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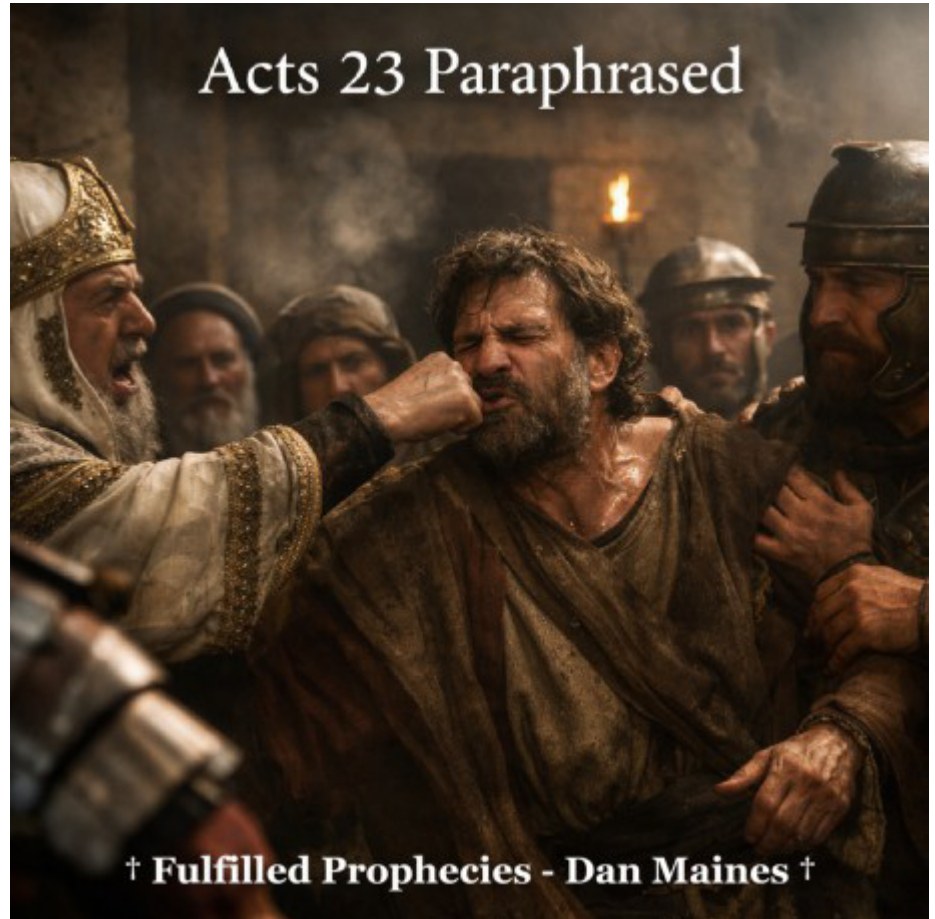
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Acts 23 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Acts 23 Paraphrased

Introduction

† This chapter shows Paul standing before the Jewish council, exposing their hypocrisy and division

† It reveals God's protection over Paul as the message continues moving toward Rome

† It confirms that what Jesus said would happen in that generation was unfolding in real time (Matthew 23:34-36)

Acts 23:1

Paul looked straight at the council and said, I have lived my life before God with a completely clear conscience up to this day

† Paul isn't claiming sinlessness, he's saying he walked faithfully in what he knew (Acts 24:16)

† His boldness shows confidence in the truth of Christ, not fear of men (Philippians 1:20)

Acts 23:2

The high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth

† This act shows corrupt authority, not righteous judgment (Micah 3:11)

† The leadership that claimed to defend the law was breaking it openly (Deuteronomy 25:1-2)

Acts 23:3

Paul said to him, God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall, you sit judging me according to the law, yet you break the law by commanding me to be struck

† Paul exposes hypocrisy just like Jesus did (Matthew 23:27)

† Judgment was coming on that leadership within that generation (Matthew 23:36)

Acts 23:4

Those standing nearby said, do you insult God's high priest

† They focused on authority instead of truth

† This shows how tradition blinded them from righteousness (Mark 7:8)

Acts 23:5

Paul said, I didn't know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, you shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people

† Paul affirms the law even while exposing corruption (Exodus 22:28)

† His response shows humility, not compromise

Acts 23:6

Paul realized one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, so he cried out, brothers, I'm a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees, I'm on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead

- † Paul divides the council by exposing their doctrinal conflict
- † The resurrection hope was the core issue of the gospel (Acts 24:15)

Acts 23:7

When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided

- † Truth exposes division where error exists
- † God uses even conflict to protect His servant

Acts 23:8

The Sadducees say there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all

- † This shows internal disagreement within Judaism
- † The denial of resurrection was a major doctrinal error (2 Timothy 2:18)

Acts 23:9

A great uproar happened, and some scribes of the Pharisees stood up and argued strongly, saying we find nothing wrong with this man, what if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him

- † The Pharisees momentarily defend Paul due to shared belief
- † This again shows division within the leadership

Acts 23:10

The dispute became so violent that the commander feared Paul would be torn apart, so he ordered soldiers to take him by force and bring him into the barracks

- † God uses Roman authority to preserve Paul
- † Even chaos serves God's purpose

