

August 8<sup>th</sup>

**Memory verse:**

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure,  
having this seal,

**The Lord knoweth them that are his.**

2 Timothy 2:19

More about today's memory verse in tomorrow's lesson.

**Something to read from history<sup>1</sup>**

We have looked at John Evelyn's Diary several times in these lessons.<sup>2</sup> Don't forget to keep making entries in your own diary. If you have let it drop for a while, do an entry today! On **8<sup>th</sup> August 1665** John Evelyn made this sober entry:

*Died this week in London, 4,000.*

1665 was the year of the great plague.<sup>3</sup> London lost roughly 15% of its population. There were 68,596 deaths recorded in the city but the true number was probably over 100,000. Many poorer people lived in the suburbs or “liberties” which were shanty towns outside the city walls where the deaths were less well recorded.

It is hard for us to imagine today what it was like for 15% of the population to die. As far as we know, the Black death in the middle of the fourteenth century had been much worse. If you remember the lesson for 10<sup>th</sup> of June we noted that then, if there were ten houses in your street, it would be as if between three and six of them were empty. The London Plague of 1665 was more like one and a half empty houses out of ten. How many houses are there in your street? You might be able to work out roughly what 15 % of them would be.

There are still different theories as to what spread the plague germs. Rats, or rather rat fleas, are generally given as the cause. More recent theories include the kind of lice that live on people themselves where conditions are not clean.

Throughout the plague, those who could afford to do so fled from the city in the hope of escaping the plague. Most of the Church of England ministers fled. But the people of London were not left without anyone to preach the gospel to them: there were other ministers in London. Only Church of England services were legal in England but there was not much gospel preaching to be heard there. Those who wanted to hear gospel preaching had to meet in secret. They were the persecuted Dissenters and their ministers mostly remained in the plague-stricken city. They cared for the dying people who had been deserted by the fleeing Church of England ministers as well as for their own congregations. Some Dissenting ministers from the country, when they heard what had happened, came up to London to preach, “... to visit the sick and get what relief they could for the poor.” In doing so they risked catching the plague themselves. When the plague was over, Parliament did not recognise the bravery and self-sacrifice of these men and reward them with a relaxation of



1 Adapted from *The Story of God's Dealings with our Nation* Volume 2 available from <https://www.creationresearchstore.com/s/search?q=The%20Story%20of%20Gods%20Dealings%20with%20our%20Nation>

2 Lessons for January 18<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, June 3<sup>rd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

3 See the lesson for 28<sup>th</sup> April about the plague village.

persecution. Instead, jealous that their own ministers were not of such a godly and heroic character, they passed an act saying that no dissenting minister was allowed to come within five miles of a town or of the place of his previous employment.

### Something to think about<sup>4</sup>

On 8<sup>th</sup> August 1945 The London Charter was signed by France, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the United States of America. This was the charter establishing the laws and procedures for the Nuremberg trials.



The Nuremberg trials were trials held after the war to establish the guilt and to sentence by a due legal process the 24 leading Nazis who were in the hands of the allies and were accused of war crimes. But under what law could they be tried?

Hitler was dead. The most senior Nazi to remain was Hermann Göring. He pointed out the problem with the trial itself. The defendants had all been operating in accordance with the law of their country when they committed the atrocities for which they were now being called to answer, he said. How could they be tried under any other system of law? Surely the trial was just a trial by the victors of the vanquished – no trial at all, in fact.



The chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials was Justice Robert Jackson (1892-1954) of the USA. Justice Jackson was one of those who had helped to draft the London Charter which created the legal basis for the Nuremberg trials. As such he was exercised by this very question. His opening statement at the trial itself is very instructive as to what he thought the answer was. In that address he spoke of the “...common sense of mankind...”, “Civilization...”, “...humanity’s aspirations to do justice...” and “...Plain people with their earthy common sense...”. Justice Jackson was a very persuasive orator and in the context of his masterly speech these terms sounded impressive. But if we examine them, as it were, in the cold light of day they seem to be inadequate.

Who is to define “common sense”? How is “Civilization” to be defined and on what basis should the ideas of those who are “civilised” be preferred to the “earthy common sense” of the *uncivilised*? Wasn't Justice Jackson just saying, “We all know what they did was wrong,” and defining “we all” to mean the victors rather than the vanquished?

