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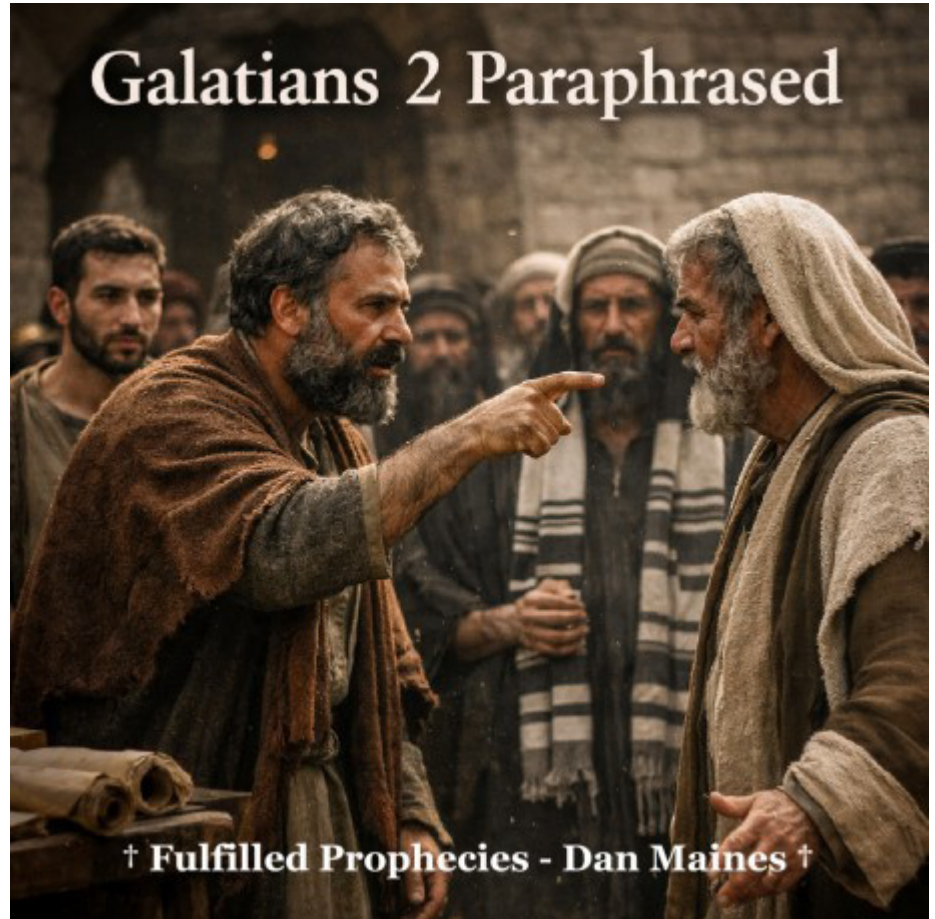
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Galatians 2 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Galatians 2 Paraphrased

Introduction

† In Galatians 2 Paul explains how the gospel he preached did not come from men but from Christ, and how the apostles themselves recognized that truth.

† The issue in this chapter centers on whether Gentile believers had to submit to the Jewish law, especially circumcision, in order to be accepted by God.

† Paul shows clearly that justification comes through faith in Christ, not through the works of the Law, a truth that became

fully evident before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 when the old covenant system came to its end.

Galatians 2:1

After fourteen years I went back to Jerusalem again, taking Barnabas with me, and I also brought Titus along.

† Paul waited many years before returning to Jerusalem, showing that his message did not depend on the approval of the apostles but came from Christ Himself (Acts 9:26-28).

† Titus was a Gentile believer, and bringing him along made the issue of Gentile freedom from the Law unavoidable.

† Irenaeus later explained that the apostles were united in the same gospel message even though their ministries were directed toward different groups.

Galatians 2:2

I went because God revealed that I should, and I presented to them the gospel I preach among the Gentiles, doing this privately with the leaders so that the work I had been doing would not be undermined.

