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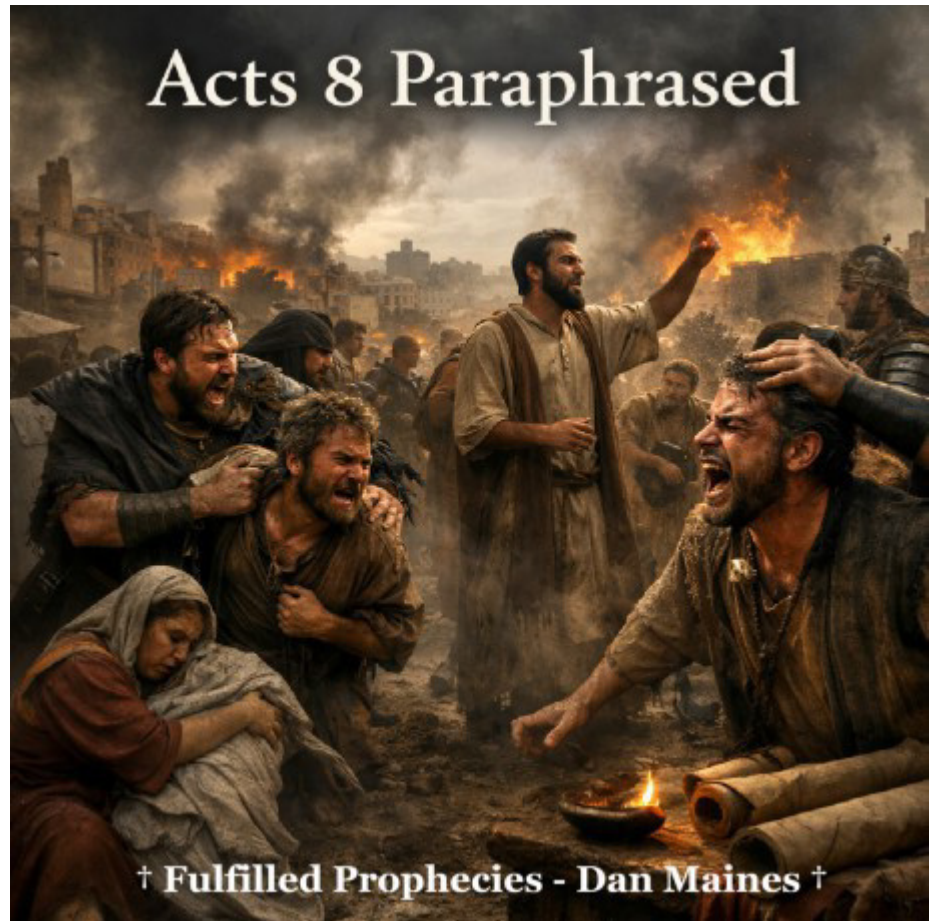
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Acts 8 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Acts 8 Paraphrased

Introduction

† This chapter shows the gospel moving beyond Jerusalem, exactly as Jesus said it would, beginning with persecution and scattering (Acts 1:8)

† The death of Stephen didn't stop the message, it multiplied it, pushing it into Samaria and beyond

† This is fulfillment in motion, the kingdom expanding in that generation just as Christ promised (Matthew 24:14)

Acts 8:1

Saul agreed completely with putting Stephen to death, and on that day a severe persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout Judea and Samaria, except the apostles

† The scattering wasn't defeat, it was the means God used to spread the message outward (Acts 11:19)

† Saul, later Paul, begins as a persecutor, showing how God would turn even enemies into instruments (1 Timothy 1:13)

† This fulfills Christ's command that the gospel would go to Judea and Samaria

Acts 8:2

Some devout men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over him

† Stephen's death was honored, showing the value of faithful witness even unto death (Revelation 2:10)

† The mourning reflects the cost of the transition from old covenant Israel to the new covenant reality

† His death marked the turning point of the gospel leaving Jerusalem

Acts 8:3

But Saul began destroying the church, entering house after house, dragging off men and women and putting them in prison

