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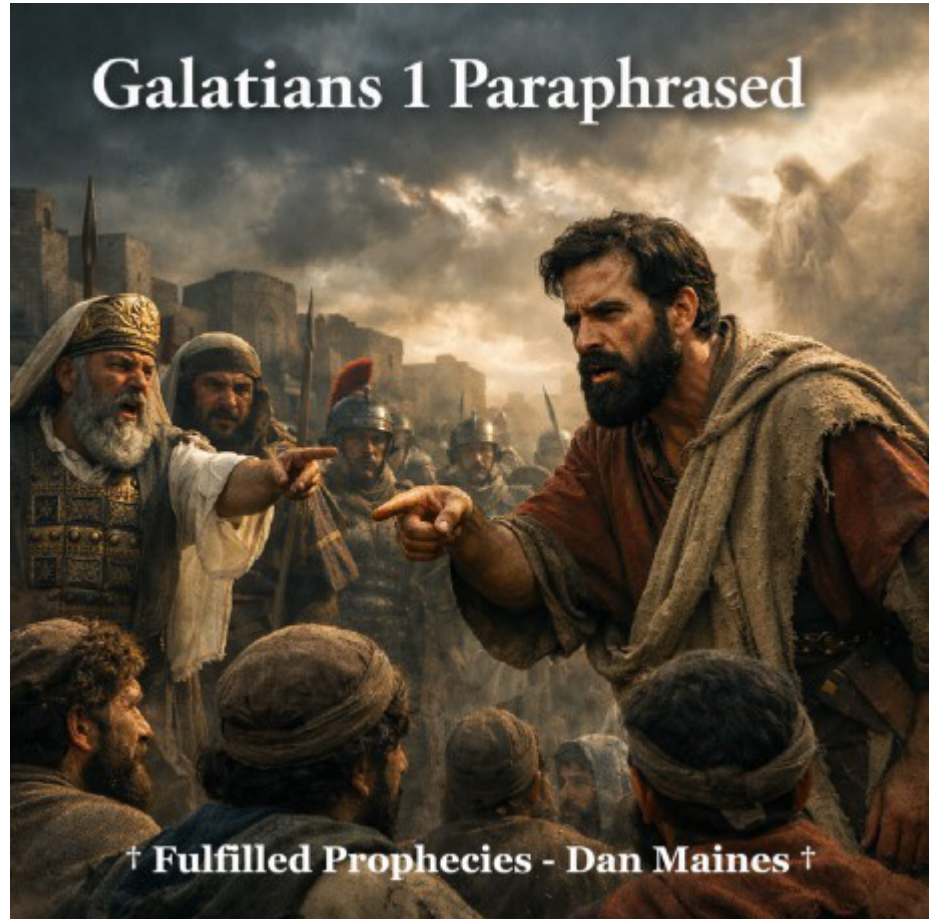
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Galatians 1 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Galatians 1 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia because false teachers were trying to pull believers back under the Law of Moses instead of trusting in the finished work of Christ.

† The issue was not small, it was the very heart of the gospel. Paul makes it clear from the beginning that the good news did not come from men, traditions, or religious authority, it came directly from Jesus Christ.

† Early Christian writers recognized that Galatians was written

to defend the freedom of believers from the Mosaic system that was passing away in that generation (Hebrews 8:13).

Galatians 1:1

Paul, an apostle, not sent from men and not appointed by human authority, but sent through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead

† Paul immediately establishes that his authority came from Christ Himself, not from the religious leaders in Jerusalem.

† This was important because the Judaizers were claiming Paul had no authority and that believers still needed to submit to the Law (Acts 15:1).

† Irenaeus wrote that the apostles spoke with authority received from Christ, not from earthly institutions (Against Heresies 3.1).

Galatians 1:2

and all the brothers who are with me, to the churches in Galatia

† Paul wasn't writing to one congregation but to several churches in the Galatian region.

† This shows the problem had spread widely and needed immediate correction.

† The early church often circulated apostolic letters among multiple assemblies so the same instruction could guide all believers.

Galatians 1:3

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

† Grace always comes before peace because peace with God comes through His grace, not through human effort or law keeping.

† Paul consistently opened his letters with this reminder so believers would stay focused on God's gift, not their own works (Romans 5:1).

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that the apostles constantly reminded believers that salvation begins with divine grace, not

human obedience (Stromata).

Galatians 1:4

who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father
† Christ's death wasn't simply about forgiveness, it was about deliverance from the corrupt age dominated by the old covenant system that was nearing its end.

† Jesus came to bring His people out of the old age and into the new covenant kingdom (Hebrews 9:15).

† Eusebius noted that the early church saw Christ's work as the turning point between the old covenant age and the new covenant age (Ecclesiastical History 3.5).

Galatians 1:5

to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

† Paul ends the opening praise with a declaration that all glory belongs to God for salvation.

† This reinforces that redemption is God's work from beginning to end.

† The early church often closed statements of doctrine with praise, showing theology always led to worship.

Galatians 1:6

I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from the One who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel

† The Galatians were abandoning grace for a system of law that could never save.

† Paul wasn't shocked that people opposed the gospel, he was shocked believers were accepting it so quickly.

† This same warning appears throughout the New Testament because false teachers constantly tried to mix law with grace (Acts 20:29).

Galatians 1:7

which is really not another gospel, only there are some who are

troubling you and want to distort the gospel of Christ

† Paul says there is only one gospel, anything else is a distortion.

† The Judaizers were adding circumcision and law keeping as requirements for salvation.

† Tertullian warned that heresy always begins by twisting the true gospel rather than openly rejecting it (Prescription Against Heretics).

Galatians 1:8

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we preached to you, he must be accursed

† Paul places the true gospel above every authority, even angels.

