

# The PLO<sup>R</sup>ER

FREE

JANUARY 2024



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# EDITORIAL



## Dear Fellow Explorers

Just like your fingerprint, your eye is unique – there may be other eyes that are similar, but there is no other eye that is exactly the same. I think everyone understands that the body uses the eye to look out, but the famous writer William Shakespeare also recognised that ‘the eyes are a window to the soul’, and so can also be used to look in. If you want to know if a person is really happy, or sad, look at their eyes.

The eye is one of the wonders of God’s creation. All day long it is receiving and processing information, sometimes because you have chosen to look – but there are other occasions when your eye notices something unexpected and alerts you to turn and look.

The eye opens wide in the dark to let in more light, but when it is too bright, it closes to protect itself. The eye is also constantly adjusting to keep focus. If you have used a telescope, you will know that getting the focus correct takes time and can be tricky. Yet the eye makes these movements automatically and without you ever being conscious of the process.

Your eyes are amazing, but there are some limits. If you want to look at something in the distance, then you will need help, and might choose to use a telescope. A telescope works in two ways, as well as making far away things seem close, it blocks out everything else that you would have otherwise seen. Your eyes would take in the whole scene and provide too much detail, but the telescope narrows the focus to a very specific part.

There are occasions in the Christian life when the Lord seems far away. Perhaps you are looking for him, but with all the busyness of life it is difficult to do so. Would it help if you had a spiritual telescope that made it easier for you to settle your focus upon Him?

The Lord in his mercy has provided a telescope for you – by providing spiritual songs to sing. These songs are gathered in the book that we call Psalms. When you worship God by singing Psalms, it is like looking through a telescope. Rather than being distracted by everything else that is going on – you are now concentrating only upon what the Lord has revealed about himself. Not only do you see something of who God is, and what he has done in the past, you also begin to see what it is that he will do in the future. Many Psalms refer to historical events, but this does not mean that these are backward looking. Rather what God has done before is being used to prepare us for what He will yet do in the future. He shall arise and deliver His people; He shall reveal His glory and His power. He shall bring all who trust in Him to dwell with Him.

Singing Psalms helps you to see further than the immediate circumstances of today. Make a special effort to sing Psalms with your eyes open, which is another way of saying – make a special effort to understand what you are singing. One good way to begin to do this is to ask some older Christians what their favourite Psalm is, and then when you are given an answer, ask why.

*God bless you all,  
James MacInnes*

P.S. I’m very glad that one of you has sent in a question, you’ll find out what it is together with the answer on page 3. Further questions can be sent by email, either when you are submitting your puzzle answers, or directly to me. Contact details on the back page.

P.P.S. I hope that by next month I will be able to give you an update on the building project for Miss Jansie’s Preschool.





# Question from an Explorer

**Question: How could Jesus see all the kingdoms of the earth from a mountain?**

This is a good question, and refers to an event when, at the beginning of the Lord's public ministry, he fasted for 40 days and then was tempted by the devil. You can read about this in chapter 4 of Matthew and Luke.

Matthew 4:8,9 ... the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Now of course the Lord Jesus did not bow to worship the devil, he responded rather with a strong rebuke, (Mathew 4:10) ... Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

After this the devil left the Saviour, and angels came to minister to him.

There are a number of questions that might arise from this passage. One being, how can the Lord, who has a sinless heart and mind, be tempted? Without perhaps understanding everything about this, we can see that it is clearly not a sin to be tempted. Sin comes if a person *gives in* to temptation – something Jesus did not do.

There is an important lesson in that Jesus resisted temptation by depending upon the Word of God. In each of the three temptations he began his reply, it is written, and then quoted from Scripture. (There is a bonus question on the puzzle page this month asking if you know which Old Testament book it was that Jesus quoted.) Another vital lesson is that Jesus, having been tempted, knows what it is like – and is able to strengthen us (if we ask him) to resist our various temptations.

You might want to think about what it means for angels to come and minister to the Lord. Remember this is something that happened again toward the end of his public ministry, just before his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane.

But the question sent to the Explorer is about what, or how, Jesus saw all the kingdoms of the earth from a mountain.

It clearly wasn't just that the mountain was high enough. Even from the top of Mount Everest, which is the highest mountain in the world, it is not possible to see all the kingdoms of the earth. Also, very interestingly, Luke provides a significant detail – that Jesus saw *all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time* (Luke 4:5). It wasn't that the various kingdoms appeared one after another – but that simultaneously all the glory of the kingdoms appeared before the Saviour.

