

Removing the Veil

1. Last week...I took some time...to reveal some of the strategies of the lying spirit...through strong holds...
 - a. My hope...was to be an encouragement...to show us...that we can break the slavery of these strongholds
 - b. The method of victory over these strategies of the enemy...starts by removing the veil... so we can see the truth
 - c. 2 weeks ago...we ended chapter 6...Stephen is arrested...He has been falsely accused...and lies are spoken about him
 - d. And while Stephen is **standing** in front of the high council...in the synagogue of the freed men...His face begins to shine brightly
 - e. I would have thought...these Pharisees... would have said woe...wait a minute...what's going on here...but not these guys
 - f. I remember reading something in the book of Exodus...about another time when Moses's face shined...from the glory of God...lets look at it
2. Ex 34:28-30, 28 Moses remained there on the mountain with the Lord forty days and forty nights. In all that time he ate no bread and drank no water. And the Lord wrote the terms of the covenant—the Ten Commandments—on the stone tablets.
29 When Moses came down Mount Sinai carrying the two stone tablets inscribed with the terms of the covenant, he wasn't aware that his face had become radiant

because he had spoken to the Lord. 30 So when Aaron and the people of Israel saw the radiance of Moses' face, they were afraid to come near him.

- a. When Moses was speaking with the Lord for 40 days and nights...on Mount Sinai...that Moses's face revealed the glory of God upon his return

3. Ex 34:31-33, 31 But Moses called out to them and asked Aaron and all the leaders of the community to come over, and he talked with them. 32 Then all the people of Israel approached him, and Moses gave them all the instructions the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai. 33 When Moses finished speaking with them, he covered his face with a veil.

- a. After speaking with Aaron and the leaders...then after speaking with all the People of Israel...Moses then veiled his shining face

4. Ex 34:34-35, 34 But whenever he went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with the Lord, he would remove the veil until he came out again. Then he would give the people whatever instructions the Lord had given him, 35 and the people of Israel would see the radiant glow of his face. So he would put the veil over his face until he returned to speak with the Lord.

- a. So when Moses spoke with the Lord...the veil was off...and when Moses spoke with the people of Israel...the veil was on
- b. Moses was revealing the covenant of the law...the old covenant...which started off wonderfully...but the children of Israel could not obey the law
- c. Because man was unable to keep the law on their own...they needed a new covenant...the covenant that Jeremiah predicted

- d. The covenant of Grace...which Jesus was able to give the world...through the perfect sacrifice for sin...that covers all the worlds sin
5. Slide...The law is perfect because it reveals man's sin and the glory of God at the same time
- a. But because man could not keep the law...the glory of God is veiled
 - b. Once Christ has made the perfect sacrifice for sin...the veil will again be removed...so the glory of God can shine
 - c. Paul is going to explain this in
6. 2 Cor 3:7 The old way, with laws etched in stone, led to death, though it began with such glory that the people of Israel could not bear to look at Moses' face. For his face shone with the glory of God, even though the brightness was already fading away.
- a. Because man was unable to keep the law...the glory of God was fading away from man
 - b. So the law brought condemnation...because man was unable to keep the covenant of the law
 - c. But because of Jesus...and His new covenant...we have the option of being right with God...If...or When...we accept the new covenant in faith
7. 2 Cor 3:8-11, 8 Shouldn't we expect far greater glory under the new way, now that the Holy Spirit is giving life? 9 If the old way, which brings condemnation, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new way, which makes us right with God! 10 In fact, that first glory was not glorious at all compared with the overwhelming glory of the new way. 11 So if the old way, which has been

replaced, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new, which remains forever!

- a. The old way was replaced...with the new way
 - b. Stephen was once part of the old way...until he came to faith in Christ
 - c. Now Stephen is speaking of the new way...to the people who are stuck...in the old way
 - d. Whose minds are veiled to the truth of scripture
8. 2 Cor 3:12-13, 12 Since this new way gives us such confidence, we can be very bold. 13 We are not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so the people of Israel would not see the glory, even though it was destined to fade away.
- a. A Christian is to be confidently bold...we are not to hide the glory of the finished work of Christ
9. 2 Cor 3:14-15, 14 But the people's minds were hardened, and to this day whenever the old covenant is being read, the same veil covers their minds so they cannot understand the truth. And this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ. 15 Yes, even today when they read Moses' writings, their hearts are covered with that veil, and they do not understand.
10. Slide...Faith in Christ removes the veil that keeps people from the truth
- a. Paul is saying...that people who don't know Christ...have a veil covering their minds...that is keeping them from the truth
 - b. The only way to remove these veils is by believing Christ
 - c. The lying spirit wants people's minds and hearts to be hardened...so they cannot understand the truth...or desire to believe the truth

