



# Church on the Hill

Sunday 28 May 2017



**Theme:** Sent Out  
**Vicar:** Susan Gill  
**Preacher:** Susan Gill / Barbara Harford  
**Readings:** Isaiah 55:1, 6-13, Luke 10:1-9

**Sentence:**

My ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.

- *Isaiah 55:7*

**Prayer for the day:**

Holy Father, you have not left us alone. Instead you promised your everlasting protection. In all we face, may we know presence and experience your abiding care, so that nothing

can destroy our trust in Jesus Christ and the strength of the Holy Spirit. You live and reign; one God, now and for ever.

**Amen**

*Following Jesus, Building Community*

# Reflections...



## Violence in the Old (First) Testament

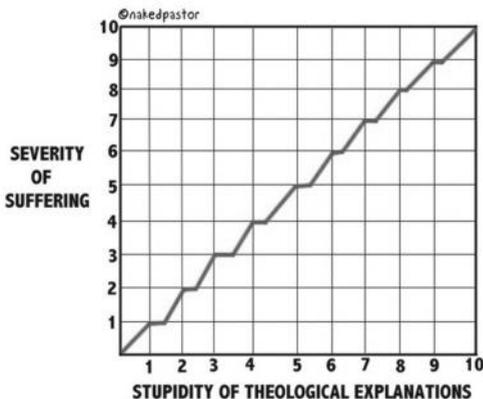
Have you heard a good explanation of why God, and God's people, appear so violent? I've heard a few and none of them really satisfy me. Here are some:

- The destruction was directed more at the Canaanite religion (Deuteronomy 7:3-5, 12:2-3) than at the Canaanite people.
- It created a religious/historical context in which God could send the Messiah to the world.
- God gave the Canaanite people over 400 years to repent of their evil ways.

What about when children were killed? Some arguments go like this:

- We are all born in sin (Psalm 51:5; 58:3). Infants are just as condemned from sin as adults are.
- God is sovereign over all of life and can take it whenever He sees fit.
- It would have been cruel for God to kill all the Canaanites except the children. They needed their parents protection and provision.
- They would have grown following the same evil religions their parents did.
- God took them before the age of moral accountability; then they went straight to heaven

There is some truth in all of those arguments but how helpful are they? Here's a chart from my nakedpastor challenger:



I tend to agree with him. Logical arguments can only go so far. Then they become unhelpful at best and downright damaging at worst.

Richard Dawkins refers to the God of the Old Testament as "a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser." Ouch!!! Is there any truth in what he says?

The character of the God I know is nothing like he describes. So how do we account for the First Testament violence?

Rob Bell was asked that question. Here is his answer:

So many people read what's called the Old Testament or more accurately the Hebrew Scriptures and they're like, why is there all this violence? One of the answers is because the editors of these stories want you to see the futility of violence. You don't think to yourself, "Oh, obviously Quentin Tarantino thinks that the solution to every problem is violence. When you see a Quentin Tarantino film, in some ways you think he's spoofing on the ridiculous notion that violence can solve things. So there's this whole level of subtlety and nuance, and I would argue like the book of Judges, which is just Game of Thrones meets a David Cronenberg film, I would argue that's the editor's point. The editor is saying, "Have you noticed here that the violence isn't working?" So you'll have critics of the Bible saying they don't believe in these ancient violent fairy tales. Well, neither do the people who wrote it. That's probably why they're writing it.

I have to say his response resonates with me far more than the other answers above.

By the way, Rob Bell has just put out a new book called 'What is the Bible?: How an Ancient Library of Poems, Letters and Stories Can Transform the Way You Think and Feel About Everything'. He writes for people who don't necessarily follow organised Christianity. He uses language 'normal' people understand. I guess you can tell I like Rob Bell! I do. And I'd love to be able to communicate as effectively as he does.

Anyway back to violence in the First Testament. The fact that Jesus lived a totally different way seals it for me.

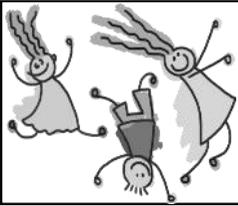
His prayer in John 17:25 - 26 reminds us that he, Jesus, is the best picture we have of God. Jesus reveals God's character in a way that no-one else could:

Father, you are the One who is good. The world does not know you, but I know you. And these people know that you sent me. I showed them what you are like. And again I will show them what you are like. Then they will have the same love that you have for me. And I will live in them.

Is God violent? I don't think so.

Learning together in love,

*Susan*



## = KIDS' CHURCH CALENDAR =

Today Sunday 28 May

St Johns

Next Sunday 7 June

The end of the story?

The toy box and baby change facilities are available anytime at the rear of the Church.

Prayers and offers of help are appreciated. Catherine 022 647 9810

**Alpha Update** - Alpha got off to a good start with the first session *Who Is Jesus?* and some good discussion to follow. It is not too late to join us for the next session on Tuesday 6 June. The topic is *Why Did Jesus Die?* Please remember to keep the Alpha Course participants in your prayers.

