

18<sup>th</sup> March

## Memory verse

There is no God like thee, in heaven above or on earth beneath. I Kings 8:23



## A picture to look at

Dutch portrait painter, Cornelis Ketel (1548 – 1616) was born on **18<sup>th</sup> March** in Gouda in the Netherlands. He was a man of many talents – he also wrote poetry and made sculptures. Not only did he work in the Netherlands but also in France and in London during the reign of Elizabeth I.

Ketel was famous in his lifetime for his allegorical painting but these have almost all been lost now. A tantalizing fragment was discovered recently of one his allegories, probably the “Triumph of Wisdom and Prudence over Force”, which he painted in England.

The painting above is called “The Company of Captain Rosecrans and Lieutenant Pauw” and it was painted in 1588. The painting is not exactly as Ketel intended it. It has been trimmed down and the city gate, which would have formed a dramatic backdrop to the scene has been almost completely removed as a result. But who are all these men, obviously dressed up in their best clothes and striking a variety of heroic poses?

The Dutch at this time were in revolt against Spain. Their leader in this fight for freedom was the Prince of Orange, William the Silent (1533-1584), one of the first European rulers to try to put into practice the ideas of religious toleration from which we still benefit today. The Dutch Republic did not become independent until 1588, but the Dutch provinces, led by the Prince of Orange, were by 1572 in full rebellion against their overlord, Philip II of Spain. The seven northerly provinces finally broke with Philip II in 1581. From 1580, at the initiative of William of Orange, the old Dutch militia guilds were refashioned into civic guards organized along military lines. These were the days before police forces or fire brigades. The militia had to alert the town in case of attack, deal with a revolt if it occurred and also organise fire fighting if a blaze broke out. They also closed the town gates at night and opened them in the morning. This is probably why the town gate featured so prominently in Ketel's original painting.

The town would be divided up into districts which the militia would guard at night in shifts or watches, usually in pairs. They trained in an open space outside the town or, if the weather was not suitable, in the church. Later on they had their own hall for training. The officers were prominent citizens appointed by the magistrate. The ensign was always a young bachelor; can you see him in the picture carrying the flag? The militia had to buy their own uniforms and weapons. Can you see a young man in a white doublet in the picture? He is carrying an arquebus, a kind of gun that fired a lead ball.<sup>1</sup> There is another arquebus in the picture too can you spot it?

The militia paraded each month and every year they had a banquet or ox roast in their training hall. Whenever there was a change in the senior officers (perhaps because someone had died or moved away) they would have a group painting made. At first this was generally set in the training hall at the banquet with all the militia members sitting at the table. It was Ketel who introduced the full length group portrait like the one you see above and other artists quickly took up the lucrative idea.

In these portraits, every individual militia member paid to be included. A prominent place in the picture would usually be more expensive than one in the background although some militias divided the cost equally among themselves. However, this latter method of payment sometimes caused arguments when some members were disappointed to find themselves at the back of the picture. Rather than assemble the militia for the painting sessions, the artist would go round to the individual men and paint them one at a time. Each man put on his best clothes and Ketel was very skilled at rendering the rich fabrics and elegant lines of these garments.

Two dogs have made it into the picture above. The large muzzled animal perhaps helped the militia in their nightly rounds. The little one jumping up at his master makes a good contrast to the well behaved sombre coloured watchdog. As the pictures were hung in the militia hall when finished, they were often damaged during the practice sessions! Perhaps that is why the picture above has had to be trimmed down.

This particular picture of Ketel's influenced another Dutch painter, Rembrandt. Can you find a reproduction of his "Night Watch" in any of your own encyclopedias or reference books?<sup>2</sup> Rembrandt is said to have got into a lot of trouble with the militia who commissioned his picture. Look at it closely. Can you think why?<sup>3</sup>

### Something to draw or paint

What about the lost painting, "The Triumph of Wisdom and Prudence over Force"? It was an allegorical picture and the subject might make you think of characters such as those you will have met if you read Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. In fact Christian does meet a character called Prudence at the Palace Beautiful in the book. Think about the three characters in the allegory: Wisdom, Prudence and Force. How might they be depicted? You may be able to think of an example where wisdom and prudence have defeated or overcome force either in history or in your own experience. An example from history might be the heavily armoured mounted French knights at Agincourt defeated by the tactics of Henry V. Or consider a task where a foolish person might try to use brute force but a wise person knows the correct tool that will do the job with little effort. Try to make your own drawing or painting of the Triumph of Wisdom and Prudence over Force.

Watch out for tomorrow's lesson that features another painting full of allegorical symbols.

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1 You can see an American replica fired here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-0lqIYTtE&t=597s>

2 See <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/SK-C-5> if you are not able to find one.

3 No everybody can be seen to best advantage in this picture.

## Map Work<sup>4</sup>

Get out your atlas for this next story which begins in Africa and takes us to Israel! I have highlighted some places in **green** for you to look up as we go along.

On **18 March 2015**, two Islamic militants attacked the Bardo National Museum in the **Tunisian** capital city of **Tunis**. Tunisia depends on tourism for much of its income and the museum was a popular place for outings from visiting cruise ships. We learned of some of the activities of the Islamic organisation ISIS or ISIL earlier this month<sup>5</sup> and the group that killed visiting tourists on this occasion were linked with this organisation. The day after the attack those who carried it out published a photo of the dead body of an Italian tourist they had killed with a red cross drawn on it and the words: “Crusader Crushed.” What did these evil men mean by these words? We will find out in today's lesson.

