

Rev Donald Macdonald - Acts 6:8 - 7:8

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Date: 08 April 2018

Preacher: Guest Preacher

- [0 : 00] We do the verse again. Unspeakable sin. Brothers and fathers.
- Here the god of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was a messipotator. Before he lived in heaven.
- He said to walk from the land of the kingdom. And go into the land. And I looked shortly. Looked the vital of the book of Acts and fathers of the impact of the ministry of this man Stephen.
- Stephen full of grace and power was doing great wonders and signs among the people. His ministry aroused much opposition and median festivity that were those who were zealously opposed to the ministry of this man.
- [1 : 20] The accuser of teaching against the bosses and the teachings of the Old Testament. The campaign that was aroused against him resulted in his being arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin to face charges.
- Broxley's the writer of blind false witnesses. He read in chapter 6 the King of Solomon sees Stephen brought him before the council and they said false witnesses who say this man never ceases to speak words against this holy place but is against the temple and the law for the unburdened sake of the species of Nazareth.
- So he said this man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and will change the customs that Moses did ever choose.
- Well we know that Stephen never preached against the work of God because he was a mountain who was infilled by the spirit of God and he exercised the spirit of God and called him.
- But these accusations were made and when he was brought before the Sanhedrin we are told they scared of him and the High Priest asked him if the accusations that were made were true.
- [2 : 57] You can't say that the student front of him are not biased to the jury. And that's the background to chapter 7.
- And it's before us in some 53 verses the response of Stephen to these false charges. Note how he begins his response.
- Brothers and fathers hear me. And it's important to take note of how he begins his defense.
- He appeals first of all to their minds, to their powers of reason. He demands the total attention and concentration.
- They were a group of people who reminded themselves and the knowledge of their past history. And he's asking them to get rid of their prejudices to let their minds be open to what he has to say.
- [4 : 09] You know maybe we might just think our own silence has been unbiased and unprejudiced when we're faced with the challenge of the gospel.

But are we? Are we really? We too have our prejudices, don't we? We too have inner minds building up our case.

Our case for gospel. We too are minds. So I want to ask you at the very outset, can you say today that you will give the truth of theory in your life as you listen to the sound?

Think about it. Stephen begins with our history lesson. But notice he doesn't begin with the great patriarchy.

He begins with God. And surely it is most significant how he begins the advice. Not just to see, asking them to give the full commitment to listening to what he has to say.

[5 : 27] But he also wants them to take note of where he begins. The God of glory. The God of greatness. The God of wonder. The God of amazing.

The God of power. The God of transcendent glory. He dwells in light. He's in the mental health of the Bible. He reinforces his God.

He's lighted in his no doubtness at all. He's not confined to temple buildings. For those accustomed to temple worship, it must have been a startling state night when Stephen began his defense in this way.

The God of glory appeared to his father Abraham Mesopotamia. He appeared in a place of idolatrous worship where there was no tabernacle and no temple.

He did not appear in Jerusalem or within the borders of Israel but idolatrous Mesopotamia. And for those who place so much emphasis on the counter background of the temple worship, it must have been an unwelcome reminder.

[6 : 44] Where the great patriarch of comfort. Further on in this monolith speech you find them reinforcing the message of the transcendent God.

Forget the most kind as God well in houses made by hands as the prophet says, heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me says the Lord.

Or is the place of my rest. Did not my hands make these things? And the outcome of this speech by Stephen was that they were absolutely incensed by what he had to say.

It cut across all the prejudices. And despite Stephen's pre-fraud for a open mind to what he had to say, all of the prejudices came strongly into play.

And do you remember that the action was detailed and the action was by the crowd and they heard these things, they were encouraged on the ground their teeth uttered.

[7 : 49] Their minds were closed to the truths that Stephen said before. They preferred to remain in the ignorance and misunderstanding and not to kill what the Bible actually teaches.

And I wonder if that sounds punitive. Because often we think we know what the Bible teaches.

And then when we actually study the Bible and read the Bible we discover that we didn't really know what the Bible was actually teaching.

Well, that's how we behave frequently. And they refused to listen. They wanted not just to suppress the message, but to suppress the messenger.

And they ordered that he be stolen to death. Well, I'd like to look, what's the background? I'd like to look with you today under Carl Vedder. Because he's one of the most notable men in all of human history.

[8 : 58] Three of the world's major religious and religious men give a place to this man.

Through him God reveals his path to some ground for the universe. In the promises made to God, the God of glory reveals that he has a plan.

