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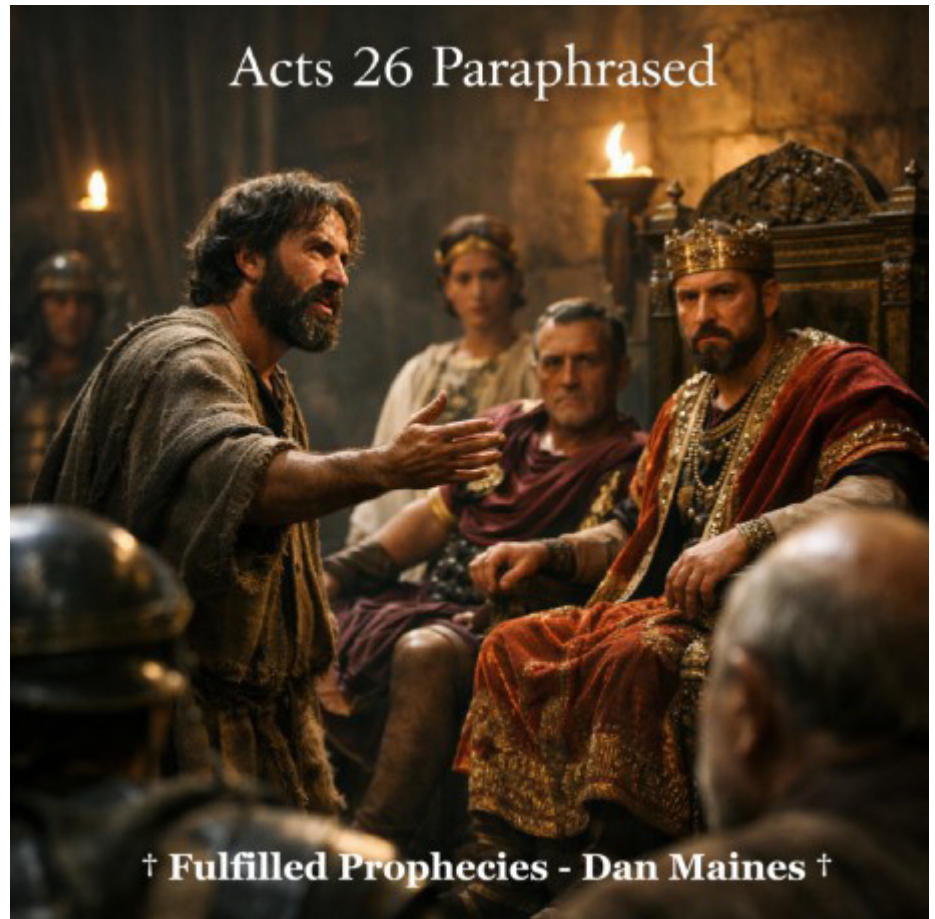
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Acts 26 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Acts 26 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Paul stands before kings and rulers, yet he's not on trial, they are

† This chapter shows the gospel confronting power, religion, and unbelief

† It reveals that fulfillment was already unfolding before their eyes

Acts 26:1

Agrippa said to Paul, you're allowed to speak for yourself, so

Paul stretched out his hand and began his defense

† The authority of kings is present, yet truth is about to speak boldly

† Paul doesn't beg, he testifies with confidence

† This fulfills Christ's promise that His servants would stand before rulers (Luke 21:12-13)

Acts 26:2

I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that I'm making my defense before you today about all the accusations of the Jews

† Paul recognizes opportunity, not fear

† The gospel advances even through trials

† God places His witnesses before those who need to hear

Acts 26:3

especially because you're familiar with all the customs and disputes among the Jews, so I ask you to listen patiently

† Agrippa knew the law, yet knowledge isn't salvation

† Understanding history doesn't equal faith

† Paul appeals to reason and truth

Acts 26:4

All the Jews know how I've lived from my youth, from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem

† Paul's life was public and known

† His past cannot be denied

† This removes any false accusation of hidden motives

Acts 26:5

They've known me for a long time, if they're willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion

† Paul wasn't ignorant, he was deeply religious

† His transformation proves the power of Christ

† Religion without Christ leads to blindness

Acts 26:6

And now I'm standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers

† The issue is the promise, not rebellion

† This is fulfillment, not a new religion

† The hope was always about Christ (Genesis 12:3)

Acts 26:7

the promise our twelve tribes hope to attain as they earnestly serve God night and day, and for this hope I'm being accused by Jews, O king

† Israel's hope pointed to Christ

† They sought what was already fulfilled

† Their rejection caused their downfall

Acts 26:8

Why is it considered unbelievable among you that God raises the dead

† The resurrection was central to the gospel

† Their unbelief wasn't intellectual, it was spiritual

† God had already demonstrated His power

Acts 26:9

So I thought to myself that I had to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth

† Paul once fought against truth

† Zeal without knowledge leads to persecution

† This shows how blind religion can be

Acts 26:10

And that's what I did in Jerusalem, I locked up many saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them