† Paul was not seeking permission but ensuring that false teachers would not twist the gospel message.

† The apostles in Jerusalem were respected leaders, yet Paul still recognized that the gospel authority ultimately came from Christ.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that the apostles preserved unity in the faith while rejecting attempts to bring believers back under the Law.

Galatians 2:3

Not even Titus, who was with me, was forced to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.

† This was a decisive moment showing that Gentiles were not required to submit to the Jewish covenant sign.

† Circumcision belonged to the covenant given to Israel, but the gospel extended salvation beyond that national covenant (Genesis 17:10-11).

† Tertullian pointed out that the apostles themselves refused to place the Law upon Gentile believers.

Galatians 2:4

This issue came up because false brothers secretly slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, hoping to bring us back into bondage.

† Paul described these men as infiltrators because they tried to impose the Law on believers who were free in Christ.

† Their goal was to reestablish the authority of the Mosaic system even though Christ had already fulfilled it (Matthew 5:17).

† Eusebius later recorded how early believers guarded the gospel against those who tried to mix it with the old covenant system.

Galatians 2:5

We did not give in to them for even a moment so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.

† If Paul had compromised here, the entire gospel message would have been corrupted.

† The freedom believers had in Christ would have been replaced with the burden of the Law.

† The apostles consistently resisted efforts to restore the old covenant authority after Christ had fulfilled it.

Galatians 2:6

As for those who were considered leaders, what they were makes no difference to me, God shows no favoritism, and those leaders added nothing to my message.

† Paul respected the apostles but made it clear that the gospel did not originate from them.

† The authority of the message depended on Christ, not on human reputation.

† Early Christian writers repeatedly affirmed that the apostles proclaimed the same gospel revealed by Christ.

Galatians 2:7

Instead they saw that I had been entrusted with preaching the gospel to the Gentiles just as Peter had been entrusted with preaching to the Jews.

† The gospel message was the same, but the audiences differed.

† Peter primarily ministered among the circumcised while Paul focused on the nations.

† This division of ministry demonstrated unity rather than conflict among the apostles.

Galatians 2:8

The same God who worked through Peter in his mission to the Jews also worked through me in my mission to the Gentiles.

† The power behind both ministries came from God Himself.

† This confirmed that Paul's apostleship was fully legitimate.

† Early church history consistently recognized Paul's authority as an apostle equal to the others.

Galatians 2:9

James, Peter, and John, who were regarded as pillars, recognized the grace given to me and extended the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me so that we would go to the Gentiles and they to the Jews.

† The apostles publicly affirmed Paul's ministry.

† This partnership showed that the gospel message remained united even though the mission fields differed.

† Irenaeus later referred to these apostles as the foundational witnesses of the church.

Galatians 2:10

They only asked us to remember the poor, which I was already eager to do.

† Care for the poor remained an important responsibility among believers.

† This request showed that the apostles were not focused on ritual laws but on love and compassion.

† Early Christian communities became known for their generosity toward those in need.

Galatians 2:11

But when Peter came to Antioch I opposed him directly because he was clearly in the wrong.

† Even an apostle could act inconsistently, and Paul confronted the issue openly.

† The gospel truth was too important to allow compromise.

† This moment demonstrates that authority in the church was always subject to the truth of the gospel.

Galatians 2:12

Before certain men came from James, Peter ate with the Gentiles, but when they arrived he began to withdraw and separate himself because he feared those who insisted on circumcision.

† Peter knew Gentiles were accepted in Christ, yet fear of criticism caused him to withdraw.

† This behavior suggested that Gentiles were still unclean, contradicting the gospel.

† The incident shows the strong social pressure that existed among Jewish believers.

Galatians 2:13

The other Jewish believers joined him in this hypocrisy, even Barnabas was carried away by it.

† The influence of respected leaders can easily lead others into the same mistake.