11. 2 Cor 3:16-18, 16 But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

- a. As we...remove...the veils...in areas of our life...that are keeping us from the truth...the more and more we are changed...and become like Christ
- b. As we learn truth...we reflect the glory of Christ...and the more free we become...
- c. The more free we become...the more we are changed to be like Christ
- d. Stephen's mind and heart have been unveiled...to the truth of Jesus
- e. Instead of responding...in faith...to the light shining in Stephen...they remain hard hearted and hard minded

12. Acts 7:1 Then the high priest asked Stephen, "Are these accusations true?"

- a. The accusation are...blasphemy of God...blasphemy of Moses...blasphemy of the law...and blasphemy of the temple
- b. What Stephen does here...is a very clever work of the Holy Spirit
- c. Stephen parallels the history of Jewish people...and their resistance to God's promises at first...but later coming into agreement
- d. Stephen answers the first accusation of blasphemy of God...but there is a subtle dig that we miss...if we are not careful

13. Acts 7:2-4, 2 This was Stephen's reply: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me. Our glorious God appeared to our ancestor Abraham in Mesopotamia before he settled

in Haran. 3 God told him, 'Leave your native land and your relatives, and come into the land that I will show you.' 4 So Abraham left the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran until his father died. Then God brought him here to the land where you now live.

- a. The first thing Stephen is straighten out the accusation of blasphemy of God...when he quotes Ps 29...by calling God a glorious God
- b. This first example of Abraham...is the start of a theme...of Abraham was slow coming into agreement with God

14. Slide...Abram's call happened while living in the Chaldeans, not in Hanan

- a. What I am going to attempt to explain...is something that seems subtle
- b. But at the same time...these subtle differences... are the very differences between things such as faith...and religion...law and grace
- c. And or...trusting on faith...or doing things your own way
- d. When we read in Genesis 12...it would be reasonable to assume...that when Abram heard the call from God...and he immediately obeyed God
- e. Let's look at Genesis 12

15. Gen 12:1-4, 1 The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. 3 I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you." 4 So Abram departed as the Lord had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.

- a. What Stephen is pointing out...is Abram first heard the call of God...in Ur of the Chaldeans...but instead of obeying God Immediately
- b. Abram moved from the Chaldeans...to Haran...with his father and lived there for years...in Haran
- c. So Abram didn't trust God...and move in faith...until his father Terah dies
- d. Years after the call of God does Abram go to the land God was giving Abraham and to his descendants
- e. Here is the point...Abram didn't go the first time God told him to go
- f. Here is what is crazy...all Abram received...is a promise from God
- g. Abrahams's descendants will be the ones who see the promise

16. Slide...Stephens point...Although Abram was slow in his obedience to God, he still remained faithful by believing the future promise of God

- a. Stephen will copy this very same theme...throughout his sermon...example after example of how the Jewish people are slow to obey God
- b. And the hope of the nation Israel...is based on promises of God...and their faith in the promises of God

17. Acts 7:5-6, 5 "But God gave him no inheritance here, not even one square foot of land. God did promise, however, that eventually the whole land would belong to Abraham and his descendants—even though he had no children yet. 6 God also told him that his descendants would live in a foreign land, where they would be oppressed as slaves for 400 years.

- a. The point that Steven is making is...that Abraham had faith in God

- b. Abraham had faith in God's promise...that God was going to provide an inheritance of land...and more importantly...a child
- c. Although God's promise of the land would not be fulfilled for 400 years...Abraham knew the promise of a child was in his lifetime
- d. The next verse...is interesting that Stephen adds this verse

18. Acts 7:7 'But I will punish the nation that enslaves them,' God said, 'and in the end they will come out and worship me here in this place.'

- a. Stephen is setting another precedence...who ever keeps God's people from worshiping Him...will be punished
- b. This parallel's how the religious Jews...are trying to keep other Jews from believes in Jesus...and worshiping their Messiah...Jesus
- c. Even today...Rabbi's forbid Jews from reading certain scriptures...that reveal Jesus as their Messiah
- d. The Religious remain slaves to the law...and refuse to trust God sent Jesus to set them free from the law...with the new covenant of grace

19. Acts 7:8 "God also gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision at that time. So when Abraham became the father of Isaac, he circumcised him on the eighth day. And the practice was continued when Isaac became the father of Jacob, and when Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs of the Israelite nation.

- a. Circumcision was a sign of the covenant promise of God
- b. When they would circumcise their children...it was a sign...that said they still had faith in the Abraham's promises...that would be fulfilled one day

20. Acts 7:9-11, 9 "These patriarchs were jealous of their brother Joseph, and they sold him to be a slave in Egypt. But God was with him 10 and rescued him from all his troubles. And God gave him favor before Pharaoh, king of Egypt. God also gave Joseph unusual wisdom, so that Pharaoh appointed him governor over all of Egypt and put him in charge of the palace. 11 "But a famine came upon Egypt and Canaan. There was great misery, and our ancestors ran out of food.

