

Family Worship Booklet



God tells us that Ezra read from the book of the Law,
day after day, and that the people of God
were filled with joy!

Produced by Ottawa RPC to help you in your family worship.
These notes have been prepared by Rev. Dr. Andrew Quigley.

Monday – Please read Luke 12:49-53 - Prince of Peace - yes, or no?

So, did Jesus come to bring peace to the earth or not? Yes and no. Yes, he is the 'Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6). Yes, he was wounded for our transgressions; yes, he was crushed for our iniquities, and upon him God laid the punishment that brought us peace with Him (Isaiah 53:5). Yes, the feet of those who bring the good news, who preach peace, are beautiful, as Isaiah says in Isaiah 52:7. Yes, justification through faith does bring peace with God, as Paul writes in Romans 5:1. Yes, we are to desire the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, knowing that it will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7). Yes, we are to be eager in the church to do all we can to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3). Yes, we are to expect that the Lord of Peace will give us peace, at all times, in every way (2 Thessalonians 3:16). But, there is another reality – in bringing peace to his elect, Jesus also brought judgement to the world, and the consequences of that are very real and ever present in our lives.

To show that this is the case, Jesus takes the smallest Jewish family, verse 52, a father, mother, married son, his wife and one unmarried daughter, and he looks at the divisions within it. Jesus' point? The Cross, the offense of the gospel, will bring real division. We want to navigate around such troubled waters, but the fact is that we can't do so and stay faithful to the truth. Jesus threw fire upon the earth with his death to save his elect. The unregenerate find Jesus' claim, to be the only Saviour of man, unacceptable. And at some point, the holiness and peace we exude will grate on them and they will react. Often it will be head on, but sometimes it will present as something totally unrelated, as the deceitful heart seeks to camouflage the real issue – their rejection of Christ. We need to understand and be aware of this, so that we can respond appropriately, as Solomon writes in Proverbs 15:1, 'A gentle answer turns away wrath'.

Q1. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, but to who?

Q2. Does Jesus bring peace to every people and every situation?

Tuesday - Please read Luke 12:54-59 - Look at the signs - it is clear!

In Palestine, rain, not surprisingly, comes from the Mediterranean Sea, which is to the west. So, if you see clouds forming in the west, it doesn't take a meteorologist to work out that it's going to rain. The same is true with the wind. When it is coming over the hot southern Negev Desert in the south, you'll know that it's going to be a scorching hot day.

What is Jesus' point? It is, 'You don't have to overthink to read the signs, and work out what is going on with the weather. Clouds in the west – rain. Wind from the south – scorching hot weather. So, if you can do that, why can't you read the signs regarding who I am and why I am here?' The Old Testament was teeming with information about the coming of the Messiah. That he would come from the line of Abraham (Genesis 22:18), from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10), as an heir to King David's throne (2 Samuel 7:12-13, Isaiah 9:7), should have provoked thought. The prophecy that he would be born of a Virgin (Isaiah 7:14), in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), and be called Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14), are signs. As were the prophecies about his childhood; of his time in Egypt (Hosea 11:1), the massacre of children at his birthplace (Jeremiah 31:15), and his being 'marked' as a Nazarene (Isaiah 11:1). The signs given about his life and ministry, beginning with the provision of a messenger to prepare the way for him (Isaiah 40:3-6, Malachi 3:1-5), His rejection as the Messiah by his own people (Isaiah 40:3-5), and his roles as a Prophet, Priest and King are clearly stated in Deuteronomy 18:15, Psalm 110:4, Psalm 2:6 and Zechariah 9:9. His teaching in parables (Psalm 78:2-4, Isaiah 6:9-10), his healing of the broken-hearted (Isaiah 61:1-2); none of this should have been a surprise to anyone. It was all there, just like the clouds in the west and the wind from the south; it just had to be read and the obvious conclusion drawn. Putting it all together should have raised some questions about Jesus, who he was and what he was doing. But it didn't. Why not? Because they were hypocrites, living for their outward religion believing that their salvation lay in their basic keeping of the law. The 'clouds' and the 'winds' spoke to them. It's just that they were blind to it all. Pray that you would not be the same.

Q1. What point is Jesus making when he talks about the rain and wind?

Q2. What were some of the prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament?

Friday - Please read Luke 13:1-9 – What Happens after Death?

Jesus now cites a case of violent death to reiterate the point, which we saw yesterday, that God will punish all men for their sin of rejecting the salvation freely offered in the gospel. It, too, had happened recently in Jerusalem near the pool of Siloam and would, therefore, have been in people's minds. A tower that seems to have been connected to the city wall, near the pool, had collapsed and killed eighteen people. A 'freak' catastrophic accident. Something no one could have foreseen that had eternal consequences for eighteen souls. Jesus' point again is simple – 'do you think those people died because of some particular sin?' Again, the unstated, but clear implication is, 'No'. And, as with the previous question, Jesus immediately follows this one with the same statement, "No, I tell you..." His reiteration leaves absolutely no room for confusion or error.

