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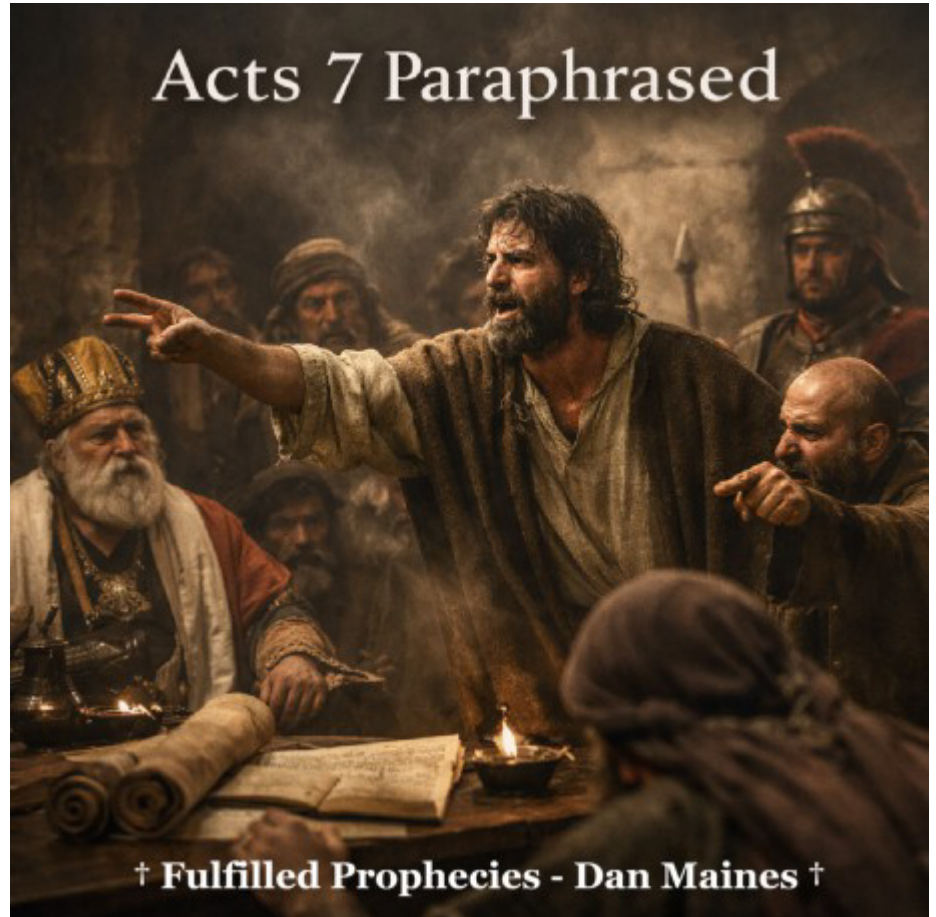
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Acts 7 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Acts 7 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Stephen stands before the council, not defending himself, but exposing their history and their resistance to God

† He walks through Israel's story to show a pattern, God sends deliverers, and they reject them

† This builds to the truth, they did the same thing to Christ

Acts 7:1

The high priest asked Stephen, Are these accusations true

† The trial begins, but Stephen isn't on defense, he's about to

confront them

† This question opens the door for a full historical rebuke

† Like the prophets before him, he speaks boldly without fear

Acts 7:2

Stephen said, Brothers and fathers, listen, the God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia before he lived in Haran

† He starts with Abraham, showing God initiated everything, not Israel

† God appeared outside the land, proving His presence wasn't limited to Jerusalem

† This directly challenges their temple-centered thinking

Acts 7:3

God told him to leave his country and family and go to a land He would show him

† Abraham followed by faith, not by possession of land or temple

† God's promise came before Israel even existed

† Obedience, not location, was always the focus

Acts 7:4

He left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran, after his father died, God moved him to this land where you now live

