

At the start of the Reformation of the Church in Scotland in 1557, John Knox wrote to his congregation before going into exile and said,

*“You are bishops and kings; your wife, children, servants, and family are your bishopric and charge. Of you it shall be required how carefully and diligently you have instructed them in God’s true knowledge . . .*

*And therefore I say, you must make them partakers in, exhorting, and in making common prayers, which I would in every house were used once a day at least.”*

# Let’s Worship God

2nd-7th February 2015  
Acts



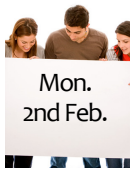
Let's Worship God is a ministry of



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**Family worship, a joy to be experienced every day!**



# Let's Worship God

**Verse To Learn**  
Yet the Most High does not  
dwell in houses  
made by hands,  
Acts 7:48a

## reading notes

Acts 6:11-7:1 - Stephen's Defence

The high priest asks Stephen if the charges made against him are true. Stephen's reply, observes John Calvin, could appear at first glance absurd and unsuitable. As you read Stephen's response in chapter 7 this week, you'll see that Stephen doesn't actually answer the charges made against him of blasphemy and rebellion, instead you'll find yourself being taken off on a journey through the Old Testament. But here's a hint - don't bother jumping to the end of the chapter to find out how Stephen's journey through the Old Testament ends because he never actually gets to the end of the story. On top of that he barely ever mentions the cross, and as for Jesus, well there's absolutely no mention of his name at all.

What is Stephen up to? Well he believes that the Old Testament is the Word of God, and he knows that the Jews also believe that the Old Testament is the Word of God. So in presenting all this information from the Old Testament, Stephen is asking the Jews to judge him and what he believes about Jesus on the basis of the Bible, which they both accept as God's Word. The Bible will therefore provide the answer to the accusations laid against him.

## questions

1. Who asked Stephen if these accusations were true?
2. What did Stephen and the Jews believe about the Bible?
3. Why did Stephen speak about what God had said in the Old Testament?

## praise pray

- Ps. 102B:1-6
1. Pray that God will help us as we learn His Word.
  2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
  3. Pray for family matters.



# Let's Worship God

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## reading

Acts 7:44-50 - Meaningless Pride

## notes

In this part of his defence Stephen speaks about the last of the three big issues in the history of Israel - worship of God.

He's spoken about Abraham, the father of the nation, knowing that every Jew takes great pride in being a descendant of Abraham's.

He's spoken about Moses, the deliverer and the prophet, the one through whom God gave His Law, knowing the pride that the Jews feel in possessing God's Law.

Now he introduces the matter of worship through focusing on the tabernacle and temple, the places where the Creator of the world calls His people to worship Him.

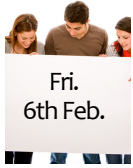
Each of these three things has a deep seated emotional hold on the people of Israel. But for Stephen these three things are totally worthless if the people don't have a living, vibrant relationship with God based on faith and obedience. What's the point in being the biological descendants of Abraham if the key elements of faith and obedience in that special relationship with God are not there? What's the point in having the Law of God if they won't obey it? What's the point of having a public show of worship in the temple if the people are living each day in rebellion against God?

## questions

1. What were the three big issues as far as Jews were concerned?
2. What point was Stephen making?
3. What did the Jews need to have with God?

## praise pray

- Ps. 103:19-21
1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
  2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
  3. Pray for family matters.



Fri.  
6th Feb.

# Let's Worship God

**Verse To Learn**  
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**reading notes** Acts 7:35-43 - Rejection of Jesus

Stephen has just shown that Moses is rejected by his people when he tries to deliver them. In doing so, the people have not simply rejected Moses, they have in fact rejected God because Moses is God's chosen deliverer, God's prophet (the one through whom God gives the Law), and God's appointed mediator (the go-between for God and His people). So when they refuse to listen to and obey the instructions given them by Moses, the Israelites are really rejecting God and His deliverance.

Stephen now moves to the heart of his sermon in verse 37. He reminds them of what Moses tells the nation of Israel - that God will raise up a prophet from Israel to be the nation's deliverer just like him. This is a direct reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, although he doesn't actually name Him.

He then goes on to remind the Sanhedrin of how the people refuse to obey Moses, how they reject him and turn back to their old ways, only to suffer the consequences. The implication is clear - just as the Israelites have rejected their deliverer, prophet, and mediator, and suffered the consequences, so those who have rejected their Deliverer, their Prophet, their Mediator, Jesus Christ, will also suffer the consequences of that rejection.

- questions**
1. What had God chosen Moses to do?
  2. What is a mediator?
  3. Who was Stephen referring to in verse 37
  4. What happened when the Israelites rejected Moses?

- praise pray**
- Ps. 103:13-18
1. Pray for the salvation of family, friends, and neighbours.
  2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
  3. Pray for family matters.



