



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The Third Sermon in the Capitol: Change is Necessary

JUNE 25-27, 2014

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Acts 7:1-10

“Then the high priest said, ‘Are these things so?’ 2) And he said, ‘Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, 3) and said to him, “Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.” 4) Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. 5) And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession and to his descendants after him. 6) But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, and that they would oppress them four hundred years. 7) “And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge,” said God, “and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place.” 8) Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the twelve patriarchs. 9) And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him 10) and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.” (NKJV)

“HIS DEFENSE IS DRAWN ENTIRELY FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY, AND IS DESIGNED TO SHOW THAT ALL GOD’S DEALINGS WITH THE CHOSEN PEOPLE POINTED TO THOSE VERY CHANGES WHICH STEPHEN WAS ACCUSED OF HAVING THREATENED.” J. A. ALEXANDER

In our short passage, how many changes did the heroes of the faith make to fulfill the master plan of God? How easy is it to leave all your family and friends to move to a foreign country? Does Abraham benefit from God’s promise regarding the land in which he was to dwell? Was it humanly possible for Abraham to have children when the land was promised to him and his seed? What kind of difficult changes would his seed suffer before they would worship God in the land He would give them? Was the sign of the covenant a painful change? How many unexpected changes did Joseph suffer before he was promoted by Pharaoh? How did God bless Joseph?

FOCUS ON FUTURE EVENTS:

- SEPTEMBER 10: LEGISLATIVE INVITATIONAL FISHING TOURNAMENT, DELTAVILLE, VA
- NOVEMBER 3: ELEVENTH ANNUAL CAPITOL COOKOUT AND PRAYER WALK

Never had such drastic changes consumed the people of God as they did in the early Church. The Apostles had experienced continual change as they followed Jesus, watching His preaching change lives and his miracles change impossible cases to perfect health, and even the elements of nature would immediately change at His command. The disciples’ expectations had completely changed when Jesus was crucified upon the cross, from thinking they would serve Him immediately in His earthly kingdom, to realizing they were completely wrong and He had died, risen and ascended to forgive sin and rule in the hearts of His people through His spiritual kingdom. What a change when the Holy spirit descended upon the 120 who had spent 10 days in prayer, so that suddenly 3000 came into the kingdom with His rushing wind and His truth preached in every language. The heart change in these repentant Jews was so radical that they all became intensely loving and generous so that no one claimed to own anything! After Peter saw the lame man changed, the Church increased to 5000 men. Peter and the all the Apostles were seeing hearts and health

BIBLE STUDIES

- WEDNESDAY @ 8:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3 AND 12:00NOON – WOODBRIDGE – DELEGATE ANDERSON’S HOME
 THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – CHESTER – SHONEY’S AT RT. 10 (IRON BRIDGE ROAD) & 301(12531 JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY)
 FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – NORFOLK – GOLDEN CORRAL, 6103 N. MILITARY HWY, NEAR THE NORFOLK AIRPORT

Virginia

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changed every day, such that many were healed by even the shadow of Peter. The Church became so immense that the Hellenistic widows began to complain, requiring a change and seven Hellenistic Jews were appointed to care for the widows so that the Apostles could enjoy a change back to their priorities of prayer and the ministry of the Word. The result was an abundance of change that impacted the entire capital city through a new reverence and obedience of Scripture, an explosion of continually multiplying growth, and *“most importantly, a great crowd of priests became continually obedient to the faith.”* The leaders’ lives were being changed for Christ! The leader of the newly appointed Hellenistic Jews serving the widows introduced *“great wonders and signs among the people”* and his preaching of the truth was extended to the Synagogue of the Freedmen. Stephen’s bold witness and irresistible wisdom now brought him before the Congress of Israel where they were astounded at the change in his face, like the glowing of Moses’ face, *“as the face of an angel.”*

“BUT WE ALL, WITH OPEN FACE BEHOLDING AS IN A GLASS THE GLORY OF THE LORD, ARE CHANGED INTO THE SAME IMAGE FROM GLORY TO GLORY, EVEN AS BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD.” 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

I. TURBULENCE FROM GOD

ACTS 7:1-4

When glowing Stephen stands before a hostile Congress of Israel, in a passing tribute to justice, the high priest asks if the false witnesses’ lies are true. Stephen has much more important truths to present than his defense. He begins as a leader addressing leaders, *“Brethren and fathers, listen.”* His first emphasis is the glory of God, forever changing the life of Abraham. So the early Church was not the first of the people of God to experience drastic changes. God’s master plan called for dramatic changes in the life of Abraham, the father of the faithful. God’s first command to him involved changes in location, *“Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land*

that I will show you.” Abraham got as far as Haran and probably his father’s physical limitations involved his intense care, so he settled there temporarily until his father died. Then he moved again into the promised land.

“THE GREAT MEN WERE THE MEN WHO WERE PREPARED TO MAKE THE ADVENTURE OF FAITH.”

WILLIAM BARCLAY

II. TRUSTING IN GOD

ACTS 7:5-8

Though this land is promised in the future, God gives him none of the land, *“not even enough to set his foot on.”* So Abraham lives in a tent all his life in dependence upon the goodness of God and those who own the land he is on, and he is old and has no children to inherit this land promised to him and his seed! Then God told him that his seed will be slaves in a foreign land for 400 years before God would render judgment and bring them out to *“serve Me in this place.”* To this God adds the intense pain of circumcision to seal the covenant with Abraham in his old age. At 100 Abraham’s child, Isaac, was born!

“HIS CHIEF POINT HERE (VV. 9-16) IS THAT JOSEPH WAS MISTREATED BY HIS BROTHERS.” J. M. BOICE

III. TRIUMPHING IN GOD

ACTS 7:9-10

Joseph had the most painful and unexpected changes when he obediently goes the extra mile to care for his brothers (Gen. 37:12-17). Yet because of envy (the same reason Jesus is killed and Stephen is standing falsely accused before these leaders), his brothers conspire to kill him as soon as they see him, but instead they sell him (for themselves) as a slave into Egypt. But God *“rescued him out of all his afflictions”* (for Himself) and Pharaoh, seeing his wisdom, appoints him governor (for himself)!

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Is God changing you to be a bold witness for Him and His Kingdom?
- 2) Have you or are you receiving unexpected or painful changes in your life from God’s hand?
- 3) How has God demonstrated that He uses painful changes and even the evil of others for your greatest good?