SEPTEMBER 2021

FREE

# THE EXPLORER

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THE SERPENT

# Elsie & James Say their Prayers (Part 1)

**"Elsie! James! Time for bed!"**

Elsie and James were playing outside when Mum called them to come in. It was the school holidays, and they had spent most of the afternoon playing with friends.

"Come on James. Time to go in," said Elsie.

"But I'm not tired," James replied with a yawn as he walked down the garden.

Once they were inside, Mum prepared supper and sent them off to bed. "Get into your PJs and Dad will come in shortly to say prayers."

Before long Dad appeared. It was his turn to read them a story. "What story would you like tonight?" he asked scanning the bookcase.

Elsie and James looked at one another. Then Elsie said, "I don't mind. You pick."

"OK," said Dad. "How about…. this one? *Jesus Tells Parables*? I like this one."

"But it's not God's Day!" protested James.

"Ah, that's true," said Dad, "but I suppose every day is God's day since He gave us the week. Besides," he said as he planted himself between them, "there's nothing better than finishing the day with a story about Jesus. Let's see. How about the man who asked his friend for food in the middle of the night?" (*Luke 11:5 – 8*)

"I like that one," said James with a smile.

"Let's read it then," said Dad.

After he had finished, Dad asked, "What if your friends, who you were playing with today, knocked on your door in the middle of the night and asked for food? Would you be like the man in the parable and give them what they asked?"

"I wouldn't hear him – I'd be fast asleep," Elsie said in a matter-of-fact way. "I'm like Mum. Nothing wakes me up."

"Oh-kay," chuckled Dad. "Elsie wouldn't wake up… how about you, James?"

"I would give him food," replied James thoughtfully.

"Why?" asked Dad. "Because he's my friend," returned James. "And his friends are hungry."

"Even in the middle of the night when you're *really sleepy*? His friend probably didn't want to get up. But because the man kept standing there, and wouldn't go home, in the end, he got what he wanted. After telling the parable, Jesus asks if God will answer His people's prayers? What do you think, Elsie? Will He answer or stay quiet?"

"God will answer them," Elsie replied, nodding her head.

"Why?" probed Dad.

"Because He is God. He can do *anything*!"

"That's it! Jesus says '*ask, and it shall be given you. Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you.*' Granny taught me a little rhyme when I was wee. Would you like to hear it?"

They both nodded enthusiastically, and Dad began:

*'Thou art coming to a King,*
*Large petitions with thee bring;*
*For His grace and power are such,*
*None can ever ask too much.'*

"Did Granny teach that to you when you were going to bed?" quizzed James.

"Yes," Dad chuckled. "She did. Now," he said, standing up, "into bed and say your prayers."

Elsie climbed into her bed and James got into his and snuggled into the covers.

"Ready? Off you go." Then, praying aloud together, Elsie and James said:

*'Lord in mercy, open the eyes of my soul that*
*I may see my need of Christ. Amen.'*

Dad looked up and smiled. "Off to bed. Love you."

"Love you!" they replied.

As Dad closed the door, James asked, "Daddy – why do we pray to Jesus?"

"Because Jesus loves to hear you pray, James. He speaks to you in the Bible, and you speak back in prayer."

"And He's always listening?"

