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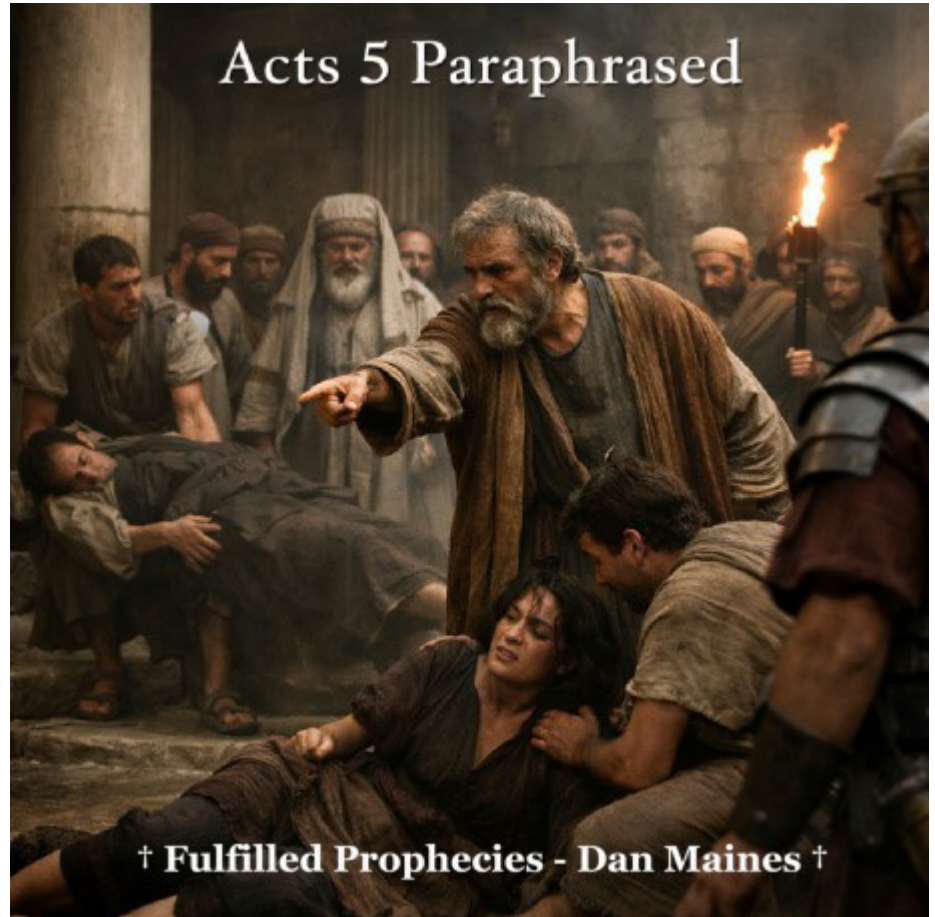
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Acts 5 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Acts 5 Paraphrased

Introduction

† This chapter shows the contrast between truth and hypocrisy right at the beginning of the church

† It reveals God's immediate judgment within that generation, proving His presence among them (Hebrews 12:28-29)

† It also shows the authority of the apostles as witnesses of fulfillment already unfolding

Acts 5:1

A man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, sold a

piece of property

† This account continues directly from Acts 4, where believers were sharing freely

† Their sin wasn't the sale, it was deception, pretending full devotion while holding back

† This mirrors Achan's sin, hidden corruption among God's people (Joshua 7:1)

Acts 5:2

He kept back part of the price, his wife knowing it, and brought only a portion and laid it at the apostles' feet

† The issue was agreement in deception, not just individual failure

† They wanted the appearance of sacrifice without the reality

† This exposes how hypocrisy tries to mimic true obedience

Acts 5:3

But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land

† Peter identifies this as lying to God, not just to men

† Satan's role shows this is spiritual rebellion, not a simple mistake

† The Holy Spirit is present and active, exposing hidden sin

Acts 5:4

While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own, and after it was sold, was it not under your control, why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart, you have not lied to men but to God