On **18<sup>th</sup> March** 1229 – Frederick II, (1194-1250) Holy Roman Emperor and ruler of vast swathes of Europe, declared himself King of **Jerusalem**. You can see him in the picture. There are two crowned figures and Frederick is the one on the left. The crowned figure on the right is wearing a turban under his crown. This picture shows events from the Sixth Crusade. Frederick is meeting the Muslim leader Sultan Al-Kamil in **Israel** which was known in those days in Europe as the “Holy Land”.



I'm sure you remember that during the days of Christ's life on earth and in the times of the apostles as recorded in the Bible, Jerusalem in Israel, was ruled by the Romans as part of the Roman Empire. This state of affairs continued until the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD.

Under the Roman Emperor Constantine<sup>6</sup> (306-337AD) Christianity became a legal religion and then the religion of the state. At the same time, the institutional church, drifting away from the truth, gradually became a formal power structure disconnected from real spiritual experience. Constantine built churches and shrines in Jerusalem and in other places in Palestine to commemorate so-called holy sites. Jerusalem became a destination for pilgrimages of deluded souls who imagined that by visiting “Holy Places” they could merit heaven.

Things changed in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century when the Roman Empire lost control of Jerusalem. First the Persians and then the Arab-Muslims took over the city.<sup>7</sup> The emerging religion of Islam considered Jerusalem to be a holy place. Muslims too built shrines and mosques in Jerusalem alongside the so-called Christian ones including the Dome of the Rock which sits to this day on the Temple Mount.<sup>8</sup> At first “Christians” in Jerusalem were tolerated. Then the toleration grew less and less. Eventually the Muslim ruler ordered all the churches in Jerusalem to be destroyed.

People in Europe were horrified at this and Pope Urban II ordered the first crusade. The crusade became an effort to recapture and liberate Jerusalem from the Muslims. In 1099, Jerusalem fell to the Crusaders who killed many of the Muslim and Jewish inhabitants of the city. The captured

<sup>4</sup> Information from <https://www.gotquestions.org/> and other sources.

<sup>5</sup> See the lesson for 5<sup>th</sup> March.

<sup>6</sup> See the lesson for 25<sup>th</sup> July.

<sup>7</sup> See the lesson for 29<sup>th</sup> May.

<sup>8</sup> See the lesson for 29<sup>th</sup> May.



territory was turned into crusader states which were small territories governed by Catholic-ruled nations. The Kingdom of Jerusalem was one of these crusader states. Settlers immigrated from Europe to repopulate and rebuild Jerusalem, and pilgrimages to Jerusalem began again. Then in 1187 the city and several other crusader states were captured by Saladin, a Kurdish Muslim warrior.<sup>9</sup>

With Jerusalem itself in Muslim control, the Kingdom of Jerusalem was reduced to just a small city on the coast, **Acre**, which you can see in the picture on the right. Further crusades followed but failed to drive the Muslims out of the “Holy Land” or recapture Jerusalem itself. A treaty was made with Saladin to allow pilgrimages, however. Fighting between various Muslim groups was common, and the city changed hands numerous times but with one short exception, Jerusalem remained in Muslim hands until after the Second World War.



That short exception was the result of the Sixth Crusade (1228-1229). This was undertaken after the devastating failure of the Fifth Crusade and the objective was again to recapture Jerusalem and free the “Holy Land” from Islam. In fact there was very little fighting on this crusade. The dynasty of Saladin was now at war with itself and during the Fifth Crusade, Sultan Al-Kamil, hard pressed by war within his own family, had offered to exchange territory in return for peace with the crusaders. If he did not have to fight with crusaders, Al-Kamil could concentrate on battling with his relatives. No one on the crusaders side took up his offer. Frederick II had promised to go on crusade before the Fifth Crusade but did not go. He married a nine year old princess who had inherited the title of Queen of Jerusalem in order to make his claim to that city more legitimate but still lingered far longer than the pope would have liked before setting off.



Frederick's forces, when after many vicissitudes he finally arrived in the “Holy Land”, were rather small, too small to have taken Jerusalem, but Sultan Al-Kamil seems not to have realised this. His position in the war with his brothers was a little better but he was still prepared to exchange territory for peace. He handed over Jerusalem with the exception of some Islamic holy sites, as well as other territories including Bethlehem and Nazareth, in return for Frederick's support against his enemies.

So it was that Frederick at last entered Jerusalem on 17 March 1229. The **next day**, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, he placed the crown on his own head.

You will sometimes hear the Crusades called “Christian Crusades” today but they were certainly not Christian. Most of the people who went on them were not truly Christians, although they claimed to be. The name of Christ was abused, misused, and blasphemed by the actions of many of the crusaders. The crusades were not glamorous either although they are often depicted as such in stories. They were brutal and evil campaigns which resorted to forcing people to “convert” to a distortion of Christianity, putting to death those who refused. Many of the actions that took place in the crusades were completely opposite to true Christian ideas. But Islam has a long memory and in that memory crusades were Christian and the crusaders' actions were examples of Christian behaviour. I do not know whether the Italian tourist who met his death in that Islamic attack on **18<sup>th</sup>**

<sup>9</sup> See the optional resources for the lesson for 21<sup>st</sup> September.

**March** 2015 in Tunisia was a Christian or not, but in the eyes of his attacker he was a Christian and therefore a crusader just because he came from Europe. The man who killed him imagined he was getting revenge for what happened all those long centuries before.

Depending on where you live in Britain, it is possible that you have a number of Muslim neighbours. We should remember them in our prayers, be as friendly to them as possible and take every opportunity to tell them about the Saviour. By kindness and friendliness Christians can demonstrate that they are *not* crusaders but servants of Jesus Christ who have a message of peace with God to share with everyone.