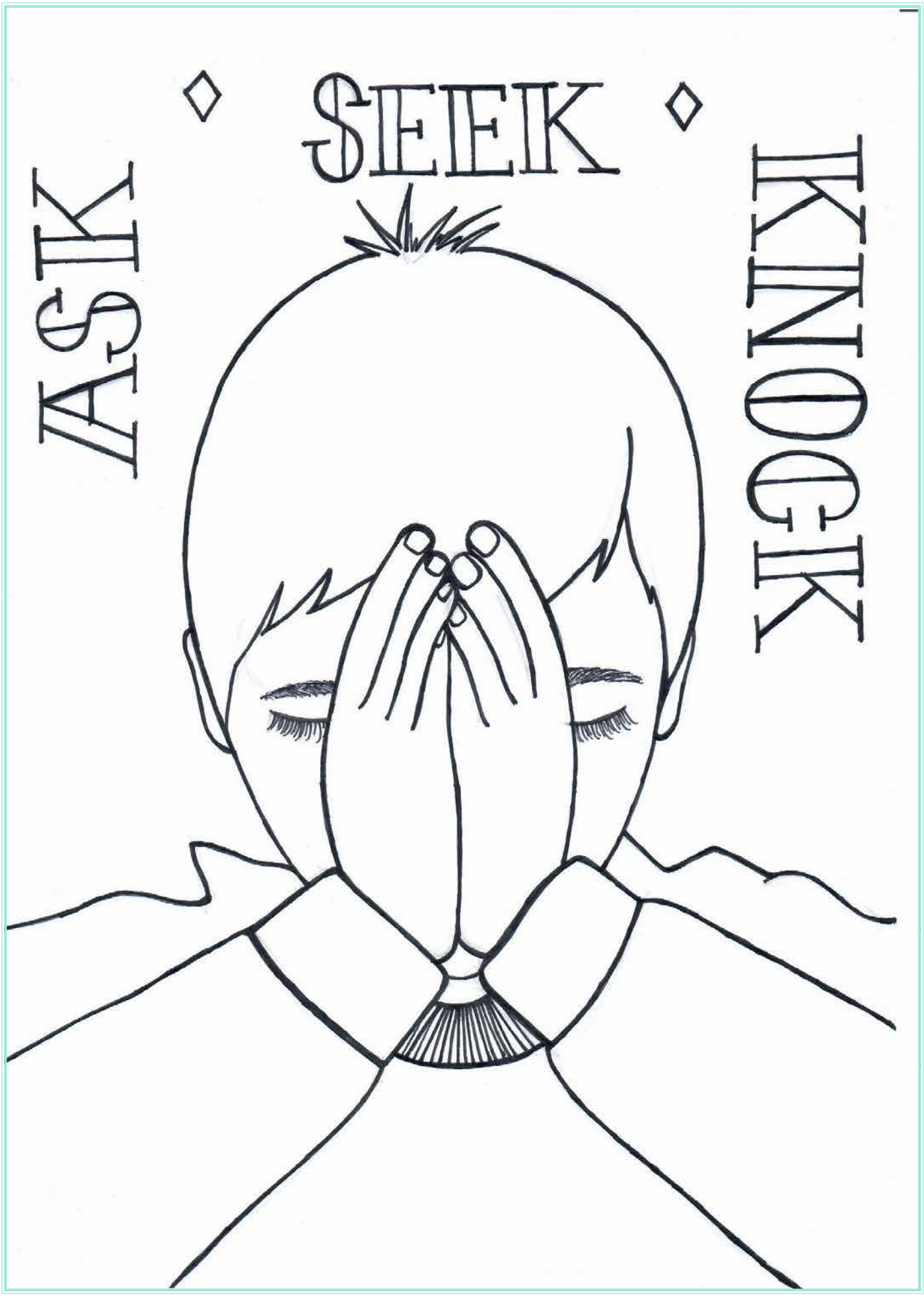
"Always. No matter where you are, or who you're with or how scared you're feeling, God will hear you. He loves to hear you pray."

*Do you pray before bed? If not, why don't you learn Elsie & James's prayer and pray it tonight? I'm sure they would be thrilled if they knew you were learning it! God loves to hear you pray. Amazing things happen when we pray to our Father in heaven.*

## Draw Your Own Pic!

WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO DRAW & SEND IN A PICTURE BASED ON THIS STORY

# Colour Me In!



# The Christian Armour

## 6. The Helmet of Salvation

**Do you ever wear a helmet? If you are ever out on your bike it is wise to wear a helmet; it will protect your head if you have a fall. If you see workers on building sites, they will usually wear helmets in case anything comes crashing down on them. Over the last number of months, we have been looking in Ephesians 6 at the armour and the weapons which the Lord has given to His people to assist them in their struggle with Satan and sin. This month, we will look at the helmet of salvation. "And take the helmet of salvation" (Ephesians 6: 17)**