The life of this man was a life of faith where he trusted in the God of glory. And his life demonstrates how God glorifies himself in the life of a man all right into the world and tells us no unbelief made to weather concerning the promise of God but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God.

Fully convinced that God was able to do hotty at times. Well, that's the summation that the apostle Paul gives us of the life of this man Abraham.

The glory of God was of how important importance in the life of Abraham. Well, three thoughts. First of all, a surprising chance.

[10 : 15] Secondly, a saving call. And thirdly, a staggering promise. First of all, a surprising chance.

In the Old Testament narrative, in the book of Genesis, we are introduced to this one, Abraham, after the judgmental act of God.

And the national pact that is set before us in Genesis is one of spiritual darkness. You may remember the intention of man was the pride and the glory of man.

Come, let us build ourselves the might of reports for us in Genesis, let us build ourselves a city under towel with its top in the heavens.

Let us weigh and give for ourselves. And to remember how God interfered, how we upset the plans that were carefully laid by man.

[11 : 22] And by a divine act he forestalls and prevents human planning from being implemented. It's an act of divine judgment. Come, let us go down, says God.

In the Old Testament, the plural is used there to indicate the persons of the Trinity. Come, let us go down. And there confuse the language so that they may not understand one another.

Speak, so the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left of building the city. Now, it's not just against the backdrop of national, spiritual darkness that this man is called, but against the backdrop of a family who were in spiritual darkness.

The family to which he gave up. What I call it was worshipers. The book of Joshua tells us this. That says, the Lord, the God of Israel, long ago, your families lived beyond the Euphrates, Taylor the father of Abraham and Omecha, and they served other gods.

And so, where there is spiritual darkness nationally, out from a family who lived in spiritual darkness, the God of glory appears to this man.

[12 : 50] Surely, that says before us, the amazing, grace of God, the marvelous mercy of God, the loving kindness of the God of glory.

We have talked about other things, of the sovereignty of God, of the God of glory, in the effectual color of this man, out of an idolatrous family, from an idolatrous background.

And although this man was on to earn a blessing, like mystery of man, he becomes a great man. I think what is much more of this, what a great God.

Because what would Abraham be without God? He would have been made an idolatrous worshiper. He would have been made unknown without mention.

He would have been a stranger to grace of God. And in some ways, it seems to me with the call of Abraham, it's as if God is beginning again.

[13 : 57] And in the first moment, nor after the flood, despite his great reputation, had also failed. And now God calls this man.

And one of the one hand was so amazing, and on the other hand, so uncannily. God comes to Mesopotamia, to a place of spiritual doubtiness, nothing there to attract the goodness of divine grace, nothing in the life of this man, to draw the grace of God.

And so it is in the life of every person who is transformed by the power of divine grace. Yet it is this man that God chooses to be the father of nations.

This man, he chooses to be the leader through whom covenant blessings come to be enjoyed. And I think it's perhaps even more amazing when you remember there was a certain man, a duty, a lifespan of Abraham, a man by the name of Melchizedek.

And do you remember how the Bible speaks of him, the king of Salem, a priest of the most high God? You find that description in the letter to the Hebrews. And the writer there goes on to give us an analysis of this title.

[15 : 25] He is first by translation of his little king of righteousness. He is also king of Salem. That is king of peace. A man in the Old Testament who is portrayed as a type of Christ.

And he was a faithful servant of God, most high among who was a contentler of this man Abraham. Yet it was not that one.

All the high young, although faithful as he was, it was not that long that God called to be the father of the faithful. But a man who came from a doctrine of spiritual darkness who belonged to a family who was in spiritual darkness.

God states, this is the man I have chosen. This is the man I would use to fulfill my purpose. And we sung here today from the sound.

Blessing is the one you choose. Obviously, when God makes chiseled a person, there is nothing that creates as much happiness in the life of a man for a moment at a boy or a girl must be chosen by God.

[16 : 42] Well, does it surprise you? Because it seems to me that there only is a surprising choice. But that there is much to encourage us in this choice that is made.

Some of you may be here today, and you've enjoyed the privilege of being brought up in a Christian form of hearing the gospel from your childhood.

It's a privilege for a young man, and not a privilege that everyone who shares in it can always value it when you're unconverted.

And God was new to others who did not have these privileges. Where there was no prayer or script you set before them. Yet from such holes and found is there are those who are brought into the kingdom of Christ.

What might be conclude from that? What can we not know presently? That we can have the privileges of a Christian background.

[17 : 47] Our influence and our despise the privilege. And on the other hand, not have the privilege of experiencing the marvelous power of saving grace.