**Lunch on the Hill** - Yvonne would love to hear from anyone who can cook for Lunch on the Hill. When our regular cooks are away or sick it is sometimes hard to find a replacement. Even if you can only help occasionally it would be good if I could have you to call upon. I would like to thank our regular cooks who have a real passion for this ministry and all who help in other ways in this ministry. It would not happen apart from the dedication of these people.

### Prayers for the Week

**Our World** - Lord God, while mindful of current problems that beset our world, may we never forget those many brave Christians in previous generations who resisted evil to establish the precious faith that can both calm and inspire us. When saddened by some mindless oppression or cruelty, such as the tragedy in Manchester, may we draw consolation from those examples of spiritual heroism that history teaches. We should indeed count our blessings in this peaceful land. But above all we thank Jesus for showing us the path to salvation; may we strive to appreciate the immensity of his sacrifice and dedicate ourselves as disciples to work for a better world.

**Our Community** - We give thanks that restoration of the earthquake- damaged cathedral in Christchurch is to be decided by the next Anglican synod there and express a hope that other interests in the city with contrary views will be reconciled. We pray that all who journey on the difficult alternative highway between us and Christchurch should remain safe from dangers that have been taking such a toll on that important route. We also pray for St John's and all who work on a paid or voluntary basis. We appreciate their work on behalf of our community and ask for protection and blessing for them.

**Diocese** - We offer our prayers for the wider community of the Reefton and Grey Valley Parish. They have many newcomers to their district, most of them with urgent needs, having a beneficiary as the family's only income-provider, including solo mothers. We join in asking for your wisdom and discernment Lord as the church seeks ways to help, including the possibility of running a parenting course over the winter months, followed by an introductory Alpha course.

**Mission** - We share Christine's grief at the sudden death of her husband Allan in China, where both have served with skill and devotion. At a memorial service in Tianjin, after a funeral service in Blenheim, Allan was remembered as a man who loved God, people and life, and whose influence will continue as those medical students he invested in develop their talents. We pray for Christine's safe return home after her final two months of teaching in China. More generally, we honour those missionary leaders who witness in countries with unfamiliar lifestyles and where basic sustenance for the population can be a daily challenge.

**Church** - We are aware of the good work and accomplishments of other Christian churches in our district, and this week particularly request your blessings for the Methodist Church.

**Parish** - We ask for your protection Lord for the buildings and grounds that comprise the home of our church family, and your guidance for the endeavours of all engaged in replacing the hall with a new structure that will be of great value to us and the wider Tasman community. Direct our loving thoughts with Albertha, Gwen, Pam, Chris, Lisa Arrandale, Sonja, and others we know in hospitals and rest homes. May they take comfort from knowing your protection is with them constantly.

## This Week...

### Monday 29 May

7.00pm Men's Forum (J. Klootwyk)

7.30pm Weekly group (K. Peterson)

### Tuesday 30 May

10.00am Fortnightly group (M. Silke)

10.00am Fortnightly women's group (B. Page)

7.30pm Fortnightly women's group (S. Frengley)

### Wednesday 31 May

10.00am Wednesday Service

10.00am Tea and Talk

### Thursday 1 June

12.00pm Weekly Study group (W. Wilkinson, J. Lines)

7.00pm Fortnightly group (J. Palmer)

7.30pm Fortnightly group (N. Pritchard)

### Sunday 04 June

9.00am Holy Communion\*

10.45am Holy Communion\*

*\*Morning Tea between services in the Hall*

## Coming up...

### Sunday 11 June

9.00am Breakfast

10.00am Trinity Sunday Combined Service

7.00pm Taizé Service

*For more information about services or groups*

**St Albans' Appleby Services 10.30am**

**Sunday 28 May**

Morning Prayer

**Sunday 11 June**

Holy Communion

If you wish to give financial support to Holy Trinity Church, our bank account number is:  
03 0751 0146369 001 Westpac Richmond

### Roster for 4 June - Thank you for serving us all!

**Leader:** 9.00am S Gill

**Reader:** 9.00am A Heslop, V Matthews

**Sidespeople:** 9.00am B Page

**Welcomer:** 9.00am J Lines

**Tea:** E Erskine, G Thomas

**Chalice:** 9.00am B Payne E Erskine

**Flowers:** M Brosnahan

**10.45am** S Gill

**10.45am** M Martin

**10.45am** TBA

**10.45am** TBA

**10.45am** V McNaughton, H Thomson,  
E/D Stanger

**Crèche:** M Brosnahan

**Theme for Next Sunday:** Birth of a new Community

**Readings for next Sunday:** John 16:4b-15, Acts 2:1-24

### Parish Contacts

Vicar	Susan Gill	544 8827	Children's Ministry	Catherine Barak	022 6479810
Priest Assistant	Jean Palmer	544 4275	Friends 'n Fun	Carol Sardella	544 9237
Senior's Ministry	Yvonne Smyth	544 8844	Parish Administrator	David Cowdrey	544 8844
Youth Leader	Antonio Sardella	027 3525598			

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### Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

10.00am - 5.30pm

Wednesday 10.00am - 1.00pm