The Roman soldier had a helmet which protected his head and also ensured that he could continue to see clearly through the visor. In 1 Thessalonians 5:8 the Apostle also says, "for an helmet, the hope of salvation." He means that the believer's head needs protection, partly because the eyes of faith and hope are there. Hope is the Christian's helmet. Hope looks forward, looks beyond and looks up to our Lord and King - Jesus our Commander! We do not want that vision to become blurred or lost.

The helmet receives many blows, so our hope is tested and tried. The Apostle Paul was hopeful not because he closed his eyes to difficulties and 'hoped for the best'. That is not what the Christian hope is like. It is firmly based on the perfect, finished work of the Saviour and on the promises of God's Word. The Christian has joy and confidence because he has been saved. The Lord has taken him from the deep pit of sin and condemnation, and through Christ he has peace with God. The Lord assures us in His Word that His people "shall never perish" (John 10:28). Through these precious promises, the believer gains fresh energy to fight on despite being outnumbered, wounded, or let down by others in battle.

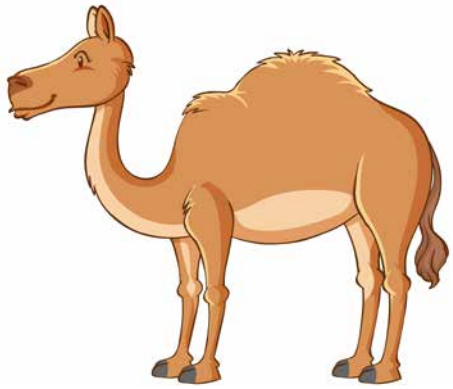
How do we put on this helmet? *We put it on each day by prayer*. We can't go without it, because we go out each day into an unfriendly and unbelieving world, which will try to convince us that this life is all there is and to give up our hope. But where there is hope, there is life: — life *in* Christ, life *for* Christ and, at last, life *with* Christ in heaven. In the Book of Psalms, we often find David discouraged and attacked. In Psalm 42, for instance, he is weeping and being mocked (v.3) and in verse 5 he is "cast down." But if you go to the end of the chapter he says, "*Why* art thou cast down, O my soul? And *why* art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God" [Emphasis added]. David is putting on the helmet of salvation! Hope expects to see Christ face to face, like Job, after the warfare here is over.

Is this your hope? What is the foundation and basis for your hope? If you are a Christian don't forget to take your helmet with you. If you are not a believer you need this hope. You need this helmet. Without Christ, there is no hope.

# PUZZLES

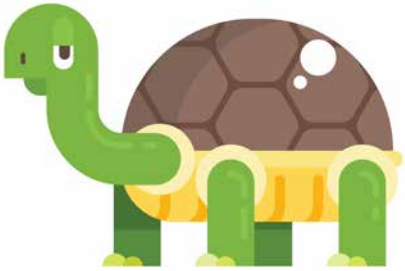
## Animal Facts

Camels live in the desert where there is lots of very dry sand which can be very difficult to walk in, so God created camels with two-toed hoofs, giving them extra support on the sand.



A chameleon's tongue is twice the length of its body. Its eyes can go in different directions to watch two objects at once and they can change colour! God created them like this so they could catch their food and hide from predators.

God created tortoises and turtles not with teeth like most animals - but with sharp edged jaws. Why? Because it is better for ripping lettuce apart!



## Spot the Difference

Can you spot at least 5 differences between these two pictures?