† The property was never required, the sin was voluntary deceit

† This destroys the idea of forced giving, everything was freely given

† God judges the heart, not just outward actions

Acts 5:5

And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last, and great fear came over all who heard of it

† Immediate judgment shows the seriousness of corrupting the new covenant community

† This was a sign to that generation that God was present among them

† Fear here is reverence, recognizing divine authority

Acts 5:6

The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him

† The quick burial reflects urgency and shock

† This mirrors judgment scenes where no delay is given

† The community responds with order, not chaos

Acts 5:7

Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened

† She enters unaware, giving opportunity for truth

† God often exposes sin fully before judgment

† This shows personal accountability, she must answer for herself

Acts 5:8

And Peter responded to her, tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price, and she said, yes, that was the price

† She confirms the lie, sealing her participation

† Truth was offered, but she chose deception

† This shows agreement in sin carries equal guilt

Acts 5:9

Then Peter said to her, why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test, behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well

† Testing God is rebellion, like Israel in the wilderness (Psalm 95:9)

† Their unity was misused, agreement in sin instead of truth

† Judgment is already at the door, no delay

Acts 5:10

And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband

† The repetition emphasizes certainty of judgment

† God shows no partiality between husband and wife

† This establishes purity in the early church

Acts 5:11

And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things

† This event defines the seriousness of God's presence

† The church is established with holiness, not compromise

† Fear leads to reverence, not terror

Acts 5:12

At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people, and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico

† Signs confirm apostolic authority in that generation

† Unity contrasts the deception just judged

† Solomon's portico connects temple imagery with fulfillment

Acts 5:13

But none of the rest dared to associate with them, however the people held them in high esteem

† The fear separated the false from the true

† Respect remained even among outsiders

† God was clearly working through them

Acts 5:14

And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number

† Growth continues despite fear, proving truth draws people

† Both men and women included, showing full participation

† Fulfillment is expanding beyond expectations

Acts 5:15

To such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them

† This reflects intense faith in apostolic authority

† The shadow isn't magical, it shows belief in God's power through Peter

† This mirrors Jesus' ministry continuing through His apostles

Acts 5:16

Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed

† The spread shows regional impact

† Healing confirms the kingdom presence

† This is fulfillment of restoration promises

Acts 5:17

But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates, that is the sect of the Sadducees, and they were filled with jealousy

† Religious leaders resist truth out of envy

† The Sadducees denied resurrection, yet confront its power

† This shows the old system opposing fulfillment

Acts 5:18

They laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public jail

† Persecution begins as expected (Matthew 10:17)

† Authority tries to suppress truth

† This is part of the transition from old to new

Acts 5:19

But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said

- † Divine intervention shows God's control
- † No human authority can stop fulfillment
- † This echoes earlier deliverances in Scripture

Acts 5:20

Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this life

- † The command is to continue boldly
- † The temple is still the center of confrontation
- † Life refers to the new covenant reality

Acts 5:21

Upon hearing this, they entered into the temple about daybreak and began to teach

- † Immediate obedience shows faith
- † They don't hide, they return openly
- † Truth advances without fear

Acts 5:22

But the officers who came did not find them in the prison, and they returned and reported back

- † Human plans fail against God's purpose
- † Confusion spreads among authorities
- † This shows the limits of earthly power

Acts 5:23

We found the prison house locked quite securely and the guards standing at the doors, but when we had opened up, we found no one inside

- † The detail confirms a supernatural event
- † No escape explanation exists
- † God makes His work undeniable

Acts 5:24

Now when the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them as to what would come of this

† Their confusion shows loss of control

† The system is beginning to unravel

† They can't explain what God is doing

Acts 5:25

But someone came and reported to them, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people

† The apostles return to the very place of opposition

† Truth cannot be silenced

† This fulfills bold witness in their generation

Acts 5:26

Then the captain went along with the officers and proceeded to bring them back without violence, for they were afraid of the people that they might be stoned