The only way to understand this is that, when on the mountain, Jesus saw a vision, in a similar way, perhaps, to the Apostle John in the book of Revelation. Jesus saw in vision glory that was to be given to him as King of Kings. And what made this tempting was the suggestion that there was a way for Jesus to receive this promised crown by avoiding the dreaded cross. But there was no other way, for without the cross there would be no salvation, and God would have broken the promise which becomes increasingly clear through the Old Testament – that the promised Saviour would bring victory through suffering and death. And so, Jesus rejected the devil's lies and instead affirmed his commitment to honour and serve the Father, even through the suffering of death upon the cross.

Good question, please send more.



Rev Gavin Beers, minister in Mebane, North Carolina in the United States of America, was Moderator when the General Assembly met in May last year. He kindly agreed to prepare a special New Year message for readers of the Explorer.

# Time and the End of Time

Dear Explorers,

Time is something we speak about often. We ask, “what time is it?” We talk about “Lunchtime and dinnertime”, or we recall the past by saying, “Do you remember the time we all went on holiday?” But have you ever stopped to think about what time really is? Time is something that God created when he made the universe. Before that there was only God, and God is eternal, He does not have a beginning or a middle or an end to His existence. Thinking about God helps us to understand time – it is duration that has a beginning, it has continuation or a succession of events, and in this world, it will have an end. All we can do is measure time and watch its passing, so we speak of minutes and hours, days and weeks, months and years.

This month marks the beginning of 2024. At the end of a year and beginning of a new year God gives us an opportunity to think seriously about time in the way the Bible teaches.

**Time is very precious.** It is the most precious commodity you have. It is more precious than money and possessions. If someone was wasting all their money you would know this was a very foolish thing to do. But every day we have a limited amount of precious time, and we can waste it on so many things that have no profit to our souls. The age we live in has more ways to waste time than any other in the history of the world. You can spend all day in total distraction watching television or scrolling on a smart phone, never thinking about anything serious. The Devil would love you to do this. As this new year begins ask yourself, how did I use my time last year? You will never get that time back again. Then consider the new year and be determined to use your time in a better way and to a better end. Moses teaches us to pray about time in Psalm 90:12 *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.* You should make every day count for God.

**Time is Short.** The older you get the more you will realize this. How many times have you spoken to an older person, and they tell you that their life has passed so quickly? They remember being young

like you, and then warn you, that before you know it, you will be old like them. In the past people represented time with a picture of an hourglass with wings, they were telling us that “time flies.” The Bible warns us of this. Paul says, the time is short (1 Cor 7:29); David tells us that his days were like the breadth of his hand, and his age was as nothing in the eyes of God, (Psalm 39:5). James tells us that our life is ... *a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away* (James 4:14). It is like the steam that rises from a cup of tea, watch it closely, how high does the steam rise above the mug before you can't see it anymore? That is like your life. When Paul tells us that time is short, he is warning us not to get distracted from the main thing we should be living for, we must put the Lord Jesus Christ first. Is this what you are doing?

**Time will End.** The world had a beginning, and it will have an end. Your life had a beginning, and it will have an end. Strictly speaking time will continue for us because we are not eternal like God, but that endless time will be spent either in the presence of God in heaven – or cut off from the presence of God and under his wrath in Hell forever and ever. Time becomes even more important when we think of that, because our eternal destiny will be determined by how we have lived in time, and in particular with what we have done with Christ. There is no heaven without repenting of your sins and believing in Christ as He is offered to you in the Gospel in time. There are no second chances when your life ends or when Jesus comes back to judge. Paul tells us, *Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation* (2 Cor 6:2), and you should let the turn of this new year move you to seek the Lord Jesus Christ and live for Him.

**Time is Uncertain.** You are young now and will have the temptation to think that you will automatically live until old age. The Bible tells us that in general a person lives to seventy or eighty years old. Some live longer than that, perhaps to one hundred, but many people's lives are a lot shorter. Some people die in childhood, others in middle age. They might get up one morning thinking about all the things they plan and hope to do, and that very day their life is taken away. Maybe that person thought they would address the need of their soul and come to Christ in the future. They promised themselves a tomorrow that never came. Don't do that young people. The past is gone, and you will never get it back, the future has not come and is not guaranteed to you. 2023 has passed into 2024 but the only time you really have is the present. Be determined to seek the Lord while he may be found, and that time is now. Then live for Christ every day, week, month, and year he gives you in this world, looking for the world to come.

I wish you a very happy new year. More important than that, I wish you a blessed eternity.

Gavin Beers



## Can You Imagine This?

Imagine that your mother has given you £5. Then, as she puts the money in your hand she says, very clearly, please go to the local shop and buy a loaf of bread and half a dozen eggs, I need it right now. So you go to the shop, which maybe isn't too far away, and when you get there, you see the bread that your family usually buys, and you also notice there are many boxes of eggs. But, instead of buying the bread and the eggs and coming straight home, you choose to buy £3 worth of chocolate and £2 worth of juice and turn outside of the shop and walk down the road in the opposite direction. Can you imagine doing that? And then eating the chocolate and drinking all the juice? And can you imagine what your mother would say once you eventually got home?