In the Old Testament, a very narrative from which Stephen takes his information was given here in Acts of Assumption. In addition, with regard to the surprising choice, he are told that Abraham was one of three brothers.

The other two being Nehvor and Herod. Herod died in the land of his kindred, another of the Chaldeans.

Chaldeans were taught. They were taught obviously from Herod, the Father. And it may account for Herod's willingness to lead the state of land and to strike down for her and along with Herod.

But there was something else I want to highlight there. And it's this. Abraham was mentioned as if he were the eldest son.

[18 : 58] When Therod had lived 70 years, he found that Abraham, Nehvor and Herod. And that gives the impression that Abraham was the eldest.

I'm so sure about that. You may be saying to me, but minister, it's not quite so simple.

You have to look at the detail in the Bible. If you do your sums, mental or earthly, I don't know if it's good or mental or earthly, you're wrong about it.

You can do something to pass your powers of mental or earthly. You will find that it does not appear to be so. But Abraham is the eldest.

After his father had died, he reached here in Acts. God removed him from there into this land in Pugetana. He lived in Sestimum to those of the Sancti. The book of Genesis, chapter 12 verse 4 tells us, Abraham was 75 years old when he departed from here.

[20 : 01] They're also told in the Genesis narrative, the days of Therod were 205 years and Therod died. Abraham's father, he died in Therod.

Now, let me explain why we should do the sums. When you subtract 75, the age, Abraham when he left, subtract 75 from 205.

The answer you get is 130. That then would be the age of Therod when Abraham was born.

But what we are told is this. When Therod had lived 70 years, he fathered Abraham, Neha and Therod.

And given what I have suggested, with regard to the new Psalms, if Therod lived 70 years when he fathered the first child, he was very likely that Abraham was the youngest son.

[21 : 06] But he is mentioned first as being the most important of the three. Why is he the most important? Because through him will come the seed of promise.

And if that is correct, then not only is this man from my doubt, spiritual background, a mygolic family, but he is the youngest son and not the oldest.

And in the eyes of man, he's the least significant member of the family. Yet this was God's choice.

That's why I say it is a surprising choice. Let me try and defend that from the Spiritus. Let me give you two examples.

When Rebecca, the wife of Isaac, had conceived children by one man, her forefather Isaac, though they were yet not yet born and had done nothing ever good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue.

[22 : 10] Not because of warps, but because of him who calls. She was told the older would serve the younger and the remanded, that we so sold this birth out and how he did indeed serve Jacob.

When Samuel was sent to choose on the mind another king in history, remember Samuel was kind of hesitant. He was uneasy.

He was a slave soul who would find out for part of his mission and he wanted to get the job over quickly. When the sons of Isaac, the sons of Jesse, and they looked at him, they thought, surely this is the Lord's anointing that's before him.

And the Lord said to Samuel, remember do not look on his uphears the height of his statue, because I have rejected him for the Lord sees and others the man sees. Man looks on the outward appears, but the Lord looks in the heart.

And they all passed before him or walked before his son. And none of them was God's choice. Just remind me of something.

[23 : 23] Way back in the earlier part of my ministry that was then in the sky. Just when you get older, you will only pay down the doors.

And I'm going to be bound. I can hope for a prayer in my wife's side that a certain minister no longer in this world had been fooled by the setup you're doing.

I've thought half of his communions are not wonderful, but all you better for it. I think he's urgent. I don't think so. But I did.

And this man will follow me. And I will not. The congregation of God was sub-ment until God was that choice. And they wanted me to consider it.

Well, after a full day of week, I was reading through the Scriptures.

[24 : 23] And neither was the Lord chosen this one. Shana, the third son of Jesse. And I was so convicted that I wasn't going to buy this.

And I phoned him to the motherly affection. And they told me, I am not your nun. I'm not only that, but you've got another five to go before the following day.

Well, he wasn't best pleased. He wasn't the kind of encouragement he was looking for. When he went into the motherly affection, you'll appreciate that's not what you're looking for. When you're looking after the congregation.

Well, they did. They had to go to the fifth person after God. And he came almost ready to become the minister of God. So I was just wondering.

Well, there was Shana. Looking at these men, none of them were God's choice. It's almost as if you can see, Shana, you're scratching his head and saying to Jesse, I'll argue with Shana to you.

[25 : 26] Jesse says, it's almost as if it's kind of discouraging. He didn't get any care to speak like that about the front. There remains the young girls, but please just keep the machine.

You know, I never thought of bringing them here. So he said, when the commander's here, arise a reminder for this is he.

See, good God knows. So transpire, I say, a promise of surprising choice. Out of a land of darkness, out of our family and spiritual darkness, the third son, and that which you might have said, far more suitable, humanly speaking, but not in the eyes of God.