† The persecution came from within Israel, showing covenant judgment beginning with them (1 Peter 4:17)

† Saul's actions reveal the blindness of the old system resisting its fulfillment

† This matches Jesus' warning that they would be persecuted by their own people (Matthew 23:34)

Acts 8:4

Those who had been scattered went about preaching the word

† Persecution spread the gospel instead of stopping it

† Every believer became a messenger, not just the apostles

† This shows the unstoppable nature of fulfilled kingdom expansion

Acts 8:5

Philip went down to a city of Samaria and began proclaiming

Christ to them

† Samaria receiving the message shows the breaking of old divisions (John 4:9)

† This fulfills the inclusion of nations and outsiders from the beginning

† The gospel moves beyond Jerusalem's boundaries

Acts 8:6

The crowds were paying close attention to what Philip said, as they heard and saw the signs he was doing

† Signs confirmed the message during the transition period (Hebrews 2:3-4)

† The people responded with unity, showing the power of truth

† These signs weren't permanent, but served their purpose in that generation

Acts 8:7

Unclean spirits were coming out of many shouting loudly, and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed

† This shows authority over spiritual and physical oppression

† These miracles demonstrated the arrival of the kingdom

† They validated the message before the full establishment in AD 70

Acts 8:8

There was great joy in that city

† The gospel brings joy where truth replaces deception

† This contrasts with the fear-driven message of futurism

† Fulfillment produces freedom and peace

Acts 8:9

A man named Simon had previously been practicing magic in the city, amazing the people of Samaria and claiming to be someone great

† False power and deception were common, just like Jesus warned (Matthew 24:24)

† Simon represents false religious influence competing with truth

† The people were easily impressed by signs without truth

Acts 8:10

Everyone from the least to the greatest was paying attention to

him, saying this man is what is called the Great Power of God

† False claims to divine power were widespread

† This shows how deception works through reputation and influence

† It parallels the false prophets of that generation

Acts 8:11

They were paying attention to him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic

† Long-standing deception is harder to break

† Truth must confront deeply rooted lies

† This reflects Israel's long history of being misled

Acts 8:12

But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, both men and women

† Truth replaced deception when the gospel was clearly preached

† Baptism marked entry into the new covenant reality

† This shows the shift from false power to true authority

Acts 8:13

Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued on with Philip, and he was amazed as he observed the signs and great miracles taking place

† Simon's belief was superficial, based on amazement, not transformation

† This warns that not all belief is genuine

† Signs alone don't produce true faith

Acts 8:14

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them

† The apostles confirmed the spread of the gospel beyond Jerusalem

† This shows unity in the early church

† Samaria's inclusion was significant in covenant transition

Acts 8:15

They came down and prayed for them so that they might receive the Holy Spirit

- † This was part of the transitional outpouring unique to that time
- † The Spirit's visible manifestation confirmed inclusion
- † This was not a permanent pattern but a fulfillment event

Acts 8:16

For He had not yet fallen upon any of them, they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus

- † This delay showed apostolic authority during the transition
- † It unified Jews and Samaritans under one body
- † It prevented division in the early church

Acts 8:17

Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit

- † The laying on of hands was part of the early confirmation process
- † This shows the structured unfolding of fulfillment
- † These practices were temporary and tied to that generation

Acts 8:18

Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money

- † Simon viewed spiritual power as something to buy
- † This reveals a corrupt heart
- † It shows misunderstanding of God's work

Acts 8:19

Saying give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit

- † Simon desired power, not truth
- † This reflects false leadership motives
- † It contrasts with true servanthood

Acts 8:20

But Peter said to him may your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money

- † God's gifts cannot be bought
- † This rebuke exposes false motives
- † It shows the seriousness of corrupt intent

Acts 8:21

You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God

- † True participation requires a right heart
- † External belief is not enough
- † God judges the heart, not appearances

Acts 8:22

Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that if possible the intention of your heart may be forgiven you

- † Repentance is still offered even to the corrupt
- † Forgiveness depends on a changed heart
- † This shows God's mercy even in rebuke