† The land came later, not first

† God directed every step, not Israel's leaders

† Their identity began with God's calling, not their system

Acts 7:5

He gave him no inheritance there, not even enough ground to stand on, but promised it to him and his descendants though he had no child

† The promise existed before fulfillment

† Faith, not possession, defined Abraham

† This exposes their misunderstanding of covenant inheritance

Acts 7:6

God said his descendants would be strangers in a foreign land, enslaved and mistreated for four hundred years

† God foretold suffering, showing control over history

† Israel's identity includes exile, not just privilege

† This prepares the pattern of rejection and deliverance

Acts 7:7

God said He would judge that nation, and afterward they would come out and serve Him in this place

† Deliverance comes by God's judgment, not man's power

† Worship follows redemption

† God was always the one leading the story

Acts 7:8

God gave him the covenant of circumcision, Abraham became the father of Isaac, Isaac of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs

† Covenant signs came after promise

† The patriarchs form the foundation of Israel's story

† Yet even they were flawed and resistant

Acts 7:9

The patriarchs were jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt, but God was with him

† Israel's leaders rejected God's chosen man

† Joseph is a clear type of Christ, rejected then exalted

† God's presence isn't stopped by rejection

Acts 7:10

God rescued him from all his troubles and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, who made him ruler over Egypt and his household

† God turned rejection into authority

† Joseph became savior to the very ones who rejected him

† This mirrors Christ's story perfectly

Acts 7:11

A famine came over all Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers could find no food

† Crisis exposes dependence

† The same ones who rejected Joseph now need him

† God uses hardship to bring fulfillment

Acts 7:12

When Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers there the first time

† The first encounter didn't reveal Joseph

† Just like Israel didn't recognize Christ at first

† God works progressively

Acts 7:13

On the second visit, Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family

† Revelation comes later, not immediately

† This points to Christ being revealed after rejection

† Recognition follows God's timing

Acts 7:14

Joseph sent for his father Jacob and all his relatives, seventy-five people in total

† Salvation extended to the whole family

† This reflects how Christ gathers His people

† The number shows fulfillment of promise

Acts 7:15

Jacob went down to Egypt and died there, as did our fathers

† The promise didn't end in the land yet

† Death didn't cancel God's covenant

† Fulfillment was still coming

Acts 7:16

They were carried back to Shechem and placed in the tomb Abraham had bought

- † Even in death, the promise remained
- † Burial in the land shows expectation of fulfillment
- † God's word continues beyond generations

Acts 7:17

As the time drew near for God's promise, the people increased greatly in Egypt

- † Growth happened in bondage, not freedom
- † God's promise advances even in oppression
- † Fulfillment doesn't require ideal conditions

Acts 7:18

A new king arose who didn't know Joseph

- † Forgetting God's works leads to oppression
- † Leadership change brought persecution
- † History repeats when truth is ignored

Acts 7:19

He mistreated our people and forced them to abandon their infants

- † Evil leadership attacks future generations
- † This echoes Herod's actions in Christ's time
- † Satan always tries to stop God's plan early

Acts 7:20

At that time Moses was born and was beautiful in God's sight, he was raised in his father's house for three months

- † God preserves deliverers even under threat
- † Moses, like Christ, was protected from death
- † God's plan can't be stopped

Acts 7:23

When he was forty, Moses decided to visit his people

† Deliverance begins with identification

† Moses chose his people over Egypt

† Christ likewise came to His own

Acts 7:25

He thought his brothers would understand God was delivering them through him, but they didn't

† Rejection of the deliverer again

† Israel didn't recognize Moses at first

† This is the exact pattern repeated in Christ

Acts 7:27

The man replied, Who made you ruler and judge over us

† Direct rejection of God's chosen leader

† Same accusation used against Christ

† Authority from God was denied

Acts 7:30

After forty years, an angel appeared to Moses in the wilderness

† God reveals Himself outside the temple

† The wilderness becomes holy ground

† Again, location isn't the focus, God is

Acts 7:35

This Moses whom they rejected is the one God sent as ruler and deliverer

† Stephen makes the point clear

† The rejected one becomes the savior

† This is pointing straight to Jesus

Acts 7:39

Our fathers refused to obey him, they rejected him and turned back to Egypt in their hearts

