

Can you tell when it is going to rain?

I still have not worked out where to look to tell if it is going to rain here in Hornsby. In The Oaks, I looked out over the hills to the South West, and if they were covered with a mist on a cloudy day, then I knew that very shortly it would pour on my house. Can you tell when it is going to rain?

Jesus said (Luke 12:54-55) *When you see a cloud coming up in the west, at once you say, 'It is going to rain,' and it does. And when you feel the south wind blowing, you say, 'It's going to get hot,' and it does.*

For us, it is probably the other way round, because we live on this side of Australia and not in Jerusalem. He said that they knew how to tell what sort of weather they were going to get. Whether they were right every day of the week is not relevant, except maybe to the weather bureau, but he said this for a purpose.

He called them hypocrites. *You can look at the earth and the sky and tell what it means; why then do you not know the meaning of this present time?*

They could see signs which told them about rain or heat, yet they ignored other signs they could see. They did not want to see the warning signs. They just wanted to run and hide.

For the signs were there. Jesus himself gave many signs of the events to come. He gave more than signs too, he told people that a time of great fire would come. He told them that great hurt and pain would come. Yet they turned a deaf ear to him. They ignored what he said and the signs he pointed out.

They were too busy in thinking about what to wear for the weather, and what clothes they could afford for the seasons to be concerned with the big signs of what was coming. So he called them hypocrites! They pretended they wanted to know what God was wanting for them, but they ignored his signs.

The big shock to come would be a future shock. Not about how will we feed ourselves, or how will our planet survive. The future shock was that Jesus would die, rise and come back again and make a vast difference to our world.

And even knowing that sign, we can go ahead with life and not act on it. Anyone who has spent a long time washing clothes and they are just about dry, will know that the sign of rain means you either get the clothes in, or they are baptised.

Jesus' death and resurrection is more than just the way that we're made right with God. It is also a sign -- a sign that we must take Jesus seriously. He said we must be ready.

One day Billy was playing sport at school, and accidentally hit a cricket ball into a boy's mouth, breaking 2 teeth. Billy felt bad, and the other boy said he would sue him. For weeks, Billy did not know what to do. He avoided the other boy, and did not tell his mum about the accident. He knew that being sued meant lots of money, and going to court, and maybe even police. Billy just wanted to run and hide. It would have been better if he had told his mum, made up with the other boy, and fixed the friendship. It might have stopped the court case.

But Billy saw the signs, and was not ready for what was coming.

Like many divorces, Mary's got very nasty. Richard wanted the lot, including custody of Amy. Richard had tried to talk, but Mary was not interested, for she was too much in love with her new man, and a bit scatter-brained. She knew tough times were coming in court, but it would have been much better if they settled their differences before it went to court, because she lost most things.

Jesus is very wise. In Luke 12:57 (GNB) he said *If a man brings a lawsuit against you and takes you to court, do your best to settle the matter with him while you are on the way, so that he won't drag you before the judge, and the judge*

*hand you over to the police, and the police put you in jail. You will not come out of there, I tell you, until you pay the last cent of your fine.*

How much better to settle the matter before it goes too far. It is no use hiding and not preparing. There is a lot of good in trying to settle it before it is too late.

Jesus knew the best way to live and how to avoid unnecessary bad things happening like that. But Jesus did not just say this to help us avoid going to jail, or from being fleeced in court. His purpose in Luke 12 was much greater than simply telling us how to avoid jail. He said it to help us avoid something far worse.

He said that as we recognise the signs of the times, we are to be ready. Something far worse is coming, and we are to avoid it.

The signs are shouting to us to be ready. We are to settle things with Jesus now, to become his friend. For he will come back and take us to God's court. If we have not settled with Jesus before then, then we will be jailed in hell forever. We will not get out, for how can we pay the last cent to God?

Right now we should settle with Jesus. We are not to wait until we are older, for the signs of the present time say that the end could come anytime.

I passed a fox on the road one day. As that fox was running across the road, I am sure it was not thinking about how short its life would be. It wanted to get to the other side. It never made it.

As a cat stalked a bird, the bird was not aware that death was close. It was busy gathering feed, or bits for its nest.

Life is always so busy that we run and hide from the signs of death being close.

Yet with Jesus, we need not fear hell. He freely helps us be right with him. He died on the cross and rose again, so that we could freely settle with him, before we face God when we die. He paid the penalty, the very last cent for us, and if

we accept him as our friend who has done that for us, then the last cent is paid for you and for me, and we won't go to hell.

Jesus is such a wonderful friend, who's done that for us. Do not hide from his love. Do not think you can hide and not be found by God. But come to him openly before that day of judgment and thank him for Jesus. For Jesus is our best friend.