† Public support protects the apostles

† The leaders fear the people more than God

† Their authority is weakening

Acts 5:27

When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council, the high priest questioned them

† The same council that condemned Jesus now confronts His witnesses

† This is direct continuation of that conflict

† Fulfillment is confronting the old system

Acts 5:28

We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us

† They acknowledge the spread of the message

† They reject responsibility for Christ's death (Matthew 27:25)

† Truth exposes their guilt

Acts 5:29

But Peter and the apostles answered, we must obey God rather than men

† This defines true authority

† God's command overrides human commands

† This is the foundation of faithful witness

Acts 5:30

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross

† Direct accusation connects them to the crucifixion

† Resurrection is central to their message

† This is fulfillment of prophecy

Acts 5:31

He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins

† Jesus is already reigning

† Repentance is offered to Israel in that generation

† Forgiveness is tied to His exaltation

Acts 5:32

And we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him

† The apostles testify from direct experience

† The Spirit confirms their witness

† Obedience aligns with receiving truth

Acts 5:33

But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick and intended to kill them

- † Truth provokes hostility in hardened hearts
- † Conviction turns into anger instead of repentance
- † This mirrors their response to Jesus

Acts 5:34

But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time

- † Gamaliel acts with caution
- † Not all leaders were blind to the situation
- † This introduces a moment of restraint

Acts 5:35

And he said to them, men of Israel, take care what you propose to do with these men

- † He urges careful judgment
- † This shows internal division among leaders
- † Wisdom pauses rash decisions

Acts 5:36

For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about four hundred men joined up with him, but he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing

- † False movements fade quickly
- † Gamaliel compares past failures
- † He implies this may follow the same pattern

Acts 5:37

After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away some people after him, he too perished, and all those who followed him were scattered

- † Another example of failed rebellion
- † Human movements collapse without God
- † He contrasts them with the apostles

Acts 5:38

So in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown

† He proposes a wait-and-see approach

† Human plans can't sustain themselves

† This indirectly defends the apostles

Acts 5:39

But if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them, or else you may even be found fighting against God

† This is the key warning

† Opposing truth is opposing God

† This recognizes divine possibility

Acts 5:40

They took his advice, and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them

† They compromise, punishing but not killing

† Persecution continues despite restraint

† They still reject the message

Acts 5:41

So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name

† Suffering is seen as honor

† This reflects Jesus' teaching (Matthew 5:11-12)

† Joy replaces fear

Acts 5:42

And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ

† The message continues without interruption

- † Both public and private teaching spread truth
- † Fulfillment is actively being proclaimed in their generation

Historical References

- † Josephus records false messianic movements rising and falling in this same period, confirming Gamaliel's examples
- † Eusebius notes the boldness of the apostles and the rapid spread of the message despite persecution
- † Tacitus acknowledges the presence and expansion of early Christians under Roman authority
- † Irenaeus affirms the apostolic witness as grounded in real historical events
- † Clement of Alexandria highlights the moral purity expected in the early church

How it applies to us today

- † God sees the heart, not just outward actions, hypocrisy still matters
- † Truth doesn't need protection, it advances on its own
- † Opposition doesn't stop God's work, it often proves it
- † Obedience to God must come before obedience to men
- † Suffering for truth isn't loss, it's honor

Q & A Appendix

Q Why were Ananias and Sapphira judged so quickly

A Because God was establishing purity in the early church and showing His presence, Acts 5:3-5

Q Was the sin about money or something deeper

A It was about lying to God and hypocrisy, Acts 5:4

Q Why did the apostles keep preaching after being arrested

A Because they obeyed God over men, Acts 5:29

Q What does Gamaliel's advice show

A That truth from God cannot be overthrown, Acts 5:39

Q Why did the apostles rejoice after being beaten

A Because they counted suffering for Christ as honor, Acts 5:41
† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Acts 5

† Josephus

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Tacitus, Histories

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

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