† Physical movement doesn't matter, the heart reveals truth

† They longed for bondage instead of freedom

† This exposes their ongoing rebellion

Acts 7:41

They made a calf and rejoiced in what they made with their own hands

† Idolatry replaces true worship

† They trusted their own works

† This is what Stephen is accusing them of again

Acts 7:44

Our fathers had the tabernacle in the wilderness just as God instructed

† God gave them a temporary system

† The tabernacle pointed forward

† It was never meant to be permanent

Acts 7:47

But it was Solomon who built the house for Him

† The temple was man-made

† It wasn't God's dwelling in the ultimate sense

† Stephen is dismantling their confidence in it

Acts 7:48

Yet the Most High doesn't dwell in houses made by hands

† This is the turning point

† God isn't confined to buildings

† This strikes at their entire system

Acts 7:51

You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit

† Stephen applies everything directly

† Their history is their present condition

† They are resisting God just like their fathers

Acts 7:52

Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute, they killed those who announced the coming of the Righteous One

- † Every messenger was rejected
- † Christ was the ultimate fulfillment
- † Their guilt is undeniable

Acts 7:53

You received the law but didn't keep it

- † They boasted in the law but broke it
- † External religion without obedience is empty
- † This exposes their hypocrisy

Acts 7:54

When they heard this, they were furious and ground their teeth at him

- † Truth produces conviction or rage
- † They chose anger instead of repentance
- † This confirms Stephen's accusation

Acts 7:55

Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand

- † Christ is exalted and reigning
- † Stephen sees the fulfilled reality
- † Heaven confirms what earth rejects

Acts 7:56

He said, I see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God

- † This is a direct claim of Christ's authority
- † It echoes Daniel 7 fulfilled
- † This is what pushes them over the edge

Acts 7:58

They drove him out and stoned him, and the witnesses laid their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul

- † Rejection turns into murder
- † Saul will later become Paul
- † God is already working beyond this moment

Acts 7:59

As they stoned him, he called out to Jesus to receive his spirit

† Stephen dies in faith, not fear

† He speaks directly to Christ

† This shows Christ's active reign

Acts 7:60

He fell to his knees and said, Lord, don't hold this sin against them, and then he fell asleep

† He mirrors Christ's forgiveness

† His death testifies to the truth

† The gospel continues through sacrifice

Historical References

† Josephus records the stubbornness and rebellion of the Jewish leaders in the first century

† Eusebius confirms early persecution of believers following events like Stephen's death

† Irenaeus speaks of Israel's repeated rejection of God's messengers

† Clement of Alexandria highlights the continuity of this pattern from the prophets to Christ

How it applies to us today

† It's not enough to know history, we must respond to God now

† God isn't confined to buildings, systems, or traditions

† We must not repeat the same mistake of rejecting truth when it confronts us

† Christ has already been exalted, and we live in that fulfilled reality

† Faith means recognizing what God has already done, not waiting for what He's already completed

Q&A Appendix

Q What was Stephen proving in his speech

A That Israel had a long history of rejecting God's deliverers, culminating in Christ (Acts 7:51-52)

Q Why did Stephen focus on Abraham and Moses

A To show God's work existed before the temple and law (Acts 7:2, 7:35)

Q What was the main accusation against the leaders

A That they resisted the Holy Spirit just like their fathers (Acts 7:51)

Q What does Stephen seeing Jesus standing mean

A That Christ was already reigning and vindicating His servant (Acts 7:55-56)

Q How does this chapter fit the fulfilled perspective

A It shows the transition from the old covenant system to Christ's completed reign (Acts 7:48)

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

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Source Index

† Acts 7

† Josephus

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

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