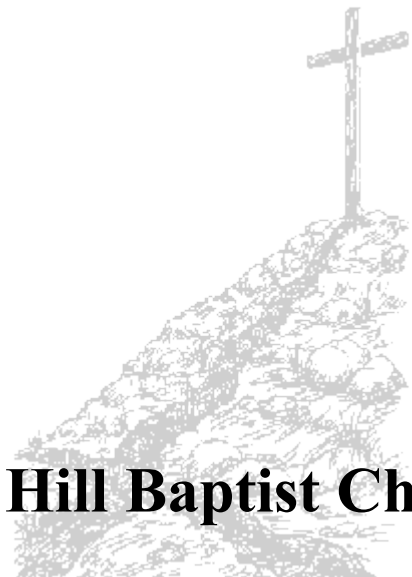


The God of Glory

Acts 7:2



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(Acts 7:2 KJV) And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory¹ appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran²

1. You Are Supposed To Be Following The God of Glory and Not The Glory of Man

Look at our text.

(Acts 7:2 KJV) ... Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory³ appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran⁴,

You have to image this. Stephen stood before the High Priest of Israel. Never was there a more *impressive figure of a person* than the High Priest of Israel. His robes were of the finest cloth, tightly woven. He had tassels and braids of gold on his clothing. A breastplate of beauty, he was adorned as a king would be adorned. An impressive figure - but may I share this with you?

The God of Glory is never impressed with what impresses us. We will not get to Heaven - *if* you have accepted Christ as Savior, you'll get to Heaven - but

1 doxa {pronounced dox'-ah}, majesty

2 Charrhan {pronounced khar-hran'},

3 doxa {pronounced dox'-ah}, majesty

4 Charrhan {pronounced khar-hran'},

When you get to Heaven it will be *not* be because God was impressed with you. No my friend, you *never* impress God - at least, not in a positive way. Your sin nature and flaws impressed God so much He knew He could *never allow you into Heaven unless He intervened* - but your efforts for God or goodness are not nor will ever be enough to impress the **God of Glory**.

God is called the **God of Glory** because He is perfect, pure, holy, without sin. How can you or I hope to impress God? We cannot! **If we want to get to Heaven, we need to stop trying to impress the *Unimpressible God* and instead seek to be *impressed by God*.**

1. If we want to get to Heaven, we need to stop trying to impress the _____ *God* and instead seek to be _____ *by God*. (Acts 7:2)

Stephen stood before this impressive, High Priestly figure knowing that this man was blinded to the True Glory of God by his own glory. But praise God - the God of Glory is in the eye opening business! Stephen stood before this impressive figure who was certain that God was impressed with him (and God wasn't), and as Stephen spoke he knew that the outcome of this day would be totally under God's control. Praise God that He is in control!

So many times we have picked up magazines and have seen highlighted, blazing across the front cover of that magazine how some actor in Hollywood is *doing such good things*. The world is impressed by the star who adopted some poor little Hispanic or Oriental child, and how this person is *such a good person* to do this. You

can read of someone or hear them loudly proclaim on the television or in the newspapers how they have done a *good deed*. Look at that talk show host who gives millions to charity - isn't that such a wonderful thing? In reality, the person who does such a thing in no way impresses the **God of Glory** - for any work, any glory done apart from the *Source of Glory* cannot impress the God of Glory.

Look at the irony of our text. Stephen stood before a man dressed in beautiful, glorious robes - but this man just as well had been naked for all that this glory was worth. **Glory apart from the *God of Glory* is useless, tasteless, and ultimately lifeless. Glory apart from that which has been bestowed through the *God of Glory* is no better than love apart from the *God of Love* (1 John 4:8; 4:16).** The *glory of the world* is the same type of thing that Satan offered Jesus when he tempted our Lord in the wilderness:

2. Glory apart from the **God of Glory** is _____, _____, and ultimately lifeless. Glory apart from that which has been bestowed through the **God of Glory** is no better than _____ apart from the **God of Love** (1 John 4:8; 4:16; Matthew 4:8-9).

Matthew 4:8-9 (KJV) "... the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; {9} And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

Jesus refused the empty glory that Satan offered, knowing that Glory apart from the **God of Glory** will ultimately lead to death and destruction. The High Priest, dressed in all his glory, will, in just a few moments, do the same thing that the glory of this world always does. It will pick up stones and stone him with stones until he is dead. The glory of this world, the High Priest, will demand that Stephen answer charges of blasphemy:

(Acts 7:1 KJV) "... Are these things so? .."