Acts 8:23

For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity

- † Sin enslaves the heart
- † Bitterness blocks truth
- † This exposes the condition behind false belief

Acts 8:24

But Simon answered and said pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me

- † Simon feared consequences more than he desired change
- † This is not true repentance
- † It shows dependence on others instead of personal transformation

Acts 8:25

So when they had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem, and were preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans

- † The gospel continued spreading outward
- † This fulfills the expansion pattern Jesus gave
- † Samaria was fully included

Acts 8:26

But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza

- † God directed the spread of the gospel intentionally
- † This shows divine guidance in fulfillment
- † The message was moving toward the nations

Acts 8:27

So he got up and went, and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure, and he had come to Jerusalem to worship

† This shows the gospel reaching beyond Israel

† A foreign official seeking truth represents the nations

† This fulfills inclusion from the beginning

Acts 8:28

He was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah

† The Old Testament pointed forward to fulfillment

† He was seeking understanding

† Scripture prepared him for the gospel

Acts 8:29

Then the Spirit said to Philip go up and join this chariot

† God connects seekers with truth

† This shows intentional evangelism

† Fulfillment includes guidance to individuals

Acts 8:30

Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said do you understand what you are reading

† Understanding requires explanation

† Scripture alone without clarity can be misunderstood

† This shows the need for teaching

Acts 8:31

And he said well how could I, unless someone guides me, and he invited Philip to come up and sit with him

† Guidance is necessary for truth

† This shows humility in learning

† God uses people to teach others

Acts 8:32

Now the passage of Scripture he was reading was this He was led as a sheep to slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He does not open His mouth

† This prophecy points directly to Christ

† Isaiah foretold the suffering Messiah (Isaiah 53)

† Fulfillment is being explained in real time

Acts 8:33

In humiliation His judgment was taken away, who will relate His generation, for His life is removed from the earth

† This describes Christ's unjust death

† His generation rejected Him

† This was fulfilled in that first century context

Acts 8:34

The eunuch answered Philip and said please tell me of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of someone else

† This question opens the door for the gospel

† It shows the need for interpretation

† Christ is the answer to the Old Testament

Acts 8:35

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him

† All Scripture points to Christ

† The gospel is the fulfillment of prophecy

† This is the correct way to interpret Scripture

Acts 8:36

As they went along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said look water, what prevents me from being baptized

† Immediate response shows genuine belief

† Baptism marks entry into the new covenant

† No barrier remains for those who believe

Acts 8:37

And Philip said if you believe with all your heart, you may, and he answered I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God

† Faith is the requirement

† Confession follows belief

† This is the simplicity of the gospel

Acts 8:38

And he ordered the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him

† Baptism follows belief immediately

† This shows obedience

† The new covenant was actively expanding

Acts 8:39

When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away, and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing

† Joy confirms true conversion

† Philip's removal shows divine control

† The message continues without dependence on one person

Acts 8:40

But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea

† The gospel continued spreading rapidly

† This fulfills the mission outward

† The kingdom was advancing toward full fulfillment

Historical References

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, describes unrest and movements in Judea during this time

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, records the spread of the gospel beyond Jerusalem

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies, affirms early apostolic teaching spreading to the nations

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, notes the expansion of Christian teaching into different regions

How It Applies To Us Today

† The gospel has already been fully established, we don't wait for it to spread, we live in its reality

† Persecution didn't stop truth then, and it can't stop truth now

† False teaching still exists, but truth exposes it just like with Simon

† We don't need signs today, we have the completed fulfillment

† Joy comes from understanding that everything Christ promised has already been accomplished

Q & A Appendix

Q Did persecution stop the church

A No, it spread it, Acts 8:4

Q Was Samaria included in the covenant

A Yes, Acts 8:5-12

Q Can spiritual gifts be bought

A No, Acts 8:20

Q Who was Isaiah speaking about

A Jesus Christ, Acts 8:35

Q What is required for baptism

A Faith in Christ, Acts 8:37

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

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Source Index

† Acts 8

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

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