

# 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!

## Friday – Luke 22:1-6 – The betrayal of Jesus.

The Festival of the Unleavened Bread and the Passover were two distinct Jewish festivals, but they were celebrated together, and to many people, they were just one festival. They recalled different aspects of the events leading up to and including the historic night in the history of Israel when the angel of death passed over the people of God who were being held in slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12, Numbers 28:16ff).

It's against the background of these festivals that we read of a discussion taking place as to how Jesus could be killed. This conversation is not taking place in the home of Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, nor in some darkened chamber in the palace of King Herod, but in broad daylight in the epicentre of Jewish religion, the Sanhedrin. The leading religious men in Judaism, having already decided that Jesus must die, are not conspiring together about how it can be done. It will not be easy because, as we read in verse two, "they feared the people". They know just how popular Jesus is with those coming into Jerusalem from all over Judea, Galilee and beyond for the Passover. These Jewish religious leaders didn't need anyone to school them about how engaged the people were with Jesus, because of the authority of his teaching and his phenomenal miracles. But these priests and scribes are determined; they are wholly resolved to take the life of Jesus and to make it happen within a few days. Nothing or no one is going to stop them. They needed a way to get at him, and they were given one. Satan was allowed by God, because Satan has no power or authority outside of that which God permits him, to 'enter' Judas Iscariot, one of the apostles of Jesus. But note, Judas was not forced to receive Satan; Judas was not an unwilling participant; far from it, he not only permitted, but embraced the presence of Satan indwelling him. And that indwelling led Judas to leave the Passover meal at the command of Jesus (John 13:27) and at some point, thereafter, he goes to the chief priests and scribes where he negotiates, all too easily, the deal to betray Jesus, much to their joy. The priests and the scribes could never have imagined such a turn of good 'fortune', and they certainly weren't going to miss the opportunity. Judas for his part, having agreed on the price, begins watching for his opportunity to betray Jesus.

Q1. What feasts were being observed in Jerusalem?

Q2. Who are seeking to kill Jesus and why?

Q3. How do they get an opportunity to do so?

## Thursday – Luke 21:34-38 – Listen to Jesus and do what he says!

Jesus now applies the implications of what he has just been talking about to the disciples' lives, and your life and mine. And it can be summed up in four words – 'take heed to yourself'. In other words, watch yourself. Be careful about what you think. Guard your heart and do so in light of what you know is coming, or rather *who* is coming. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are not to get sucked into the depressive way of thinking that so dominates the world because of how it views the future. Just listen to the world; the anxieties of life engulf it; it's filled with insidious pessimism, and where does that drive it? Into the arms of seeking escapism through drunkenness, and other abusive and debauched practices. Jesus is telling his disciples and us to be very, very careful not to set aside what we know to be true, and mimic the world in pondering over and dwelling upon its godless, doomsday scenarios. Not to allow the world's cares to gain such a foothold in our lives so that they begin to drag down our hearts and lead us to think negatively about everything happening in our lives.

As believers in Christ, we are to give ourselves to being awake to the reality of the imminent return of the Lord Jesus. And as we do so, we are to spend ourselves begging God for the strength to face down every temptation that comes our way; and so be enabled, by his grace and in the righteousness Christ imputed to us, to stand before him on the Day of Judgment and be ready to give a good account of how we have lived for His glory.

Luke now closes his account of the public ministry of the Lord Jesus with a few summary statements which tell us that Jesus spent the remainder of his days teaching in the Temple Courts and his nights sleeping in Gethsemane. Did many people come to hear him? Yes, and such was the demand for seats that many of them were rising early in the morning to get to the Temple Courts so as not to miss any of his teachings.

Q1. What's the world's approach to the future?

Q2. How are we to face the future?

Q3. What did Jesus do in the last few days of his life before his crucifixion?

## Monday – Luke 21:20- 24 – The destruction of Jerusalem.

Jesus is answering the question that was asked in verse 7. He had begun by answering the question in general in verses 8-10, then in verses 11-19. He had addressed the issues of persecution that would come immediately after the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, recorded for us in Acts chapter 2. Now, he turns to the imminent destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army and what the people should do. Ordinarily, in a time of war, people would make their way into the city to find some protection within her walls, but Jesus tells them not to do that, but to flee to the mountains beyond the river Jordan in the region of Perea. No one will be safe in Jerusalem from this marauding Roman army with their infamous short swords and well-honed battle techniques. An army who will unconsciously be the arm of God in bringing judgement upon the city and so fulfil Scriptures such as Psalm 94:1, Isaiah 34:8, Zechariah 14:2, 11:4-14; Malachi 3:1, etc.; "these are days of vengeance" as Jesus refers to them. This will be God's judgement upon Jerusalem for her unbelief and final rejection of the gospel. The reality of what will take place in the siege and destruction of the city, including the temple, will be brutal, especially for the most vulnerable, pregnant women and young children. Something that does not pass by Jesus lightly. You get the sense that, despite knowing that this is a matter of ordained divine wrath, when Jesus utters these words, there is genuine concern for those who will be caught up in it. The distress they will experience will be great, and its ramifications will unfold not only upon the city of Jerusalem, but the entire region.