Tue.  
3rd Feb.

# Let's Worship God

**Verse To Learn**  
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Acts 7:48a

**reading** Acts 7:2-8 - Stephen's First Witness - Abraham

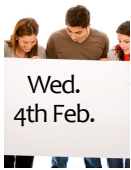
**notes** As with anyone who stands in a court accused of a crime, Stephen has the opportunity to call witnesses, people to speak in his defence. What's interesting though is that Stephen doesn't call any of his friends because he knows that will only be a waste of time. Instead, he goes into the history of the nation and calls people from the past.

His first witness is Abraham. God tells Abraham to leave his home and go to a country which He will give to Abraham and his descendants - the land of Canaan (Genesis 12). And even though that is all God says to him, Abraham takes God at His Word and goes. God then makes a covenant (agreement) with Abraham (Genesis 17) in which He promises to bless Abraham and his descendants if they have faith in Him and show this faith by obeying Him.

So Stephen's point is this - the special relationship which the Jews have with God is not because they are all descended from Abraham but because of faith and demonstrating that faith through obedience. These are the two key elements in the relationship between God and the Jews. God has started the relationship because of Abraham's faith in Him and the sign of Abraham's faith is his obedience. God has maintained the relationship down through the centuries because there are always some Jews who, no matter what, still have faith in and obey God.

- questions**
1. Who was Stephen's first witness?
  2. What did God promise Abraham?
  3. What was God's agreement with Abraham based on?

- praise pray**
- Ps. 102B:7-10
1. Give thanks that God brings us into a relationship with Himself.
  2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
  3. Pray for family matters.



Wed.  
4th Feb.

# Let's Worship God

**Verse To Learn**  
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Acts 7:48a

**reading** Acts 7:9-16 - Obedience or Rebellion - It s the Only Choice!

**notes** Joseph is the second witness Stephen calls for his defence. He reminds the Sanhedrin of how Joseph s brothers sell him into slavery in Egypt because they are jealous of him. He reminds them of how God is with Joseph in Egypt - as Joseph stays loyal to God, so God in turn blesses Joseph, even to the point where Joseph is appointed Prime Minister of Egypt under Pharaoh. This is a position from which Joseph is able to help his family survive during the famine.

Stephen is painting a picture here of two responses to God:

- Joseph s brothers - jealous of their brother and rebellious against God. This brings sadness to their father, worry and fear to themselves, and endangers the entire family.

- Joseph - who, despite the difficult circumstances he often finds himself in, remains faithful to God, trusting all the time that God will sort it out. This response to God brings blessing, promotion, power, and wealth, and places him in a situation where he can rescue his family.

Yesterday we read about how Stephen shows that the Jews have a special relationship with God because of His promises to them and their faith and obedience to Him. Today we see from Stephen that there are two possible responses to this relationship: either obedience or rebellion - each having its own consequences.

- questions**
1. Why did Joseph s brothers sell him into slavery?
  2. How did Joseph react to the situation?
  3. What are the two responses man can have to God?

- praise pray**
- Ps. 103:1-6
1. Pray that God will help us to trust in Him and obey Him.
  2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
  - 3 Pray for family matters.



Thur.  
5th Feb.

# Let's Worship God

**Verse To Learn**  
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**reading** Acts 7:17-36 - Rejection of God s Chosen Deliverer

**notes** Stephen has shown that God entered into a special relationship with Abraham and his descendants. He has also shown that Joseph and his brothers are examples of how people either obey or rebel against God and the consequences that follow. Now he s going to give an Old Testament example of a deliverer, a man raised up by God to save his people. This man will be rejected by the very people he s been sent to rescue. The deliverer s name is Moses.

God has promised Abraham that when his descendants become slaves in Egypt, He will rescue them after 400 years (Acts 7:6-7). Moses, the baby boy who has been hidden from Pharaoh and then rescued and brought up in Pharaoh s palace by his daughter, is the deliverer through whom God will fulfil His promise. Rejected by his own people and forced to flee to the wilderness at the age of 40, Moses will, 40 years later, be called by God to lead His people out of Egypt.

Stephen emphasises the fact that the Jews reject Moses when he tries to help them. This is a pattern of behaviour that can be traced throughout the Old Testament, for the Jews have consistently rejected the deliverers God has sent to rescue them. Stephen is getting ready to show the Sanhedrin that this rejection of God s deliverer has also a very recent fulfilment.

- questions**
1. Who did God choose to deliver His people from Egypt?
  2. What happened when he tried to help the Israelites?
  3. What was the point that Stephen was making?

- praise pray**
- Ps. 103:7-12
1. Give thanks that God sent the Lord Jesus as our deliverer.
  2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
  - 3 Pray for family matters.