In his speech, Justice Jackson came nearer to solving the dilemma when he said, “The Charter of this Tribunal evidences a faith that the law is not only to govern the conduct of little men, but that even rulers are, as Lord Chief Justice Coke put it to King James, “under God and the law.” But he seems to have fought shy of taking this further since the USA with its ideas of religious neutrality in government preferred not to mention God in connection with the foundation of law and the USSR, also represented on the prosecuting side at the Nuremberg trials, firmly denied God's existence.<sup>5</sup>

In fact, it is impossible to define right and wrong without reference to some standard which is outside human intervention. There is a deep revulsion in human beings against crimes of the type committed by the Nazis and it is only by suppressing this feeling that men can behave as the Nazi war criminals did. Yet if we deny God, it is not possible to account for this feeling without resorting

4 Illustration: Nuremberg Palace of Justice today. By Nichohofmann - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=9800353>

5 The non prosecution of the Soviet perpetrators of war crimes a Nuremberg was one of the biggest problems with the trials. It made Göring's accusation ring true.

to some idea of human consensus. And consensus leaves us with a problem. If morality is just a human custom, convention, agreement, matter of expediency or majority decision it can change over time or even differ from once place to another. This was exactly what Göring was arguing.

Outside a Christian world view which sees God's Word, the Bible, as the source and reference point for morality, an unchanging definition of morality cannot exist.

Since the days of Alfred the Great and earlier, the English legal system has been based on God's Word – in particular the 10 Commandments. The Bible says clearly that rulers are given by God for a specific purpose. A ruler is the "...minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." (Romans 13:4) A ruler who makes laws that go against God's law as revealed in his Word, the Bible, is making *invalid laws* since in that case they are not punishing "evil doers" but those who do good.

An example of an invalid law would be one that punished people with death on the basis of their ethnic group, their health or their age. This has no sanction in the Bible. Such a law revolts the "common sense of mankind" but this is a *consequence* of it being a violation of God's Law not the *reason* for it. The Nazi's had such laws, allowing them to massacre Jews, handicapped people and the unborn. But such laws were, are and always will be *invalid*. The Nazi leaders could therefore be called to account on the basis of a higher law.

### Something to make

In July 1874 a plague of grasshoppers hit Kansas, destroying crops and ruining homesteads. If you have read *On the Banks of Plum Creek* (the fourth of the "Little house" Books) by Laura Ingalls Wilder you will have some idea of the terrible devastation they caused. The Ingalls family lived through the plague but lost everything as a result of it. One of the greatest natural disasters in American history, the devouring grasshoppers left terrible poverty in their wake as the poor settlers had their livelihoods destroyed. On **8<sup>th</sup> August** 1874 the swarms of grasshoppers reached Denver, Colorado, picked up by a thunderstorm gust front and were carried right into the city itself. Millions of them were seen cruising through the air in the city streets.

Make your own grasshopper:

you will need:

a wooden clothes peg (spring type)

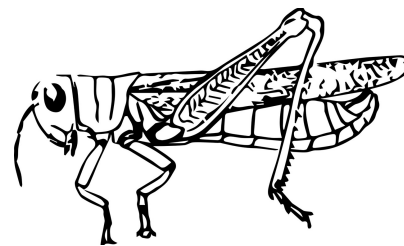
some green paint

two googly eyes

glue

green pipe cleaners

magnetic tape (optional)



Paint the clothes peg green. Let the paint dry.

Place the peg on the table so that the flat side is on the table. Glue the eyes on the front of the clothes peg on the top of the opening end.

Now use a length of pine cleaner to make the back legs. Pass the pipe cleaner through the hole in the spring of the clothes peg. The back legs should be rather long. Cut the pipe cleaner to length and bend the legs backwards into a realistic position.

Two short pieces of pipe cleaner are used to make the antennae. Glue them behind the eyes and bend them upwards and forwards.

The other two pairs of legs are made from two pieces of pipe cleaner, shorter than the back legs. Open the clothes peg and push in the two pieces of pipe cleaner together at right angles to the clothes peg. Secure with a spot of glue and bend into shape.

If you stick a strip of magnetic tape on the base of your grasshopper, he will stick on the fridge door.