- a. Here is the point Stephen is making...here
- b. The jealousy of the patriarchs of Israel...rejected the very one...Joseph ...who would later save them
- c. And it wasn't until a time of great trouble...did they seek the help of the savior they rejected
- d. The very same thing is prophesied for the end of the age...when trouble comes to the Jewish people...do they cry out to Jesus

21. Acts 7:12-13, 12 Jacob heard that there was still grain in Egypt, so he sent his sons—our ancestors—to buy some. 13 The second time they went, Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, and they were introduced to Pharaoh.

- a. Here is a biggy...they didn't recognize the only one who could save them from death...until the second time they see him
- b. This is prophecy...which shows that the first time Israel's Messiah comes...they will not recognize Him...but on the second time they do
- c. This is what Stephen is trying to get them to see...Jesus is the promised Savior...the Messiah...the fulfillment of the new covenant

- d. The One they rejected and killed...who is now the very One...the only One...who can save them

22. Acts 7:14 Then Joseph sent for his father, Jacob, and all his relatives to come to Egypt, seventy-five persons in all.

- a. Some people would love to say this is a contradiction...because Genesis says 70 people went to Egypt...And Stephen says 75
- b. 70 people went with Jacob to Egypt...and 5 were already there
- c. The 5 already there were Joseph...his wife and 2 children...and of course Benjamin who was held there by Joseph...to get his father to come

23. Acts 7:15 So Jacob went to Egypt. He died there, as did our ancestors. 16 Their bodies were taken to Shechem and buried in the tomb Abraham had bought for a certain price from Hamor's sons in Shechem.

- a. What Stephen has just said...is that the patriarchs were counting on 2 things...the promise of the land
- b. And the promise of the resurrection...which would be cool with the Pharisees...and that is who Stephen is talking to

24. Acts 7:17 "As the time drew near when God would fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt greatly increased. 18 But then a new king came to the throne of Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph. 19 This king exploited our people and oppressed them, forcing parents to abandon their newborn babies so they would die.

- a. Stephen is doing 2 things here...one showing that God is keeping His promise that Israel would be in Egypt for 400 years

- b. Also the promise that those who curse you will be cursed
- c. Also that in a time of great trouble...is what motivates God's people to desire the un-seen promised land over...the slavery of the world
- d. How again...in the future...a great time of trouble is what will get Israel to recognize their Messiah...Jesus
- e. Reminding them...how God comes to help us...in times great trouble...that God that will rescue them...is the one they rejected
- f. The Romans are here...there is trouble...the promised Messiah showed up
- g. And they are rejecting what God provided for them...what Jesus is offering

25. Acts 7:20-21, 20 "At that time Moses was born—a beautiful child in God's eyes.

His parents cared for him at home for three months. 21 When they had to abandon him, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and raised him as her own son.

- a. At that time Pharaoh was killing all the babies...because there were too many Jews
- b. And Moses was hidden by his family...and how it was by faith...they put Moses into an ark...and because of the faith that Moses was saved
- c. Stephen is drawing the comparison of how by one man...through Moses ...the nation Israel was delivered from the slavery to the world...Egypt
- d. Salvation through faith in the Messiah Jesus...is the ark provided by God...for anyone who will trust in Jesus as Lord...will be delivered also

26. Acts 7:22-25, 22 Moses was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was powerful in both speech and action.23 "One day when Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his relatives, the people of Israel. 24 He saw an Egyptian

mistreating an Israelite. So Moses came to the man's defense and avenged him, killing the Egyptian. 25 Moses assumed his fellow Israelites would realize that God had sent him to rescue them, but they didn't.

27. Slide...The first time the Jewish people didn't recognize their savior

a. brings up the issue of Moses...and parallels Moses with Christ

28. Acts 7:26-29, 26 "The next day he visited them again and saw two men of Israel fighting. He tried to be a peacemaker. 'Men,' he said, 'you are brothers. Why are you fighting each other?' 27 "But the man in the wrong pushed Moses aside. 'Who made you a ruler and judge over us?' he asked. 28 'Are you going to kill me as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?' 29 When Moses heard that, he fled the country and lived as a foreigner in the land of Midian. There his two sons were born.

a. The point Stephen is making...the first time Moses come to help Israel... they reject him

b. Moses flees to a distant land for 40 years...finds a gentile bride...starts a family

c. Until the Lord God starts a bush on fire...and says go and rescue Israel

29. Acts 7:30 "Forty years later, in the desert near Mount Sinai, an angel appeared to Moses in the flame of a burning bush.

a. Moses was Israel's great deliverer...and yet Israel rejected him just like they are rejecting Jesus

b. Israel did not want a judge in either situation...their response to Moses was who made you judge over us

- c. The religious said to Jesus...we have no king but Caesar
- d. In verse 29 after they rejected Moses, he took a gentile bride.
- e. When the religious leader rejected Jesus he too took a gentile bride
- f. We need to end here
- g. Don't miss that Stephen was raised up to the ministry of waiting tables
- h. It was not long after that he rose up to do miracles and signs and wonders.
- i. Now he is telling these guys what's up.
- j. Stephen knew the word of God and was able to bring it up in a time of great pressure and Stephen spoke with boldness