Because Stephen preached that salvation was not through the Law, nor through the glory of the High Priest. Stephen preached that salvation could only come to a person who had turned away from his own glory, who was willing to accept what Jesus Christ did for him on the Cross.

Preachers pray and preach, following the same course that Stephen followed. We preach about and pray to the God of Glory because we are confident of two things. We are confident that the unsaved are blinded to all but that glory of this world, but we are also confident that the **God of Glory** is in the eye opening business.

2 Corinthians 4:3-6 (KJV) "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: {4} In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of

Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. {5} For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. {6} For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Listen dear friends: if you continue to chase after the glory of this world, you will become just like that High Priest was. You will be blinded to the true path of God, for you cannot see the God of Glory nor understand His ways until you surrender to Him. The Bible says:

2 Corinthians 4:6 (KJV) "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

There is no glory apart from a surrendered life to the Lord Jesus Christ. You will not be, nor can ever be in tune with the God of Glory while you chase after the robes of the High Priest.

3. There is no glory apart from a surrendered life to the Lord Jesus Christ. You will not be, nor can ever be in tune with the God _____ while you chase after the robes of the _____.

Here's a secret that Stephen shares with you all this holiday season. Because Stephen has given his life to the

God of Glory by accepting Christ as his Savior - even though he stands at death's door he's never been more alive. When you give yourself wholly and devotedly to Christ, when you commit your way to Him, then you can say with the Psalmist:

Psalms 37:5-7 (KJV) "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. {6} And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. {7} Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."

2. You Should Be Faithful To The God of Glory, For He Is Faithful To You

(Acts 7:2 KJV) ... Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory⁵ appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran⁶,

If you read the entire narrative of Acts 7, and read all the words that Stephen says, you could sum it all up in these words.

**Our God is glorious.
Our God is eternal.**

5 doxa {pronounced dox'-ah}, majesty

6 Charrhan {pronounced khar-hran'},

Our God is faithful.

Or as the old song states:

**Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!⁷**

Think about the great faithfulness of the **God of Glory**. God started the nation Israel through one man named **Abraham**. God promised Abraham that he would be his constant Companion and Guide - that He would build a relationship with that man that would never end. Our God is like that. When you look at the life of Abraham you see a man who often made mistakes. Twice he hid behind his wife Sarah when his life was threatened - a cowardly thing to do. And yet, even though he neither earned nor deserved it, God made a covenant or a promise to Abraham that led to the creation of the nation Israel.

God wants you to know this. Greatness in this life is not achieved by bowing down to the god of this world, Satan, nor by subjecting yourself to the glories of this

7 Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923. According to Chisholm, there were no special circumstances which caused its writing—just his experience and Bible truth. The hymn first appeared in Songs of Salvation and Service, 1923, compiled by William M. Runyan. It is the unofficial “school hymn” of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, with which Runyan was associated for a number of years.

world. These things are oh so fleeting! The Bible says:

1 Peter 1:24-25 (KJV) "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: {25} But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

Abraham found out the same thing that we all find out: in time, beauty ceases. But the God of Glory's Word, the promises He has made, they are as eternal as He is.

Oh my Beloved, you need to put all your hopes and dreams in trusting the Word of God! He promised Abraham that a mighty nation would come from his seed, and in time God brought forth Israel as His chosen nation out of that seed. **God promised Abraham that his name would be remembered, and that all the nations of the world would be blessed through him. God fulfilled this promise when He sent His only Son to earth, born of the Virgin Mary, to suffer and die for our sins.**

Romans 3:23 (KJV) "... all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God... "

Jesus is the Great YES of God:

2 Corinthians 1:19-20 (KJV) "For the Son of God,

Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. {20} For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."

4. God promised _____ that his name would be remembered, and that all the nations of the world would be blessed through him. God fulfilled this promise when He sent _____ to earth, born of the Virgin Mary, to suffer and die for our sins.

Stephen stands before a counsel of self-righteous *but lost and confused* men who represent Israel. Stephen knows that he is in a bad spot, and knows that he has no hope - on his own - of opening their eyes. The glory of this world has blinded them. But he also knows this. The **God of Glory** stands with him, and the God of Glory will do a great work this day. Stephen doesn't compromise, nor does he consider his own life - but he tells these men about the **God of Glory**.

