

20221113 – THE DECLARATION OF THE DEACON

Sunday AM – Acts 7:1-53

I. THE QUESTION OF THE COUNCIL

- A. Remember – the church at Jerusalem chooses for itself deacons
 - 1. They were told to look out for themselves men of faith
 - a. Men who were members of that church
 - b. Men of honest report, of sterling character
 - c. Men who were full of the Holy Ghost
 - 2. And Stephen was chosen ACTS 6:5
 - a. Only two were described – one to say where he was from
 - b. The only other Stephen – a man FULL of faith and the Holy Ghost
 - c. The titles God gives some people
 - i. A man after God’s own heart – David
 - ii. The friend of God – Abraham
 - 3. And there were results from choosing these deacons
 - a. The Word of God increased! ACTS 6:7
 - b. Many were saved and added to the church
 - c. Even some of the Priests became believers (that’s important!)
- B. Now Stephen is arrested and brought before the Council ACTS 6:9
 - 1. These were the Libertines, Alexandrians, the liberal religious crowd
 - a. By the way, the Alexandrians have always been against God
 - b. That’s why you cannot trust a modern English Bible translation
 - c. They (mostly if not all) come from the Alexandrian text stream!
 - 2. He is charged with blasphemy – even though they don’t believe God
 - a. Sounds like politicians today – it’s only bad if the other side does it
 - b. The motto of the professional politician: Do as I say not as I do
 - c. These types have been around for a long time
 - d. Babylon Bee – After election loss, Christian man briefly considers placing his trust in God
 - 3. They disputed with Stephen and were not able to RESIST him ACTS 6:10
 - 4. They lied about him, planted false witnesses against him, bullied him
 - 5. But Stephen’s face shone like the face of an angel (he was a messenger)
- C. And then the Chief Priest asked a question ACTS 7:1
 - 1. “Will you recant?” “Will you deny?” “Will you go along to get along?”
 - 2. Stephen answers by exalting the God of Glory (vs. 2)
 - 3. Stephen begins an expository message through the scriptures
 - 4. He starts in Genesis with Abraham and preaches through the OT
 - a. We see this morning the Question of the Council
 - b. And the Declaration of the Deacon
 - c. First, let’s hear the Answer of Abraham

II. THE ANSWER OF ABRAHAM

- A. Abraham was obedient to the Divine call from God
 - 1. He went wherever God sent him
 - 2. HEB. 11:10 – “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”
 - a. God told him to leave his father’s house and travel
 - b. And God would tell him when to stop!
 - c. ROM. 4:3 – “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”
 - 3. Abraham made mistakes but obeyed and God blessed him
- B. And God made a covenant with Abraham
 - 1. The covenant carried on to Abraham’s seed
 - 2. So, we see God working in the life of a man, but also a great NATION
- C. But there were also ADVERSARIES that fought against God ACTS 7:6
 - 1. They would place the children of Abraham into bondage and afflict them
 - 2. This, of course, refers to the Egyptian bondage
 - 3. In the Answer of Abraham, we see two sides:
 - a. God working in the lives of His people
 - b. And His adversaries working against Him

III. THE JOURNEY OF JOSEPH

- A. Stephen moves on to another story of the Egyptian bondage, in the life of Joseph
 - 1. He reminds the council of the history ACTS 7:9
 - a. Joseph was a great man of God, a picture of Jesus Christ
 - b. He was used of God to suffer affliction
 - c. He was wrongly and unjustly accused
 - d. But he saved his people from death
 - 2. Joseph was sold into bondage by his own brothers for jealousy
 - 3. He was made governor over the whole land of Egypt
- B. God used Joseph in a mighty way to save the children of Israel in a great famine
 - 1. Until there arose a Pharaoh which “knew not Joseph”
 - 2. We see again, God working in the lives of His people
- C. But there were many ADVERSARIES working in opposition to God!
 - 1. His own brothers, the patriarchs of the tribes of Israel hated Joseph
 - 2. The world itself, the Pharaoh who didn’t know Joseph hated God’s people
 - 3. In the Journey of Joseph, we see two sides.
 - a. God working in the lives of His people
 - b. And His adversaries working against Him
 - c. This is what the Deacon declared:
 - d. The answer of Abraham and the Journey of Joseph