Death is the inevitable consequence of being born. As a descendant of Adam, you and I will be one of the 156,400 people who die each day. We won't escape it. Paul tells us the reason why in Romans 5:12, "therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." But the issue that Jesus raises, and addresses, is not why people die, but what happens after death. As the writer to the Hebrews says, "And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment," (Hebrews 9:27). The critical point about the judgement is that it is not a 'trial' to ascertain the facts of the case so that a verdict of innocence or guilt can be determined. That is a common, but seriously mistakenly held view. It is the declaration of the guilty verdict, because every human being outside of Christ stands condemned before God. That is why every human being who dies without repenting of their sin, will, in the words of Jesus, "perish". Shorter Catechism Answer 87 merits consideration and should lead to our praising God. "Repentance unto life is a *saving grace*, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience."

Q1. What happened at the Tower of Siloam? Can we escape death?

Q2. What will happen after we die? What will happen to the ungodly?

Wednesday – Please read Luke 12:54-59 - Judge for yourselves!

Jesus continues to confront the issue of ignoring the signs and He does so by challenging them through a typical life example. He envisages two men going to court to settle a dispute. His counsel is simple – do your best to settle the dispute before you get to court. If you've ever been to court, the advice that you settle it before you reach the courtroom will ring very true. Having your day in court sounds good, but it can prove to be a very costly experience, and Jesus' hearers knew that. No one listening to him would have said, 'that's nonsense!'. They would have all agreed. But Jesus isn't giving them free legal advice; he is taking what they know, and applying it to their standing before God. His point is – you need to sort out your life with God. The 'clouds' in the west and the 'wind' from the south are there for a reason. They are there to warn you that the rain and the scorching heat is coming. All the signs, the prophecies about Jesus, were for a reason.

His coming into the world as the Messiah was for a reason. Man enters the world condemned in his trespasses and sins, and no amount of religious activity will save him on the Day of Judgement. Jesus is saying to all who will hear – get it sorted with God before the courtroom on the Day of Judgement; otherwise, the evidence presented will be so damning that payment will never be made. The only hope is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Only in Christ can the penalty be paid. Only in Christ is the righteousness necessary to enter into heaven imputed, literally placed over one's life.

The signs are clear and must be heeded. Salvation alone is in Christ. The way of sanctification, holy and blameless living, is stated simply and clearly in the Bible. We need to read and respond to it, just as we do with the weather, when we put a coat on when the skies are thick with clouds, and put sunscreen on when it is a scorching hot day.

Q1. What illustration does Jesus use and why?

Q2. What do we need to do with the signs that point to the reality of the coming judgement?

Thursday - Please read Luke 13:1-9 – Repent or Perish.

Luke is the only one of the gospel writers to tell us that some people came to Jesus to tell Him about the killing of a number of men from Galilee on the orders of Pontius Pilate. What Luke doesn't do is tell us why they came. We can tell that it took place in Jerusalem, because the Galileans were offering sacrifices at the temple when, for whatever reason, they were killed. But why the rush to tell Jesus? Did the news carriers think that this might ignite such a sense of indignation within Jesus that he would rise up in a fit of rage, storm off to Jerusalem and incite a rebellion? Jesus' response doesn't support that possibility. What we get from Jesus' response is that those who bring this news to Him do so because they think the victims must have committed some heinous secret sin and that God used Pilate to destroy them. Jesus asks if they think that the men who died were any worse sinners than anyone else who lived in Galilee.

As we know, God can and does, on occasions, deal immediately with specific sin. God addressed Cain's sin directly in Genesis 4. The sin of Achan brought immediate judgement from God upon him and his family (Genesis 7:10-26), as did that of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) and Herod (Acts 12:20-23). However, it is unwise to connect major events in people's lives with the possibility that they have committed some specific sin. A point Jesus makes more than once in various circumstances, e.g., John 9:2,3.

Jesus states emphatically the answer to His own question - “No, I tell you”. There is no room for misunderstanding here. And it leads to an equally clear statement about life and death. Obviously, Jesus is not saying that everyone in Galilee is going to be murdered by the Romans at the instigation of Pilate. The point is that these men perished, but so will everyone who does not repent. That is an incredibly sobering truth. Eternal punishment is a horrific reality and if, by God's grace, you have repented of your sin, you should be thanking God with all your being that you will not experience it.

Q1. What was the news brought to Jesus?

Q2. How did Jesus respond?