And it may be you are here today, and you too, have God's surprising choice. But please, do the second thing, I'll say in car.

Remember, there was no Bible. He was in a spiritually doubt place, and Stephen, in the sad breasted, the God of glory appeared to her father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia before he lived in here.

[26 : 40] God revealed himself to this formerly idolatrous person before he left Mesopotamia, brother of the Caledians. Now, if you ask me, how did God reveal himself?

Was it a vision, or a dream? Did Abraham hear a disembodied voice, or was it some kind of a symphony? Did he appear, in other words, in the far-off environment?

I cannot tell you. For the very simple reason, I cannot find anything in the Bible. Apart from this information that is given by Stephen, the Old Testament simply tells that the Lord spoke to Abraham.

However the God of glory appeared, I think we can safely assume, that there was an authority to the Lord in the instruction given to move out from the place where he decided.

The authority, divine authority, commands, demands a response. But the strange thing is that he only heard part of the way.

[27 : 57] It's not what he was asked to do. But I think this could be used as an example of the effect of the gospel in the lives of some who hear it.

On the part of some, there is, as it were, the Jews. Here in the symphony, he's no longer a tombem, Mesopotamia, but he failed to travel to Kedah to where he was instructed to go.

That's what God commanded. But that could be applied in this way. When the word of God has begun in the life of a man or a woman, or a boy or a girl, and maybe you like it, that's not what it was.

You've made partial reformation, and you no longer a tombem in the company of those who are unconverted. But neither do you feel a tombem in the company of the converted.

Boy, yes, you would love to be a tombem in the fellowship, but you're afraid of being rejected. And you're not in a position of solitude.

[29 : 09] You decide to be in the fellowship of the believers, but for some reason you feel shut out. Well, let me put it to you. Given that you are uncomfortable in the company of the unconverted, it's not always all.

Has it occurred to you that the reason is justice, that God is calling you tomb? Why don't you put it to the test? Why don't you think that you will be rejected by those who are unbelievers?

Why do you hear, though, how stark and hearer? This man remember the atlas that was in the hotel, the place of his birth, the place for his well-wished wife, the place for his brother had been built, a place to which he had a strong, emotional, family time.

He had left our rich, fair, dilated. He had been given a command, go out from this land. Set your face in the direction of the wilderness before the lightning in the land promised to be.

I'm a kindred, I'm going to the land of the diamond shore. It's not easy to leave behind everything that we buy. I'm going in a very, very different direction of a different perhaps, comfortable living.

[30 : 32] It's not easy to leave the place where you feel secure among the people, who are you? Who are you to linger with people totally under onto and unwavering would be a stranger.

But the unrelenting command, the shun with divine authority, was this go out from your land when your children were found by your shore. He had to separate from friends or perhaps some family members.

And if you read the Old Testament narrative, the impression created is that God spoke to him in Kreda. The Lord said to him, what is when he was in Kreda?

But I think not to be careful. Many commentators would agree, it can be translated, no, the Lord had said to him, said to him when he was in Mesopotamia, not necessarily when he was in Kreda.

But from the removal of any doubt, as to when he was addressed by the Lord, Stephen makes it very clear in his address here, the God of glory appeared to him in front of him, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Kreda, and I said to him, go out from your land and from your children, go into the land, I will show you.

[31 : 48] And when you read the Old Testament, you get the impression that Abraham left immediately, but that he stopped in Kreda. Why did he not continue on his journey? We know that his heart had cleared up a company, whether because of the bitter memory of having buried one of the sons of Mesopotamia, or the change that occurred in the son, Abraham, made such an impression that the Father wanted to follow the son of the Bible, doesn't say so.

But what we have told in the Old Testament is that Abraham was 75 years old when he departed from Kreda, and he took Sarah's wife and lot his brothers son, and this I think is significant.

All the possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Kreda, and they set out to go to the land of Kreda.

All the possessions that they had gathered, the people that they had acquired in Kreda, and that the writer seems to suggest an element of worldliness, I hope I'm not reading over much into it, creating an obstacle to obedience in the life of this man.

Of course, that would be the influence of his Adam and the Holy Father. And you know, these two things I believe can create huge tensions and be great hurdles to overcome.

[33 : 26] The influence of someone close to you in life, and all the riches of this world, which can also be a slave.

And for a period it appears that they receive more attention, more diligence from the unaliening Word of God.

Half way of obedience is never enough for God. Partial reformation is not enough. And God says to you, unto me, give me your heart, give me your all, and go out in faith.