She wouldn't be pleased, would she? Your mother would be angry. And in your heart of hearts, you would know that she was right.

Can you imagine saying to her, "well you gave it to me, so it was my £5, I could do whatever I wanted with it"?

Saying something like that, certainly wouldn't make things better, would it? That would be a very foolish and provocative thing to say. If you do ever find yourself in a situation like this, then you are already in big enough trouble, don't make it worse.

Of course I hope this never happens to you, though I do fear that something similar will happen to many people.

God in his mercy has given each person gifts and talents that are to be used for his praise and glory. But sadly, many people presume these gifts and talents to be their own, and so use them only for their own short-term pleasure. What do you think this will mean when eventually they stand before God? What a terrible situation to find yourself in.

Don't make this mistake. If you use your imagination well, you will understand why it would be crazy to do this. Serving God does not mean missing out, though this is often what people fear. Not serving God means missing out.

Use all that you are, and all that you have, for his glory. Make it your daily prayer - show me how to serve you today, Lord. And on that day when you stand before Him, He will say, "well done, my good and faithful servant - enter into the joy of the Lord" (Matthew 25:14-30).

## FIVE FOOLS

**When God calls someone a fool, He means it. There are five notable ones.**

1. The fool who denies God (Psalm 14:1). This is the result of wilful ignorance; he refuses to accept the evidence God provides in Creation and Scripture. Even the devil disagrees with this fool as he has no doubts about God's existence (James 2:19).
2. The fool who walks in the darkness of his own mind (Ecclesiastes 2:14). He doesn't know where he is going, but he would rather muddle on than follow Christ. Soon the road he is on will end, and himself with it (Psalm 1:6).
3. The fool who is deceived (Proverbs 12:15), and, of course, she will not be persuaded otherwise. This is the person who is always right (in her own eyes) and would rather give advice than take it, especially from God.

4. The bold fool (Proverbs 14:9). This person ridicules what God says about sin and how He must punish it. But to mock the disease is also to mock the remedy. Jesus only came to save sinners, and to reject this truth is to reject Heaven itself.

5. The worldly fool (Luke 12:20). This person lives for this world only and does not prepare for the next. The world praises such a person for his or her achievements, but the Christian praises God for the salvation He has worked out through Jesus Christ.

It is better to be wise than to be a fool. God has given us the Bible so that we would be made wise through trusting, honouring, and obeying Him (2 Timothy 3:15). The first steps on this wise road are faith and repentance.





# MISSION IN MOYOBAMBA

## HOPE

“I *hope* it won’t rain for the picnic tomorrow.”  
Can I be sure that it will not rain tomorrow? No!

“I *hope* I can go.” Can I be sure that I will be able to go? No! I can’t.

In these situations, it is impossible for us to know for certain, if what we hope for, will happen. We just do not know.

In Moyobamba we had the privilege of knowing a lady called Doña Esperanza. You can see her in the photo along with her youngest daughter, Elizabet. The Spanish word ‘esperanza’ means ‘hope’. When we first met Esperanza, she was living with her three youngest children, two girls and a boy. But her early life was not what it should have been. She had had several children, but all with different fathers. However, after she was converted, her life was transformed. She would have told you that now that she was a Christian, her hope was certain. Her mother, unknowingly, had named her well!

Esperanza had no doubt that what she hoped for would absolutely happen. This is because she had the same kind of hope that King David in the Bible had. In Psalm 119:114, he says, “... I hope in thy word”.

What makes the difference? The difference is that God never breaks His word. The promises that God makes are serious and binding covenants. We can be confident that everything spoken about will come to pass. Noah built the ark because he believed God’s word and had the *hope* that he and his family would be kept safe, so that someday the Saviour would be born from his descendants. A Saviour had been promised since after Adam and Eve sinned, and Lot believed what God had said. Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, King David, and many others also believed God’s promises and shared the same hope; the sure hope that the Messiah would come, and that, as Isaiah said many years before Jesus was born, He would die for our sins (Isaiah 53).

Whenever the missionary would go to one of the villages in the Land Rover, Esperanza was one of those who loved to accompany him. Once there, off she would go and round up some of the villagers, persuading them to go to the service with her to hear the Word of God preached. She

wanted others to have the same *hope* that she had.

Sometimes she would come to the mission-house to let the missionary know of someone who needed a visit. She cared about others. Her faith had given her a new steadiness in her day-to-day life, and a certain hope that, through trusting Jesus as her Saviour, she would go to Heaven when she died.

