

# The God of Glory

Acts 7:1-8

## Introduction

What kind of sermon gets you killed?

We've seen the violence toward the early church escalating. Here at the end of this sermon we will see the first martyr for the gospel.

Importance – longest message in Acts/confusing

Charges against Stephen

Speaking blasphemous words against Moses, against the law of Moses and the Temple

What we're going to see over the next few weeks is that Stephen is going to prove from the Jews own history, that the very things they had made idols of – the land, the law, the temple, and their heroes all point to Jesus and prove that the gospel is true.

Today we're going to be looking at the journey of Abraham and how Abraham's life points us to Christ, and I think what we're going to see is that there are a lot of similarities between Abraham's story and our story.

## Abraham's Call

"The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham

Joshua 24:2 "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods.

False gods – why would anyone ever choose to worship a false god? The reason is for the benefits they think they'll get from their false god. Which is exactly the same reason some people falsely worship the true God. Do you realize how common it is for people to use Christianity as a means to get all the things they truly want.

The truth is, no one seeks after God

Psalms 14:2-3 The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. 3 They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

God comes to Abraham in such a compelling way...

Promises

- That God would lead him to a land that he would receive from God as an inheritance
- That God would give him a son and make him a father of many nations
- That God would bless all the families of the earth through Abraham's offspring

## **Abraham's Journey**

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Wanders out to live as a Nomad

Out of comfort, familiarity, security

Why would God call us out like this?

**\* Lead us into deeper trust**

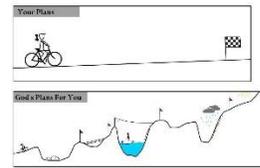
First thing Abraham does is builds altars... In his journey, worship will be a primary mark

Journey – dangers, set backs, famine, family conflict, armed conflict with other kings, strife within the land

He makes some horrible decisions (twice he pawned Sarah off)

If Jesus is a good shepherd why would he lead us through dark and difficult paths?

Only because he knows what's on the other side will make it worth it.



Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come. Tis grace has brought me safe this far and grace will lead me home.

## **Abraham's Son**

God promises Abraham and Sarah a son

The reason that's so crazy, right up front in the story of Abraham we learn that Sarah was barren and was unable to conceive a child.

Different culture – in our culture children are often seen as a burden. Many people choose not to have children (since 1973 over 58 million babies have been aborted)

And we live in a society that is able to tolerate it

Pain of not being able to have children (or if you've ever had the pain of wanting children but having miscarriages)

In Abraham and Sarah's culture not being able to have children was seen as being cursed by God.

So you would have all the internal trauma of not being able to fulfill your God-given maternal instinct and the external trauma of your family and the community around you viewing you as being cursed by God.

Why?

When it seemed like God was taking too long to fulfill his promise, Abraham and Sarah took matters into their own hands. Sarah gave her servant Hagar to Abraham, together Abraham and Hagar conceive a son, Ishmael, but this is not God's chosen son through which he plans to bless the world.

Genesis 18:9-14 They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." 10 The LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years.

*The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah.* 12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" 13 The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?'" 14 ***Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.***

### ***God appears to be leading us in the opposite direction of his promises***

Now that God has fulfilled his word to Abraham, God is going to put him to the test. Is it the promises of God that Abraham loves most, or is it God himself?

In Gen. 22 the God of glory appears to Abraham again

Genesis 22:1-3 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

Look at this father and son going out and going up into the mountain...

### **Conclusion**

A little over 2,000 years later, somewhere near where Abraham offered up Isaac, another father led his son up a mountain...

God the Father led his son, Jesus, carrying wood for an altar (the cross). And when they reached the top, Jesus didn't ask where was the sacrifice. He knew that he was the sacrifice. And so he was nailed to the cross, and unlike Isaac, there was no voice from Heaven to stop the violence. The sword of God's justice came down in full force on Christ's head, as he was suffering in the place where his people deserved to be.

What could make Jesus do this? He had seen the glory of God, he was the glory of God and he knew where the promises of God would lead.

Friends, this journey begins for each of us when the God of glory appears to us and calls us out of our sin and self worship. And when our journey comes to an end, like Stephen, the heavens will open and we will see the glory of God, and Jesus standing there at the right hand of God, ready to receive us home.

*Acts 7:55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.*