Man may be faithless, but God is faithful. Whatever the outcome, if you rely on the God of Glory you will find Him to be faithful to you.

1 Corinthians 1:9 (KJV) "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

2 Thessalonians 3:3 (KJV) "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil."

Hebrews 10:23 (KJV) "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)"

5. Man may be faithless, but God is _____.
Whatever the outcome, if you rely on the **God of Glory** you will find Him to be _____ to you. (1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; Hebrews 10:23)

The faithfulness of God will not save Stephen's life this day. In just a few moments these men, every one of them deluded by the false glory of this world, will jump on Stephen, bite on Stephen with their teeth, then throw him to the ground and beat him to death with stones. But the **God of Glory** is going to cause something good to come out of this brutal death. As Stephen looks heavenward for guidance, and these deluded men look hellward for sustenance, one man would be impressed by what went on that day. The Bible tells us:

Acts 7:58 (KJV) "And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul."

This man Saul is mentioned almost as an afterthought of Scripture - but his participation in Stephen's murder is critical to the growth of the early Church. The seed of

Saul's salvation would be planted this day, and because Stephen was obedient to the God of Glory Saul would come to accept Jesus Christ as Savior in just a few days. Why is this important?

If it were not for Saul, neither you nor I would know of the love of God in Christ Jesus. Saul, later called Paul the Apostle, would bring the message of the Gospel of salvation to we who are Gentiles⁸. I do not believe that Stephen knew his obedience to the **God of Glory** would become something that would lead Saul to salvation. Stephen had his eyes on Jesus that day and was obedient. Because of this the **faithful God of Glory** used his death to bring many sons to salvation.

Every week an invitation is given, an altar call to surrender to Christ, and you may sit there and do nothing. Every week you may be at your workplace and a co-worker may share with you a need or a point of suffering in their lives, opening a door where you can witness the power of the **God of Glory**. Every day you come in contact with people who see how you live, either for the glory of this world, or for the **God of Glory**. You do not know what effect your actions may have on others, but you do know this.

If you are obedient to Him, if you surrender to Christ, if you step forward by faith and do that which He has called you to do, if you diligently attend to and serve in this Body of Christ as you are so called to do, then the

⁸ non-Jewish peoples

faithful God of Glory will take your act of faith and elevate it to eternal greatness.

The God of Glory is always faithful - even as we stand at death's door. As Stephen was stoned to death he looked up to Heaven and saw:

Acts 7:55-56 (KJV) "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, {56} And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

When you come to the end of life's highway, will you look up into Heaven and see Jesus Christ standing there, waiting for you? Will you see the glory of God because you have trusted your life to the **God of Glory**? Will you see the heavens opened for you? Will you, looking back over your life, see a long line of things you *wished you'd done* and *hoped you'd achieved*, or will you be able to look back and see where your obedience brought another Saul to Damascus Road?

6. When you come to the end of life's highway, will you look up into Heaven and see _____ standing there, waiting for you? Will you see the glory of God because you have trusted your life to _____? Will you see the heavens opened for you?

The reason there's so little shouting and praising God in our Church today is because so few people realize how far short they fall from the glory of God. Few people realize how much they deserve eternal damnation. Are you working inside of this *organism* called the *Body of Christ, the Church of the Living God* to help open the eyes of the blind?

The glory of this world kills, but service to the **God of Glory** - to Christ our Savior - that lasts forever.

The following is an edited excerpt from Steve Farrar's book *Finishing Strong*:

"You've heard of Billy Graham. But what about Chuck Templeton or Bron Clifford? Have you ever heard of them?"

Billy Graham wasn't the only young preacher packing auditoriums in 1945. Chuck Templeton and Bron Clifford were accomplishing the same thing – and more. All three young men were in their mid-twenties. One seminary president after hearing Chuck Templeton preach on evening to an audience of thousands, called him "the most gifted and talented young man in America today for preaching."

Templeton and Graham were friends. Both ministered for Youth for Christ. Both were extraordinary preachers. Yet in those early years,

most observers would probably have put their money on Templeton. As a matter of fact, in 1946, the National Association of Evangelicals published an article on men who were "best used of God" in that organization's five-year existence. The article highlighted the ministry of Chuck Templeton. Billy Graham was never mentioned. Templeton, many felt, would be the next Babe Ruth of evangelism.