Acts 23:11

That night the Lord stood near Paul and said, take courage, as

you have testified about Me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome

† Christ confirms the mission isn't finished yet

† This ties directly to the spread of the gospel to the nations (Acts 1:8)

Acts 23:12

When it was day, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath, saying they wouldn't eat or drink until they killed Paul

† This reveals the depth of hatred against the truth

† Their zeal was completely misguided (Romans 10:2)

Acts 23:13

There were more than forty men who formed this plot

† This wasn't a small group, it shows organized opposition

† Large numbers don't equal truth

Acts 23:14

They went to the chief priests and elders and said, we've bound ourselves under a curse not to eat until we've killed Paul

† Religious leaders were involved in murder plots

† This exposes the corruption Jesus warned about (Matthew 23:31-32)

Acts 23:15

Now you and the council request the commander to bring him down, pretending to examine him more closely, and we'll be ready to kill him before he arrives

† Deception and murder were working together

† This is the same pattern used against Jesus (Matthew 26:4)

Acts 23:16

But Paul's nephew heard of their ambush, and he went and entered the barracks and told Paul

† God provides protection through unexpected means

† Even family plays a role in God's plan

Acts 23:17

Paul called one of the centurions and said, take this young man to the commander, he has something to report

† Paul acts wisely, not passively

† Faith includes action when needed

Acts 23:18

So he took him and brought him to the commander and said, Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you

† God is working through Roman structure again

† Authority is being used for protection, not harm

Acts 23:19

The commander took him by the hand and stepping aside asked privately, what is it that you have to tell me

† The situation shifts from chaos to control

† God is directing events quietly

Acts 23:20

He said, the Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow as though they were going to inquire more closely

† The plot is fully exposed

† Darkness is brought into the light

Acts 23:21

But don't listen to them, more than forty men are lying in wait for him, they've bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they've killed him, and now they're ready, waiting for your promise

† The danger is real and immediate

† God's intervention comes at the right time

Acts 23:22

So the commander let the young man go, instructing him, tell no one that you've informed me of these things

† Wisdom and discretion are used

† Not everything needs to be publicly declared

Acts 23:23

He called two centurions and said, prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night

† A massive escort shows how serious this was

† God ensures overwhelming protection

Acts 23:24

Provide mounts to put Paul on and bring him safely to Felix the governor

† Paul is moved toward his next assignment

† God's plan is advancing, not stopping

Acts 23:25

He wrote a letter to this effect

† Official documentation protects Paul legally

† God's providence works through systems

Acts 23:26

Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent governor Felix, greetings

† Roman authority acknowledges the situation

† This shows the political context of the gospel

Acts 23:27

This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them, but I came with the troops and rescued him, having learned that he is a Roman

† Paul's Roman citizenship becomes a tool for protection (Acts 22:25-29)

† God uses earthly status for His purpose

Acts 23:28

Wanting to know the reason they accused him, I brought him down to their council

- † The commander sought truth, not mob justice
- † This contrasts with the Jewish leadership

Acts 23:29

I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment

- † Even Rome saw no real crime
- † The issue was purely religious opposition

Acts 23:30

When I was informed of a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, also instructing his accusers to bring their charges before you

- † The transfer shifts the case to a higher authority
- † God's plan moves Paul toward Rome step by step

Acts 23:31

So the soldiers, according to their orders, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris

- † The journey continues under protection
- † God's timing avoids the ambush

Acts 23:32

The next day they let the horsemen go on with him, while they returned to the barracks

- † The threat decreases as distance increases
- † The mission continues forward

Acts 23:33

When they came to Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and presented Paul also before him

- † Paul now stands before Roman leadership
- † This fulfills Christ's words about testifying before rulers (Luke

21:12-13)

Acts 23:34

When he read the letter, he asked what province he was from, and when he learned he was from Cilicia

† Legal jurisdiction is established

† The process continues orderly

Acts 23:35

He said, I'll give you a hearing after your accusers arrive also, giving orders for him to be kept in Herod's Praetorium

† Paul is preserved for testimony, not execution

† God's plan is still unfolding toward its completion

Historical References

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, records corruption among high priests like Ananias

† Tacitus, Histories, confirms Roman governance structure during this time

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, affirms early church persecution and apostolic testimony

How it applies to us today

† God is still in control even when opposition rises

† Truth will always expose division and hypocrisy

† We can stand bold knowing Christ is with us

† God uses unexpected people and systems to protect His purpose

† The mission continues forward no matter the resistance

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why did Paul say he was a Pharisee

A: He used truth to expose division and shift the situation, showing the central issue was the resurrection (Acts 23:6)

Q: Was Paul wrong to speak against the high priest

A: No, he exposed hypocrisy, but he still honored the law when reminded (Exodus 22:28)

Q: Why did God allow the plot to happen

A: To reveal it and demonstrate His protection over Paul (Psalm 34:19)

Q: What does this chapter show about God's sovereignty

A: God controls events, people, and outcomes to fulfill His purpose (Proverbs 21:1)

Q: How does this connect to fulfillment

A: It shows judgment falling on corrupt leadership and the gospel moving outward just as Jesus said (Matthew 23:36)

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

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Source Index

† Acts 23

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews

† Tacitus, Histories

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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