## Animals and Birds of the Bible

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| W | S | H | Y | L | M | P | C |
| A | M | Q | U | A | I | L | S |

1. This animal was one of the names given to Jesus _____ (John 1:29)

2. Out of the eater came forth meat and out of the strong came forth sweetness _____ (Judges 14:8)

3. These licked the man's sores in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus _____ (Luke 16:21)

4. Pharaoh saw 14 of these in a dream _____ (Gen. 41:18-19)

5. This bird was in the story of Noah and in the story of Elijah _____ (Gen. 8:7; 1 Kings 17:6)

6. David killed a Lion and a_____ (1 Sam. 17:36)

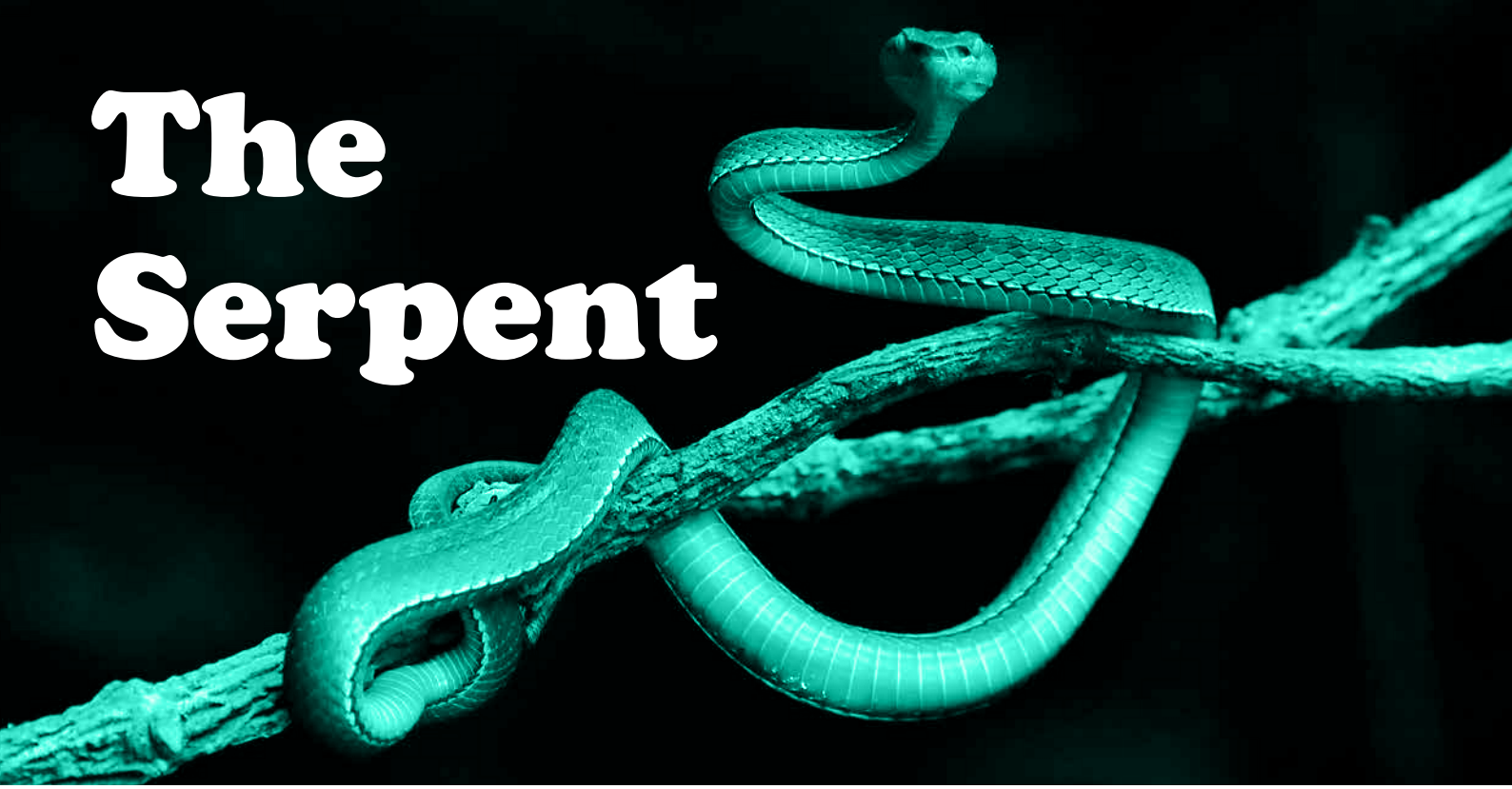
7. God provided these to feed the Israelites in the desert _____ (Ps. 105:40)