† Truth is measured by the message of Christ already delivered, not by new revelations.

† Early Christians often quoted this verse when confronting false teachers in the second century.

Galatians 1:9

As we have said before, so I say again now, if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he must be accursed

† Paul repeats the warning to emphasize the seriousness of corrupting the gospel.

† The word accursed means under divine judgment because the message destroys the hope of salvation.

† The early church took this warning seriously when guarding apostolic teaching.

Galatians 1:10

Am I now seeking the approval of people or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I wouldn't be a servant of Christ

† The gospel often offends religious pride, so those who preach it can't live to please people.

† Paul had already suffered persecution for refusing to compromise the truth.

† Lactantius wrote that true teachers of Christ must choose truth over popularity (Divine Institutes).

Galatians 1:11

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man

† Paul makes it clear that the message didn't come from religious tradition.

† Christianity wasn't a human invention, it was revealed by God.

† This is why the apostles spoke with certainty, they were delivering divine revelation.

Galatians 1:12

For I neither received it from man nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ

† Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus was the moment Christ personally revealed the gospel to him (Acts 9:3-6).

† His teaching wasn't borrowed from the other apostles but confirmed by them later.

† Eusebius recorded that the apostles recognized Paul's authority as coming directly from Christ.

Galatians 1:13

For you have heard about my former way of life in Judaism, how I violently persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it

† Paul reminds them of his past to show that the gospel radically transformed him.

† A man who once tried to destroy the church became one of its greatest defenders.

† This transformation served as powerful evidence that Christ truly appeared to him.

Galatians 1:14

I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my

contemporaries among my countrymen, being extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers

† Paul had been deeply devoted to Jewish traditions before meeting Christ.

† His former zeal demonstrates he didn't abandon Judaism lightly, Christ completely changed his life.

† The early church frequently pointed to Paul's conversion as proof of the power of the risen Christ.

Galatians 1:15

But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased

† Paul recognizes that his calling was planned by God long before his conversion.

† Salvation and ministry both come from God's grace, not personal merit.

† This reflects the same pattern seen in prophets like Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:5).

Galatians 1:16

to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I didn't immediately consult with flesh and blood

† Paul's mission was specifically directed toward the nations.

† This fulfilled God's promise that the Gentiles would share in the covenant blessings (Isaiah 49:6).

† The spread of the gospel to the nations was one of the defining marks of the apostolic age.

Galatians 1:17

nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus

† Paul spent time alone after his conversion, likely learning and reflecting on the revelation Christ had given him.

† This time prepared him for the ministry ahead.

† Early church historians believed this period helped Paul understand how the Law pointed to Christ.

Galatians 1:18

Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days

† This shows Paul's message wasn't dependent on Peter, yet it was in agreement with the other apostles.

† The short visit demonstrates Paul wasn't trained by them but simply confirmed fellowship.

† The unity of apostolic teaching strengthened the credibility of the gospel.

Galatians 1:19

But I didn't see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother

† James had become a leader in the Jerusalem church by this time.

† This reference helps historians confirm the early structure of the church in Jerusalem.

† Eusebius recorded James as a central figure among the believers in the city.

Galatians 1:20

Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying

† Paul emphasizes the truthfulness of his testimony because the gospel was under attack.

† His integrity was essential since false teachers were trying to discredit him.

† Apostolic writings often included such affirmations to strengthen trust among believers.

Galatians 1:21

Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia

† Paul's ministry expanded beyond Judea into the wider Roman world.

† These regions included his hometown of Tarsus.

† The gospel quickly spread throughout the eastern provinces

of the empire during this period.

Galatians 1:22

I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ

† Even though Paul was famous for persecuting Christians, many believers had never seen him personally.

† His reputation had spread, but his physical presence hadn't yet reached every church.

† This shows how rapidly the church was growing.

Galatians 1:23

They only kept hearing, the man who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy

† Paul's conversion became a powerful testimony throughout the Christian world.

† The very message he once opposed had become his life's mission.

† Early Christian writers frequently pointed to this as undeniable proof of Christ's resurrection.

Galatians 1:24

And they were glorifying God because of me

† The churches didn't praise Paul, they praised God for what He had done through him.

† True ministry always points people back to God, not to the individual servant.

† The early church understood that transformed lives were evidence of God's power.

Historical References

† Irenaeus confirmed that the apostles defended the gospel against those trying to mix the Law with Christ's finished work (Against Heresies).

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that the apostolic letters preserved the true teaching of Christ against later distortions (Stromata).

† Eusebius recorded the spread of Paul's letters among early churches as authoritative instruction (Ecclesiastical History).

How it applies to us today

† The same pressure exists today to add religious requirements to the gospel instead of trusting Christ's finished work.

† Believers must stay grounded in the message delivered by the apostles rather than following traditions that distort it.

† Just as in Paul's day, the truth of the gospel must remain our foundation and our defense against false teaching.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why was Paul so concerned about the Galatians turning to another gospel?

A: Because adding law keeping to salvation destroys the message of grace (Galatians 1:6-7).

Q: Why did Paul say even an angel preaching another gospel should be rejected?

A: Because the gospel delivered by Christ is the final authority and cannot be changed (Galatians 1:8).

Q: What shows that Paul's message came directly from Christ?

A: He received it through revelation and not through human teachers (Galatians 1:12).

Q: Why did Paul remind them of his past persecution of the church?

A: To show how completely Christ transformed his life (Galatians 1:13-16).

Q: What was the reaction of the churches when they heard Paul was preaching Christ?

A: They glorified God for the transformation they saw (Galatians 1:23-24).

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

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Source Index

† Galatians 1

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Lactantius, Divine Institutes

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