So how did people respond to Jesus' words of prophecy here, and what ultimately happened in AD 70? Well, for the most part, the Christians did flee the city, and Eusebius, the third-century historian, records that the congregation in Jerusalem followed a revelation that had been received before the war and migrated to Pella in Perea. Josephus, the first-century historian, says that over 1,000,000 Jews were killed and nearly 100,000 taken and used as slaves throughout the Roman Empire.

Q1. What is the day of vengeance that Jesus speaks of?

Q2. What did Jesus tell the people to do?

Q3. What happened?

## Tuesday – Luke 21:25-28 - The coming of the Son of man.

Jesus now moves from the destruction of Jerusalem to his second coming. He begins by referring to shocking signs; this is apocalyptic imagery which speaks of a sudden, violent change and the emergence of a new order. Matthew records it this way when he writes, “immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” (Matthew 24:19). This is cataclysmic. Everything will descend into chaos and destruction when God speaks, and by the power of His voice the earth is ushered into its final stages of existence. No wonder Jesus says that people will be fainting with fear and foreboding about what is happening in the world; no one will ever have experienced anything like this. The effects of the worst volcanic eruption, the most devastating tsunami the world has ever experienced, will be like children splashing in a paddling pool compared with this complete and utter disintegration of the heavens and the earth.

Then it will happen. The Lord Jesus will return. This will happen in heaven and on earth for one reason, the second coming of Lord Jesus Christ. And everyone on the earth will see him when he comes. There will be a manifestation of power and glory, the like of which the world has never experienced before. It will be wholly unique, unprecedented, and more than awe-inspiring; it will be staggering in its capacity to defy all speech. But how will everyone on the earth see him at the same time? That’s a question being asked from the perspective of life on earth at this moment in time; but when this cataclysmic event takes place, the whole universe, the earth, will be wholly changed beyond anything that you or I currently can envisage or contemplate - it will be a whole new world.

How does Jesus say those who know and love him should respond? Run and hide? No. He says we are to “straighten up and raise your heads.” We are to cower, but look up because our ultimate and final redemption is about to occur.

- Q1. How does Jesus describe what will happen at the end of the world?
- Q2. Why is this going to happen?
- Q3. How should those who believe in Christ respond to these earth-destroying events, and why?

## Wednesday – Luke 21:29-33 – Jesus’ words will not pass away!

Jesus now leads us into asking what we must do to be ready for his second coming, and he does so through a parable. It’s a short parable but a powerful one. It’s about a fig tree showing signs that summer is not far off because the leaves are coming out. What’s it telling us? It’s saying that all the signs that Jesus has been speaking about are proclaiming one thing, the ‘Kingdom of God’ is near, and Christ’s rule in glory is imminent. But note the solemn warning that follows. Verse 32 begins with the word ‘Amen’ in the original and speaks to both the truthfulness of what he is about to say and its authority. The question is which generation is Jesus referring to when he states that ‘this generation’ will not pass away until all he has just been talking about has taken place. Obviously, it cannot be the generation of people that he is speaking with. So, what does it mean? Well, one must dig a little deeper into the word ‘generation’, and when that’s done, we find that the word ‘generation’ is used as a reference to *a kind of man*. But what *kind of man*? An evil *kind of man*, a righteous *kind of man*, or some other *kind of man*? Well, who are the people Jesus has been talking with? Who has been contending, fighting, arguing with him? It’s the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They are the *kind of man*, the generation who will not pass away until all this has happened. They will continue rejecting Him throughout history until the final day when he returns.

We should ingrain deep within our hearts and minds the words of Jesus in verse 33, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away”, for they are truth to our souls and a lamp to our feet. We live at a time in the history of the world when nothing is fixed; everything is transient, movable, and changeable. People are so immersed in telling lies about themselves and others that nothing they say holds any value, not even when it is spoken. As believers in the Lord Jesus, we love the truth because our hearts and minds have been changed, and we are drawn to it, yet not everything we say is true or certain. But when it comes to the words spoken by the Lord Jesus, they are in a completely different league from everyone else’s. Nothing compares with them in terms of truth and certainty, for they will not simply last for time, but for eternity. That’s why we must ground our thinking and lives in what he says.

- Q1. The fig tree parable is about what?
- Q2. What does Jesus mean when he says this generation will not pass away?
- Q3. Why must we invest ourselves in trusting Jesus’ words?