8. It was one of the plagues in Egypt _____ (Ex. 8:5)

9. These birds are mentioned in Psalm 84 _____

10. Satan was disguised as this when he tempted Eve _____ (Gen. 3:1)

# The Serpent



***Are you afraid of snakes?***

Well, I've held one. It was an *anaconda* – one of the heaviest and longest snakes in the world!

I once visited a lady who lived on a farm. As she showed me around, I asked how many animals she had and what breed they were. She mentioned a number of them before turning around with a smile and saying, "I even have an anaconda."

"A what?" I said, startled.

"An anaconda," she replied. "Would you like to hold it?"

Against my better judgment, I said "yes." In a few moments, she had taken it out of its cage, wrapped it around my torso and placed the rest of its body on my shoulders, so it looked as though I was 'wearing' it. To say I was nervous was an understatement, but I managed to look as though I was enjoying myself! The lady took a photo and I sent it to my soon-to-be wife, and wondered what her reaction might be. To my amusement, she replied, 'GET THAT THING OFF YOU *NOW*!'

Most of us are probably afraid of snakes, and for good reason too. Apparently, there are an estimated *one million* snake bites every year and 90,000 people die from their venom. They are dangerous animals. But I believe there is another reason why we are afraid of snakes, and I think it has something to do with what God said to the serpent in Genesis 3:14: "And the LORD GOD said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field." I may be wrong, but I believe our fear can be traced to the *curse* God pronounced upon the serpent, after it tempted Adam and Eve to rebel against God.

Snakes are viewed negatively in the Bible. We often read of God sending snakes as a punishment for sin (e.g. Num. 21: 6 – 7). They can also represent wicked men (e.g. Ps. 140:3). Did you know, for instance, that Pharaoh's crown had an upright cobra as a symbol of one of their gods that supposedly gave him power? In the New Testament, we discover that God makes use of the serpent several times to identify the devil (e.g. Rev. 12:9; 20:2). We first encounter him in Genesis 3. Why don't you read it before we carry on?

There are a number of things we learn from that passage about our ancient enemy. Let us learn *four* lessons.

**Firstly, Satan is *real*.** Society ridicule the existence of the devil, but the Bible mentions him repeatedly. He is not a figment of our imagination, but the chief fallen angel who rebelled against God in heaven. He can think, speak and act. Satan has many names and titles: Apollyon (Rev. 9:11), Beelzebub (Matt. 12:24), the dragon (Rev. 12:7), the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4), the tempter (Matt. 4:3), a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8) and of course, the serpent. Right from the beginning, God tells us he is *our* enemy. The name 'Satan' means "adversary or accuser." Jesus confronted him in the wilderness and often spoke of his influence. There is

nothing scarier than an enemy we cannot see, which is why the Bible frequently warns us about him. Let us remember we have an *unseen* enemy. As someone once said, 'the greatest trick the devil ever pulled was to convince the world he didn't exist.'