IV. THE MISSION OF MOSES

- A. Again, in the tale of Israel and Egypt, God's people, and the world
 - 1. The way God used Moses
 - a. Moses spent 40 years in Egypt, learning to be "somebody"
 - b. Moses spent 40 years in the desert, learning to be "nobody"
 - c. Moses spent 40 years leading Israel, learning to serve EVERYBODY
 - 2. Moses was hated by his own people, and ran away to the desert
 - 3. God spoke to him in the burning bush and sent him back to Egypt
- B. God used Moses in a mighty way to lead the Hebrew children to freedom
 - 1. Through the great plagues against Egypt, the blood, the frogs, the flies
 - 2. Until finally, the night when God said He would pass through Egypt
 - 3. And every first born of man and beast would die – EXCEPT!
 - a. Except those under the blood of the lambs
 - b. The blood placed upon the doorposts and the lintels
 - c. Only those under the blood would escape death!
 - 4. And then God used Moses to lead them through the Red Sea
 - a. Where the waters parted and were held back like a wall
 - b. And the Children of Israel walked through dry shod!
- C. But there were many Adversaries working in opposition to God
 - 1. Heretics and unbelievers! No, not Egypt – but among the Hebrews
 - 2. They would not obey – ACTS 7:39-41 – They made a golden calf
 - 3. Even throughout the Mission of Moses, we see two sides:
 - a. God working in the lives of His people, SAVING His people
 - b. And the adversaries of God working against Him
 - c. Adversaries among those who should have been His own!

V. THE DESIRE OF DAVID

- A. David was called the "man after God's own heart"
 - 1. The "sweet psalmist of Israel"
 - a. A man who trusted God, who took him from the sheep cote
 - b. To be King over God's people
 - c. A man that wasn't perfect, in fact he was a great sinner
 - d. But he was also a GREAT repentor
 - 2. A man who cried out to restore unto him the JOY of God's Salvation
 - 3. The Bible says that David (in vs. 46a) found favor with God
- B. God used David to drive out the enemies of God
 - 1. And David had an earnest desire – to build a temple for God
 - 2. He collected all the raw materials, he stockpiled the gold and silver
 - 3. But there was war all of his days
- C. And there were many adversaries working in opposition to God
 - 1. David wanted to build a temple, but he was a bloody man, a warrior
 - 2. He had to fight the enemies of God's people on the battlefield

- a. It wasn't until Solomon's reign that the Temple could be built
- b. David stockpiled the raw materials (like John the Baptist)
- 3. Even in the Desire of David, we see two sides:
 - a. God working in the lives of His people, protecting David at war
 - b. But the adversaries of God working against Him
 - c. The Philistines all around them, working to overthrow God's rule

VI. THE SENTENCE OF STEPHEN

- A. Finally, let's here the Sentence of Stephen
 - 1. He preached a great message from the Old Testament
 - a. All history that the council would know and identify with
 - b. Stephen detailed that whenever God worked
 - c. Adversaries worked against him
 - 2. In the stories of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and David
 - a. The enemies of God fought Him
 - b. And each one lost and was judged of God
 - c. And the council seemed to be agreeing with Stephen
 - i. They were listening attentively – they LIKED this message
 - ii. Amen! Boy, the enemies of God treated our people badly!
 - iii. They might have been nodding their heads
 - iv. They might have been smiling with national pride
 - d. Then suddenly the temperature of the room changed ACTS 7:54
 - 3. What was it? ACTS 7:51
 - a. That's when Stephen rebuked them! Corrected their thinking!
 - b. You religious people think you're like Abraham, Joseph, Moses and David but you're NOT!
 - c. You're the ones that fought against them!
 - d. Which of the prophets have you not persecuted? And slain?
 - e. You are on the wrong side! You have NOT kept the Law
- B. People today fall into the same trap
 - 1. They think: I'm a good person. I go to church. I have never murdered.
 - 2. But the Bible says, there is NONE righteous, no, not one
 - a. We are all sinners in need of a Savior
 - b. This council learned that from Stephen, and they choose to stop their ears and stone him.
 - c. They could kill the messenger, but they couldn't change the Truth!
 - 3. That is Jesus Christ, HE is the Way, the Truth, and the Life
- C. What about you?
 - 1. Have you been lulled into complacency thinking "I'm okay"
 - 2. If you don't know Jesus and free pardon of your sin, you are NOT okay
 - 3. Be Saved today!