

DIVINE SUCCESSION—A BETTER, BIGGER & BRIGHTER FUTURE

Series: Transition to Simplicity, Pt5

September 29-30, 2018

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I. POINT OF INTRIGUE

A. Tonight's/today's "point of intrigue" comes in the form two Scripture texts, one from the Old Testament and one from the New.

For those of you who are able, let's stand.

Deuteronomy 34: 1, 4 & 9 (p239 PME; p295-296 LAB)



1 Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo ... There the LORD showed him the whole land—[and] **4** said to him, "This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, 'I will give it

to your descendants.'

9 Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because ***Moses had laid his hands on him.***

(show photo) So the Israelites listened to Joshua and did what the LORD had commanded Moses. ***emphasis mine**

SAY WITH ME, "DIVINE SUCCESSION."

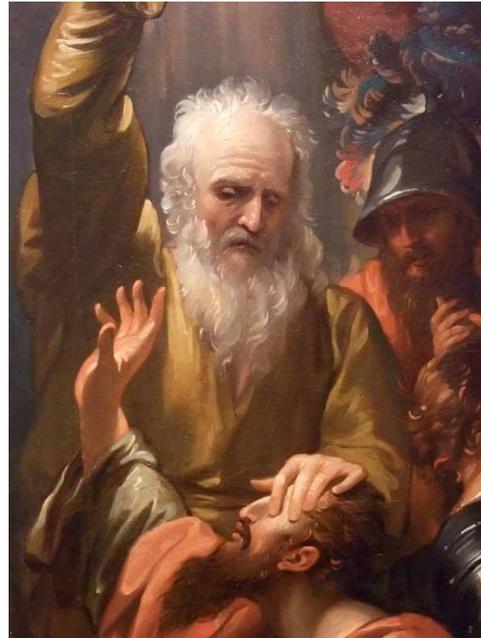
(next text)

Acts 9: 10-12 & 17 (p1250 PME; p1818-1819 LAB)

10 In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him [and said] **11** "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, ... **12** Then place [your] hands on him ...

(show photo)

17 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."



SAY WITH ME, "DIVINE SUCCESSION."

The rest is history. Paul is healed from his blindness (this is why I don't believe Paul's thorn in the flesh was his eyesight), gets baptized and begins proclaiming the GOSPEL* through Jesus Christ the Lord. *God Offer Sinful People Eternal Life

II. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF DIVINE SUCCESSION

A. The Bible doesn't tell us if Joshua was the people's choice or the elders' choice; it does

tell us that Joshua was God's choice. Certainly, Paul of Tarsus wasn't the disciples' choice, or the Church's choice—they were scared to death of him—but he was God's choice.

Although in **1 Corinthians 15** Paul acknowledges Matthias, he also clearly states that “divine succession” was laid upon him (Paul).

8 Last of all, as to one born at the wrong time, he also appeared to me. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

SAY WITH ME, “DIVINE SUCCESSION.”

NOTE! In the case of Joshua and St Paul, it was a ***better, bigger and brighter future*** for Israel and the Church.

B. Divine succession is a strange thing. It doesn't always turn out the way we want it to, or the way God wants it to. Oh, I know, some of you are saying, “*Heretic! Heretic!*” // Calm down. Calm down. **(show poster, p4)** Your dispute isn't with me, it's with God. Consider the following examples: the *Prophet Balaam, King Saul, King Jeroboam, Lucifer* and *Creation...* just to name a few. **But this we know, whether God's creation blows it or not, His purposes always prevail.** [R] How do we know that is true?

1) A virgin birth

- 2) A crucifixion
- 3) A burial
- 4) A resurrection
- 5) A soon coming king

III. DIVINE SUCCESSION OFTEN WORKS WITHIN A PERSON BEFORE IT IS REVEALED.

If you don't mind, rather than use a biblical illustration, I'm going to use a personal one.



A. My father built three homes—two in Glassboro and one in Cross Keys. I remember because he would take me with him. *“Bruce, hand me this and hand me that.”* I was 5 years of age—today they would report my father for “child labor abuse.” LOL! This was the first, a grey house, still in use today on Glassboro Cross-Keys Rd., about one mile west of Delsea Drive.



(show photo)

I only have one distinct memory from that house—my sister and I playing church. I thought it was

outside, but she insists it was inside, and since she is my elder, I'll yield to her. LOL! We would set up boxes—one was the pulpit, the others were pews. Sandy would be the song evangelist (lead singing) and I would preach. Are you getting the picture?