**Secondly, Satan is *clever*.** For instance, he: -

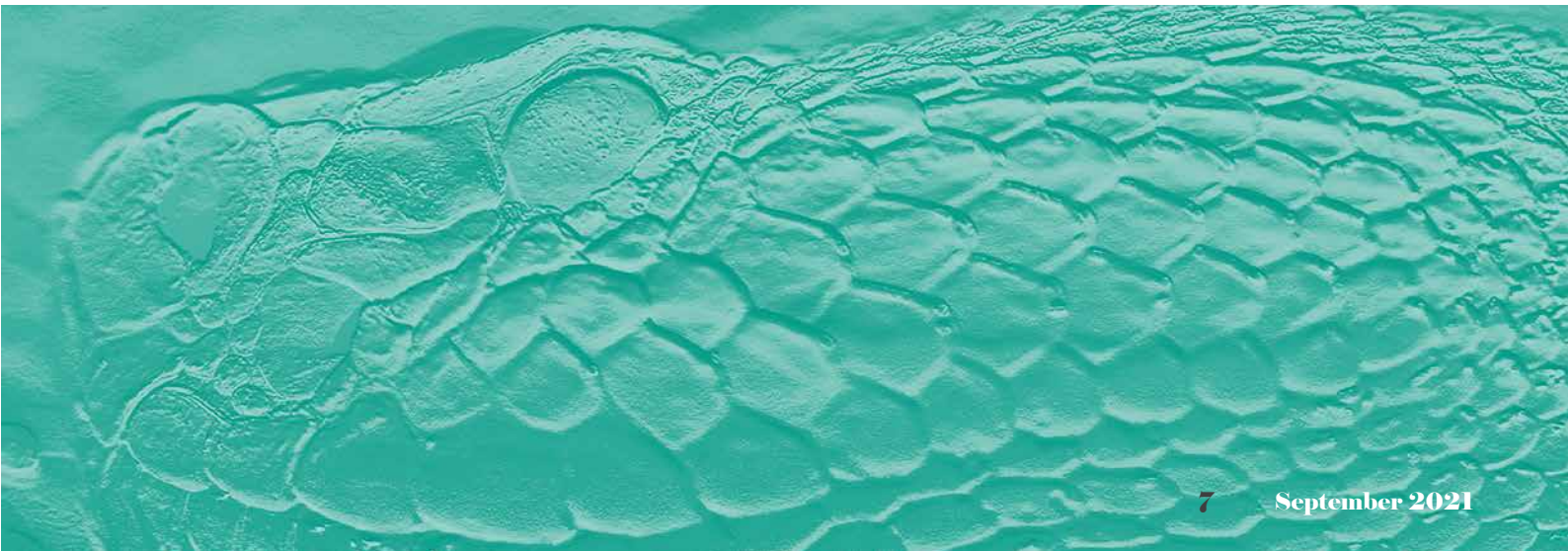
- *disguised* himself and used the serpent as a kind of 'puppet' to lure Eve into his trap (Gen. 3:1) – Satan often appears as an angel of light in order to draw us to his lies (2 Cor. 11:14);
- *directed* his attack initially against Eve – though it was always his plan to cause Adam to fall, since he was the head of the covenant;
- *deceived* her by making her *doubt* and *distrust* God's good character and Word (vs. 4 & 5) – suggesting that God's command somehow robbed her of her freedom and that she deserved better; and in so doing,
- *destroyed* her spiritually (v.6). When Eve yielded to Satan's temptation, she sinned and, in a sense, destroyed her soul and ruined her relationship with God. Then, being evil, she destroyed Adam's: "… and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

The devil is cunning. He knows our weak-spots. He also knows the Bible *very* well. He used it against Jesus during the temptation, but Jesus rebuked him (Luke 4: 9 – 12). The devil won't attack the gate of the city – that's too obvious. Instead, he'll circle it quietly and look for weak spots. He will show the bait but hide the hook. Here, the devil promised a knowledge of good and evil (the bait) – *but he didn't tell them they would become evil* (the hook)! The Apostle wrote we should not be ignorant of his tricks (2 Cor. 2:11).