† Paul's rebuke protected the gospel from being distorted.

† The early church later remembered this event as proof that truth must be defended even among leaders.

Galatians 2:14

When I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, If you, being a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force

Gentiles to live like Jews.

† Paul's confrontation addressed the contradiction directly.

† Peter himself had already lived freely among Gentiles before withdrawing.

† The gospel removed the dividing line that the Law had created (Ephesians 2:14-15).

Galatians 2:15

We are Jews by birth and not sinners from among the Gentiles.

† Paul spoke from the Jewish perspective to explain their traditional viewpoint.

† Jewish culture often considered Gentiles outside the covenant.

† The gospel overturned that distinction through Christ.

Galatians 2:16

Yet we know that a person is not made right with God by the works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we believed in Christ Jesus so that we might be justified by faith in Him and not by works of the Law, because no one will be justified by the works of the Law.

† This verse summarizes the entire argument of Galatians.

† The Law could reveal sin but could never justify anyone before God (Romans 3:20).

† Tertullian wrote that justification through faith distinguished the new covenant from the old system of the Law.

Galatians 2:17

But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves are found to be sinners, does that mean Christ promotes sin, absolutely not.

† Paul rejected the accusation that freedom from the Law encouraged sin.

† Justification by faith produces transformation rather than lawlessness.

† The gospel replaces legal bondage with genuine

righteousness.

Galatians 2:18

If I rebuild what I once tore down, I prove that I am a lawbreaker.

† Returning to the Law after embracing Christ would contradict the gospel.

† Paul had already abandoned reliance on the Law for salvation.

† Rebuilding that system would deny the finished work of Christ.

Galatians 2:19

Through the Law I died to the Law so that I might live to God.

† The Law exposed sin and led Paul to recognize his need for Christ.

† In Christ the authority of the Law over believers ended.

† This transition marked the shift from the old covenant era to the new covenant reality.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.

† Paul's identity was now completely defined by Christ.

† The believer's life is no longer controlled by the Law but by union with Christ.

† Clement of Alexandria described this transformation as the believer living by the life of Christ within them.

Galatians 2:21

I do not reject the grace of God, because if righteousness comes through the Law then Christ died for nothing.

† Depending on the Law would make Christ's sacrifice unnecessary.

† The cross proves that salvation could never come through human effort.

† The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 confirmed the final end

of the old covenant system that some were still trying to preserve.

Historical References

† Irenaeus wrote that the apostles preserved the gospel of grace and rejected attempts to return believers to the Law.

† Tertullian argued that justification through faith distinguished the gospel from the Mosaic covenant system.

† Clement of Alexandria explained that the apostles maintained unity while teaching that salvation came through Christ alone.

† Eusebius recorded how the early church defended the gospel against those who tried to reintroduce Jewish legal requirements.

How it applies to us today

† This chapter reminds us that salvation never comes through religious systems or human effort.

† Faith in Christ alone is what brings justification before God.

† We must guard the gospel carefully because history shows that people constantly try to add rules and traditions to it.

† Christ already fulfilled the Law and established the new covenant reality that believers now live in.

Q and A Appendix

Q: Why did Paul bring Titus to Jerusalem

A: Titus was a Gentile believer and his presence proved that Gentiles were accepted without circumcision (Acts 15:1-11).

Q: Why did Paul confront Peter publicly

A: Peter's behavior suggested Gentiles were inferior, which contradicted the gospel (Ephesians 2:14-16).

Q: What is the main message of Galatians 2

A: A person is justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law (Romans 3:28).

Q: Why is justification by faith so important

A: Because no one can be made righteous through the Law, only through Christ (Romans 3:20).

Q: How does Galatians 2 connect to the fulfilled perspective

A: It shows the transition away from the Law that was fully confirmed when the old covenant system ended in AD 70 (Hebrews 8:13).

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

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Source Index

† Galatians 2

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Tertullian, Against Marcion

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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