(show photo) Not that one, LOL!, the one of Sandy and I conducting church.

On one occasion when we were holding church, she told me she was called to be a missionary. To this day I chastise her for not fulfilling her calling. // Actually, my sister has been a missionary. She has taught children in Sunday School since she was 16; that's 56 years of faithful service unto the LORD impacting lives for the kingdom.

As for me, never did I dream that those times Sandy and I played church were a revelation of "divine succession," a passing of the baton, a handing down of a pastor's mantel from one of the godliest persons I have ever met—the Rev Anna E Smith, my maternal grandmother. **(show photo, p6)**

At times, more times than not, I feel totally unworthy of this "divine succession." As the song writer said,

*Who am I that a King
would bleed and die
for? Who am I that He
would pray, 'Not my
will Thine LORD?'"
The answer I may
never know, why He
ever loved me so, That
to an old rugged cross
He'd go, for who am I?*



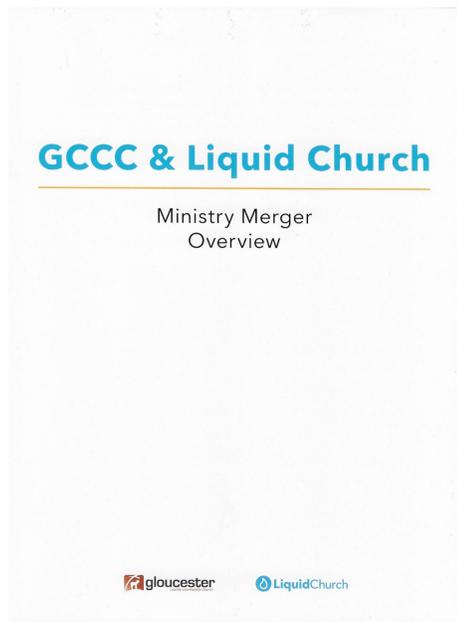
MAYBE IT WAS BECAUSE GOD KNEW THAT FOR 36 YEARS I'D GIVE THE ABC'S AND 35,000+ PEOPLE WOULD GIVE THEIR LIVES TO CHRIST? // To be honest, I have no idea. **(Many of you are among those 35,000+.)** It wasn't anything I asked for, that's for sure. It wasn't anything I deserved. It wasn't anything I am worthy of. **It's something He placed on me.**

B. Fast forward. So when Sheryl and I began discussing stepping out of our roles as Lead Pastor and First Lady, we sought God on the *successor* who would be His choice...not ours, not the staff's, not the Board's, but His. **This wasn't a popularity vote, this was "divine succession."** God clearly led us to Tim Lucas, Lead Pastor of Liquid Church.



One day together with Tim and his lovely wife Colleen revealed why He

chose Tim and Colleen—everything from the *ABC's of salvation* to **(show photo)** *no one models church better for this, and the emerging generation better than the leadership of Liquid.* One outstanding question remained: *Would the Boards of GCCC and Liquid agree to what Tim and I, and our wives felt in our hearts?* **It was a unanimous “yes.”** After a year of prayer and planning, God has brought us to the point where we are today. // My time is up because ...



C. ... I'd love for you to stay after the service and find out how all of this *miraculously* came about. But before we take a five minute break and place in your hands an overview of a year's journey, **(show photo)** let me introduce you to the ABC's of Salvation.

VI. INVITATION—THE ABC'S OF SALVATION

Admit— your sins have separated you from God. (***Psa 14:1-3; Rom 3: 23***); **Believe** – that God did something about your sins through Jesus Christ. (The final Pascal Lamb/Messiah.) (***Lev 17:10; Heb 9: 19-22***); **Commit** – yourself to His righteous by

confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior. ***(Isa 53:5; Col 1:22); Do it today! (Isa 49:8; 2 Cor 6:2).***

Father in Heaven, I'm sorry for the things I've done that are wrong: I am a sinner; forgive me. Thank You for loving me and sending your Son, Jesus, to pay the penalty for my sin. Holy Spirit, come into my heart; Jesus be my Lord and Savior. I give You my life. Amen!

ser3770, ***Divine Succession—A Better, Bigger & Brighter Future.***
(Transition to Simplicity, Pt5) Words w/ Invitation 1316)