To err beyond the insistent vice will go out from your land, and go into the land that I'm sure. I want to ask you, is there something like that in your life, keeping you from stepping out in faith, in fellowship with the Lord Jesus?

Is there someone close to you who exerts a huge influence on the way you think and the way that you conduct yourself, that is preventing you from taking on step?

[34 : 51] Or are worldly matters so huge in your estimation that they know the way it was losing all the marvelous benefits that have to be found in the war with Christ?

There can be a huge detail. You think to follow Christ publicly might be a step, but a step too far.

Can I remind you of a business woman in New Testament? Her name, by the way, at least, she was known in Philippi as Lydia, not to totally permiss us a proper name.

But that's how she was known in Philippi. Did she let worldly matters come between her and obey the Lord? Did it occur to her that to step out in obedience and to profess the Lord might affect her business interests?

It was a business woman, probably certain, but it would affect her business.

[36 : 14] But no matter this woman profess Christ. And if these issues might prevent you from submitting to the car, remember what the Bible teaches, what will it probably matter if it gives the whole world on profits a soul or what will it want to do in return for a soul?

God says to everyone, as he says to you, God, Father, have you ever thought of going out from your mouth and go into the last car?

In other words, he says to you, go to Christ and you're not saved until you trust in Jesus alone. I take you to the final point, because at times swiftly passing are surprising chances.

Saving car, scattering promise. God promises to take you as a possession of you as offspring after loathing at no child.

There's a kind of note of irony in this promise. Why do I say that? Because in Genesis he read that you find a snippet of information.

[37 : 32] The name of Abraham's wife was Sarah. Now, Sarah was black, she had no child. Of course, if she's black, she had no child.

But the devil emphasis there is infantic and significant. And yet God has said, despite of all these obstacles, you shall have offspring, you say to Abraham, how utterly unlikely that that should happen.

Given that you have no fun. How can I believe this Abraham could ask? How can it be? Remember the discussion he had with God?

Abraham said, oh Lord God, how can you give me for I continue childless on the earth of my house as a result of the mask? And Abraham said, behold, you are given no offspring.

And a member of my household will be my ear before the word of the Lord came to me. This man shall not be the way, your very own son shall be the way.

[38 : 37] And do you remember the incarceration that was given to Abraham? And the day, God the Lord said, look for us ahead, and I'm not sure this is part of the vision.

Or do you think that Abraham is kind of difficult to be sure about? I'm kind of thinking that it actually happened, but it wasn't part of the vision. Look toward the heavens, look to the door of the dead, look toward the heavens, number of the stars, your little gem number.

Then I said, so should the rocks. I don't know, it was good time to know that the stars, all the advances in technology, still have a manage to number all the stars.

Still just got to be a son. And this is significant. He believed the Lord. And God counted it to him as righteousness.

He believed the Lord. Michael doesn't say he believed and did something. But simply Abraham believed the Lord.

[39 : 53] He trusted in the promise of God through faith. He's brought it to our right to relationship with God. And someone who has faith faces the facts.

But it also faces the fact of God. Now this was the same Abraham who had sinned. The same Abraham who had faith. The same Abraham who had stung us.

He believed God and God counted to him as righteousness. And found that all Testament Genesis passage Paul was on to prove.

The doctrine of justly cherished by faith alone and Christ alone, by grace alone. How could sin for Abraham be accepted and justified by our holy God?

And the question is answered and Paul's led into the Galatians. Now the promise was made to Abraham through his offspring. It does not say on the offspring, we fell into men, but we fell into one.

[40 : 58] And two of you lost men who raised Christ. Two of your offspring who raised Christ, Christ, all the sins of men, sealed on the curse of the cross as he buries the weight of the sins of all who believe in him.

Under reason given by Paul is this so that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to the dead face. And to be thanked if you are trusted in the Christ of the cross.

You are invited to share it. Look at the blessing of Abraham. Yes, he might be a surprising chance to be not mistaken.

You know when my daughter was hungry, what was really really dark was also what we really expected of men, but of the thought. A saving call and out to get in the tree.

A stubborn promise, God promised the promise of Abraham to his offspring. Everything seemed high and lightly. All of that are you prepared to trust in the God who fulfills his promise.

[42 : 20] And he fulfills that above all he longs for the greatest expectation. Let us pray.

All in turn, the marvelous God wishes to each one of us today. Help us to profit from thy trust.

Not just the grace to trust, but the Christ of the cross, that we too might know where it means to be chosen by thee.

Experience the blessings associated with our trust. The glory shall be done, and Jesus will be asked.