**Thirdly, Satan is *evil*.** He hates God. He hates man, and he especially hates you, if you are a Christian. He will do all he can to tempt you, to discourage you, to deceive you and to stop you from making any progress in holy things. He delights to see men, women and boys and girls go to hell. He will rub his hands together with glee if you reject the Gospel and die in your sins. For many, death is a trap door to a lost eternity, because all along they have believed the devil's lies – not God's Word. He does not want you to go to heaven. He wants to drag you to hell. Never forget the devil is *evil*.

**Fourthly, Satan is *defeated*.** Imagine if the Bible had stopped at Genesis 3! Mercifully, it carries on. Though man sinned, and Satan seemed to triumph, we read the wonderful words of v.8: "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." The Hebrew word for *voice* is *sound*, so Adam and Eve heard the *sound* of a man's footsteps. We believe the Lord Jesus – in temporary, human form – appeared as '*the angel of the LORD*' and rescued Adam and Eve from eternal misery. He pronounced a dreadful curse on the serpent and sentenced Adam and Eve to hardship in this life. But before the day was over, God promised a Saviour would appear who would reverse the curse, save sinners and destroy the works of the devil (Gen. 3:15; 1 Jn. 3:8). That day eventually appeared, and the Lord Jesus dealt Satan a massive blow at the cross. We learn that God will send the devil to hell forever and ever, out of reach from God's people in heaven (Rev. 20:10).

Please don't forget these lessons. The devil is *real*. The devil is *clever*. The devil is *evil*. He will do all he can to stop you from going to church. He doesn't want you to hear the Gospel because he knows it has the power to save. But we praise God the devil is *defeated and is being defeated*. When Jesus went to the cross, He took the punishment for our sins, and opened the way to heaven, so that if we forsake the serpent's lies and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall no longer be under the power of Satan. Though Satan is still powerful, he is under God's control. So, never forget the comforting words of 1 John 4:4: "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."



# PUZZLES

## The Garden of Eden

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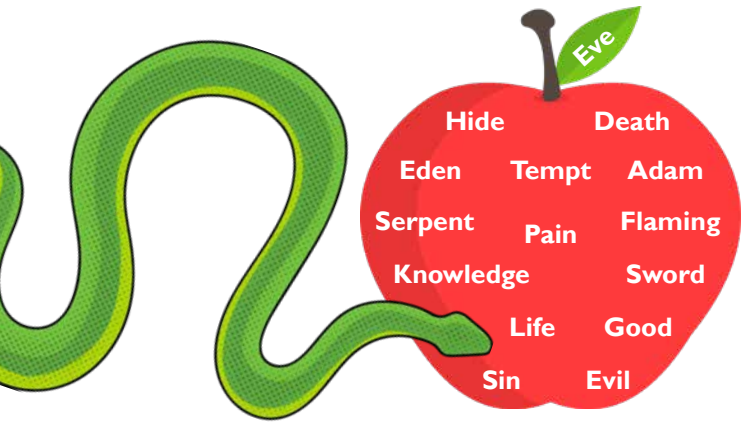


Name: .....

Age: .....

Congregation: .....

Address: .....

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### Latest entries

**1st prize:** **Rachel Flynn** *(Loughbrickland)*

**Runners up:**
**Timmy Fairns - Brora**
**Amelie MacLean, Lauren Cormack - Inverness**
**William Mackenzie - Greyfriars**
**Summer Hall - Ayr** **Kenny MacKinnon - Partick**
**Abigail Blaney, Benjamin Blaney, Joel McMurray, Seth McMurray - BallyClare & Doagh**

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**Abigail Blaney: 10 Entries**

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## SUBSCRIPTION DETAILS

The Explorer is published by the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) and is supplied free with the *Witness* magazine which is published monthly. The subscription rates for 2021 are:

| | |
|---|---|
| **UK** | **£33.50** |
| **Europe (Airmail)** | **£35.00** |
| **Overseas (Airmail)** | **£40.00** |

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## PUZZLES & DRAWINGS

Young folk are encouraged to complete the various puzzles in the magazine and send them in to:
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30 Mackenzie Place,
Maryburgh IV7 8DY
Email: **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)**