Bron Clifford was yet another gifted, twenty five year old fireball. In 1945, many believed Clifford the most gifted and powerful preacher the church had seen in centuries. In that same year, Clifford preached to an auditorium of thousands in Miami, Florida. People lined up ten and twelve deep outside the auditorium trying to get in . . .

Graham, Templeton, and Clifford.

In 1945, all three came shooting out of the starting blocks like rockets. You've heard of Billy Graham. So how come you've never heard of Chuck Templeton or Bron Clifford? Especially when they came out of the chutes so strong in '45.

Just five years later, Templeton left the ministry to pursue a career as a radio and television commentator and newspaper columnist. Templeton had decided he was no longer a believer in Christ in the orthodox sense of the term. By 1950, this future Babe Ruth

wasn't even in the game and no longer believed in the validity of the claims of Jesus Christ.

What about Clifford? By 1954, Clifford had lost his family, his ministry, his health, and then . . . his life. Alcohol and financial irresponsibility had done him in. He wound up leaving his wife and their two Down's syndrome children. At just thirty five years of age, this once great preacher died from cirrhosis of the liver in a run-down motel on the edge of Amarillo. His last job was selling used cars in the panhandle of Texas. He died, as John Haggai put it, "unwept, unhonored, and unsung." Some pastors in Amarillo took up a collection among themselves in order to purchase a casket so that his body could be shipped back East for decent burial in a cemetery for the poor.

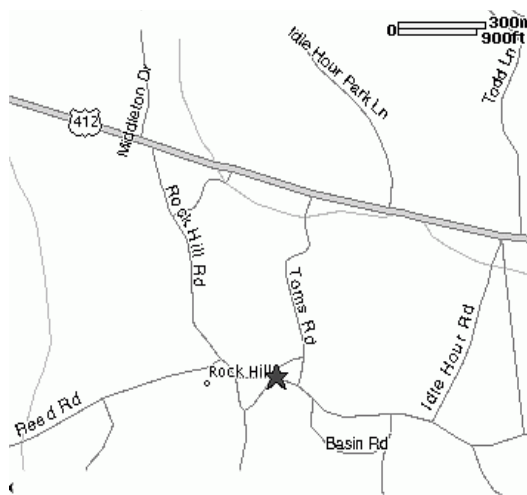
In 1945, three men with extraordinary gifts were preaching the gospel to multiplied thousands across this nation. Within ten years, only one of them was still on track for Christ.

In the Christian life, it's not how you start that matters. It's how you finish. "

The High Priest's name isn't even mentioned in our Acts passage. Stephen's name is not only mentioned, but the fact that the **God of Glory** stood up to receive him into Heaven is mentioned.

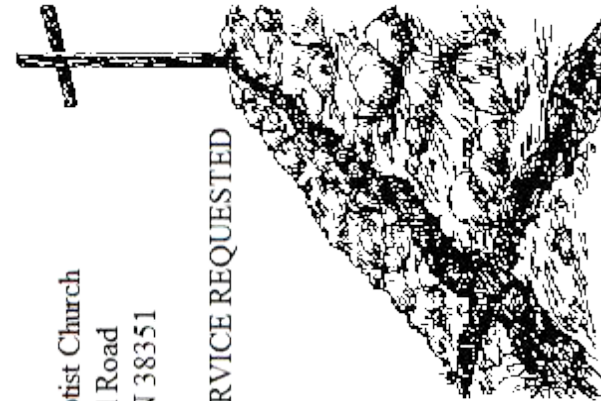
Stephen finished well.

What about you?



Rock Hill Baptist Church is located between Parsons and Lexington, Tennessee, on Highway 412. Look for our sign! We have services on Wednesdays (Adult, Youth, and children's Bible studies) at 7:00 PM, Sundays at 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Rock Hill is a family oriented Bible believing Church - Jesus Christ is

the same yesterday, today, and forever! Our Pastor, Brother David Buffaloe, will answer any questions you have about our Church if you contact him at 731-845-6104, or through his website at bibleteacher.org; or e-mail him by writing webmaster@bibleteacher.org. Rock Hill is an independent Church affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, and is a regular contributor to missions through the Cooperative Program.



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