† Paul was complicit in persecution

† Authority was misused against God's people

† This shows the corruption of leadership

Acts 26:11

And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to force them to blaspheme, and being furiously enraged at them I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities

† Religious rage drove Paul before Christ

† Persecution was widespread

† Yet God would turn the persecutor into a preacher

Acts 26:12

While doing this, as I was on my way to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests

† Paul had full backing of religious power

† He thought he was serving God

† Yet he was about to encounter truth

Acts 26:13

at midday, O king, I saw on the road a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those traveling with me

† Christ revealed Himself in undeniable glory

† This was not imagination, it was divine intervention

† The light signifies truth breaking into darkness

Acts 26:14

And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me, it's hard for you to kick against the goads

† Persecuting believers is persecuting Christ

† Resistance to truth brings pain

† Christ directly confronts rebellion

Acts 26:15

And I said, who are You, Lord, and the Lord said, I am Jesus whom you're persecuting

- † The risen Christ speaks
- † Jesus identifies fully with His people
- † This proves the resurrection reality

Acts 26:16

But get up and stand on your feet, for this purpose I've appeared to you, to appoint you as a servant and a witness of what you've seen and what I'll reveal to you

- † Paul's calling was immediate
- † Grace transforms enemies into servants
- † Witnessing is central to the mission

Acts 26:17

rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I'm sending you

- † Paul would face opposition from all sides
- † Yet God promised deliverance
- † The mission extends to the nations

Acts 26:18

to open their eyes so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who've been sanctified by faith in Me

- † The gospel brings light and forgiveness
- † This is fulfillment of covenant promises
- † Salvation is by faith, not law

Acts 26:19

So, King Agrippa, I didn't prove disobedient to the heavenly vision

- † Paul obeyed immediately
- † True faith results in action
- † The vision was divine authority

Acts 26:20

but I kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds consistent with repentance

† The message was consistent everywhere

† Repentance produces visible change

† This shows the spread of the gospel before AD 70

Acts 26:21

For this reason some Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me

† The temple became a place of violence

† Rejection of truth leads to destruction

† This foreshadows judgment on Jerusalem

Acts 26:22

So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place

† Paul's message aligned with Scripture

† This wasn't new teaching

† Fulfillment was the central theme

Acts 26:23

that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles

† Christ's suffering and resurrection fulfilled prophecy

† Light goes to both Jew and Gentile

† This is the completed plan of God

Acts 26:24

While Paul was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, Paul, you're out of your mind, your great learning is driving you insane

† Truth often sounds like madness to unbelievers

† Intellectual pride rejects revelation

† This is the natural response of the flesh

Acts 26:25

But Paul said, I'm not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I'm speaking words of sober truth

† The gospel is grounded in truth

† Paul remains composed

† Truth doesn't need emotional defense

Acts 26:26

For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I'm persuaded that none of these things escape his notice, for this hasn't been done in a corner

† These events were public

† Christianity wasn't hidden

† The evidence was undeniable

Acts 26:27

King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets, I know that you do

† Paul presses for a decision

† Belief in Scripture demands response

† Truth confronts the hearer

Acts 26:28

Agrippa replied to Paul, in a short time you'll persuade me to become a Christian

† Conviction was present

† Yet hesitation reveals resistance

† Many come close but don't surrender

Acts 26:29

And Paul said, I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains

† Paul's desire was salvation for all

† He values truth over freedom

† Chains didn't stop the gospel

Acts 26:30

The king stood up, and the governor and Bernice, and those sitting with them

† The hearing ends without repentance

† Authority walks away from truth

† This shows hardened hearts

Acts 26:31

and when they'd gone aside, they began talking to one another, saying, this man isn't doing anything deserving death or imprisonment

† Even rulers saw Paul's innocence

† The charges were false

† Yet truth still suffers unjustly

Acts 26:32

And Agrippa said to Festus, this man might've been set free if he hadn't appealed to Caesar

† God's plan moves Paul to Rome

† What seems like loss is purpose

† The gospel continues forward

Historical References

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, describes the tensions between Roman authority and Jewish leadership during this time

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, confirms Paul's witness before rulers as fulfillment of Christ's words

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, speaks of apostolic boldness before kings and authorities

How it applies to us today

- † We're called to stand in truth even when facing opposition
- † The gospel still confronts both religion and power today
- † Many will hear and come close, but we must press toward full faith
- † God uses trials to advance His purpose, not stop it
- † We must speak truth clearly, knowing it's already fulfilled and established

Q & A Appendix

Q Why did Paul emphasize the prophets so much

A Because the message was fulfillment, not something new, as seen in Acts 26:22-23

Q Why did Festus think Paul was insane

A Because spiritual truth isn't understood by the natural mind, Acts 26:24

Q What does Agrippa's response show

A It shows conviction without commitment, Acts 26:28

Q What was Paul's mission

A To open eyes and bring people from darkness to light, Acts 26:18

Q How does this show fulfillment

A The promises to Israel were being completed through Christ and preached to all nations, Acts 26:6-7, 23

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

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Source Index

- † Acts 26
- † Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews
- † Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History
- † Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

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