In Hebrews 6:19, Paul likened this *hope* to an anchor: “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast ...” Even today’s huge ships use anchors to keep them from turning round or drifting. Paul had first-hand experience of being on a ship in stormy seas being blown about by the wind and watching sailors dropping anchors. You can read about how many anchors were sometimes used (Acts 27:29).

Like most of the folk in the congregation Esperanza had received only two or three years’ education. But her faith opened her mind to be curious about God’s creation. She was interested in what our home country of Scotland was like. I hope you are curious too, wanting to understand more of God’s work, not just in His amazing creation, but also in His wonderful plan of salvation. Trusting in Jesus and knowing His word will be an anchor for you, as you learn and grow into adulthood. It will keep you from believing all the different and confusing ideas that are invented by those who rebel against God, who sadly do not realise the tragic consequences of doing so.

*Question 1: Faith and hope are closely linked. Linked to them is something even greater. Look up 1 Corinthians 13:13. Can you explain why it is the most important? Don’t be afraid to ask someone if you need help!*

*Question 2: What can you do day by day to help you to be ‘anchored’ in what you believe?*

*Be steadfast, unmoveable,  
in faith stand your ground,  
Let the world not entice you,  
nor let errors confound.  
For the Lord is your portion,  
His word is your guide,  
Be steadfast, unyielding,  
and turn not aside.*

(Scripture Union)



# PUZZLES

Colour in the text

Repent:  
for the Kingdom of  
Heaven is at hand

# PUZZLES

## Words of Jesus in Matthew

Use the wordsearch to fill the spaces below

1. Blessed are they which do \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ after righteousness: for they shall be \_\_\_\_\_. *Matthew 5 v 6*

2. But seek ye \_\_\_\_\_ the kingdom of \_\_\_\_\_, and his \_\_\_\_\_; and all these things shall be \_\_\_\_\_ unto you. *6 v 33*

3. \_\_\_\_\_, and it shall be given you; \_\_\_\_\_, and ye shall find; \_\_\_\_\_, and it shall be opened unto you: *7 v 7*

W	H	F	I	N	D	K	P	M	W	P	R
O	U	H	M	W	A	U	W	G	I	J	I
R	N	S	P	O	S	S	I	B	L	E	G
L	G	E	O	S	V	N	L	Y	T	R	H
D	E	E	S	G	O	D	L	I	L	I	T
A	R	K	S	J	E	Y	F	K	R	G	E
S	T	H	I	R	S	T	K	K	J	P	O
K	A	F	B	E	E	Y	I	N	K	T	U
F	I	L	L	E	D	R	L	O	R	E	S
I	D	G	E	P	O	G	O	C	Y	Y	N
R	W	E	A	L	W	A	Y	K	P	U	E
S	A	D	D	E	D	G	J	Y	K	S	S
T	R	P	T	H	V	B	G	H	J	U	S

4. With men this is \_\_\_\_\_; but with God all things are \_\_\_\_\_. *19 v 26*

5. Not as I \_\_\_\_\_, but as thou \_\_\_\_\_. *26 v 39*

6. I am with you \_\_\_\_\_, even unto the end of the \_\_\_\_\_. *28 v 20*

**BONUS QUESTION:** Which Old Testament book did Jesus refer to in answering the three temptations? (see article on page 3)

### Latest entries

1st prize: **Jasmine McMurray** (*Ballyclare & Doagh*)  
 Runners up: **Joseph Clarke** - Beacon Baptist Church  
**Bethany Blaney, Benjamin Blaney, Abigail Blaney, Jonas McMurray, Seth McMurray** - Ballyclare & Doagh  
**Euan Grant, Seumas Grant** - Knockbain Free Church  
**Eliana Kok** - Smith Falls      **Alastair Morrison** - Ness  
**Abigail Keddie** - Dores      **Benjamin Ross** - Portree  
**Seumas MacInnes, Catherine MacInnes** - Lochalsh & Strath  
**Lauren Cormack** - Inverness  
**Lily MacLeod** - Tarbat      **Kenny MacKinnon** - Partick

**Bethany Blaney, Euan Grant, Catherine MacInnes, Seumas MacInnes, Seth McMurray: 20 Entries**  
**Jonas McMurray: 10 Entries**

Illustrated scripture passage - **Lauren Cormack, Inverness**

Name: .....

Age: .....

Congregation: .....

Address: .....

.....

### PUZZLES & DRAWINGS

Young folk are encouraged to complete the various puzzles in the magazine and send them in to:

**Miss Anne Macaulay**  
 30 Mackenzie Place,  
 Maryburgh IV7 8DY  
 Email: [macaulayanne@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:macaulayanne@hotmail.co.uk)

Younger readers who find the questions too hard may like to do a drawing based on one of the articles and send it to the editor.

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*(Unattributed articles ought not to be considered the work of the Editor)*

Published by the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)