

the Explorer

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Free



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Puzzles

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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 same address.

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From the Editor



Dear friends,

If you wanted to see a kangaroo where would you go? Perhaps to a zoo or if you happened to get the opportunity to visit Australia you could see them there wandering about in some places. One of our family visited a place called Kangaroo Island in Australia and had a great time watching kangaroos and their little joeys hop about.

One place you wouldn't expect to see a kangaroo would be in the middle of the road in any European city. Yet that is precisely what some motorists in Rome saw one night. One evening a runaway kangaroo caused quite a commotion there. As news spread many people came out to see this strange sight. If they were attracted to the kangaroo, he was even more attracted by the headlights of all the cars. He would hop along, pause in front of a car and peer down at the headlights.

The people in the cars found it all quite funny but their laughing ended when a sports car came round a corner. The kangaroo hopped out to look and the car hit the poor animal. A vet from Rome zoo was called for but sadly he was unable to save the kangaroo's life. The kangaroo's attraction to car lights caused him to be hit by a car, and apparently every year kangaroos in Australia are killed in this way.

We can also be attracted to the wrong things. Things which can be very dangerous. We should be drawn to the Lord but because of our sinful nature we are drawn in the opposite direction: right into the path of danger. Satan has a way of making danger appear exciting and harmless and we can be drawn in the same way as the kangaroo is drawn to the headlights of the car. That kangaroo hopping about in the centre of Rome needed someone to come along and save it. We also need a saviour and the Lord Jesus Christ is the only one strong enough to save our souls and take us out of danger. Don't let attraction for the things of this world keep you from the Lord Jesus or draw you towards what will prove dangerous. In Psalm 119:9 we find some good advice. Find a Bible and read it for yourself.

Murdo A N Macleod

Skipper's Tales



When Skipper Found The Gate Open

I'm not sure if I've told you about Skipper running away before, but just a week or so ago he decided to do it again! Of course it was partly our fault as we were going out that evening and when I came home I decided it was hardly worth closing the gate for a couple of hours, especially as it was dark and late afternoon when Skipper usually spends his time snoozing in front of a nice fire. The other thing that made me think it would be fine was that for some months now when the gate has been opened Skipper has not made a mad dash for freedom but has been quite content to sit about in the garden, and has been let out a few times when we forgot the gate was open and has come back without any attempt to be naughty.

Well, that night we had to be somewhere at a certain time and, of course, just as we finished dinner I said 'Where's Skipper'? It is not like him to miss dinner time. (He's usually hanging around to see if there is anything tasty coming his way after dinner!) We had a friend staying and neither he nor we remembered seeing Skipper since I had started to serve dinner. Then I remembered he had been hanging around the back door and I let him out, completely forgetting the gate was open. We thought he'd be at the back door waiting to get in as it was dark and cold and damp and he's not too keen on any of these things, but no, he had decided to take himself off to the woods.

Of course, we didn't know where he had gone and we were very worried because at that time of night our main road is busy with vans and cars leaving or coming home from work and we have no street lights or pavement. Skipper had put himself in danger even though he didn't appreciate it. We had to look in all directions but eventually our friend said he would look in the woods. He took a torch and off he went. When he reached the woods there was Skipper running around, totally unaware of the bother he was causing and the danger he was in.

Skipper saw the gate open and he chose to go through it. In Matthew chapter seven Jesus speaks about two gates. One is a narrow gate which leads to life. This is the one through which we go when we repent of our sins and begin to follow the Lord. It leads to eternal life. Sadly Jesus tells us that many people do not go through this gate or follow the path of life; "few there be that find it". Jesus tells us that there is another gate: a broad, wide gate. It leads in the opposite direction: to eternal death, and sadly many go that way. Skipper went through the gate and put his life in danger. We are in far greater danger if we go through the broad gate and follow the broad way.

Skipper chose to go through the gate. We must all go through one of the two gates which Jesus spoke of. The choice we have to make is which gate we are going to go through. Skipper made an important choice, but it was the wrong choice. Our choice is very important; make sure this year that you make the right choice.



BRAVE JENNIE CAREY

Jennie Carey lived, many years ago, in the United States. She lived in a country area and would spend many hours playing in the fields near her home. A railway line passed close by and Jennie liked to watch the trains as they would come and go. Often she would stop playing and go as close as she could to the railway line and wave at the passing trains. Some of the drivers got to know her and would give a friendly wave back!

One day, when Jennie was aged ten, she was out, as usual, playing in the fields. Suddenly something caught her eye: there was smoke coming from the direction of the railway tracks. She ran over to see where the fire was and found it under the railroad bridge that crossed a deep canyon. The bridge was built of logs and was very old. To her horror Jennie saw that some of the logs were burning. Jennie could see that part of the bridge had already burnt through. She could see that the bridge was not safe for a train to cross.

Jennie also knew that an express train was due to come along very soon. She didn't need to go and ask anyone about the train times. She had watched them cross that bridge countless times. She could run and try and get help, but it didn't take her long to realise that she didn't even have enough time for that. She would have to try and stop the train herself!

Jennie ran up the tracks as fast as she could. She had got about a quarter of a mile from the bridge when she saw the train coming around the curve ahead. Standing in the

middle of the track she took off her jacket and frantically waved it up and down. She could not see the driver or the fireman but she was praying to the Lord that they would see her. As the train roared closer she waved and yelled as loudly as she could. At the very last minute she jumped off the track, but kept waving her jacket as the engine rushed by. She heard the squealing of the brakes, which the driver had used to slow the train down. Then Jennie knew that her warning had been seen. The train stopped just in time: just before the weakened bridge!

Jennie was a real heroine when her bravery was reported. The passengers, rail crew and officials all wanted to thank her for her brave act. Many lives were saved by what she did.

The Bible warns us that we are all heading for eternity and unless our sins have been forgiven we are in greater danger than the people on that train. That is why ministers speak so often and so solemnly about eternity. They are like Jennie Carey, warning and calling on people to stop before it is too late. Christian parents and friends do the same. They want to alert people to the danger. If we listen to these warning voices, repent of our sin and trust in Christ as Saviour we will be saved.

Think what would have happened to everyone aboard that train if the driver had ignored the warning Jennie gave. Don't ignore the warnings. Don't put it off. Apply the brakes! The warning has been given and time is running out.





OUR WONDERFUL BIBLE (PART 1)

Psalm 119 is the longest of all the psalms. It has one great theme: God's Word. It uses many different names for the Word of God. In this psalm the Bible is called, amongst other things: law, truth, precepts, statutes and ordinances. In verse 129 we read these words, "Thy testimonies are wonderful". Again, this is just another way of talking about the Word of God.

Why is God's Word so wonderful? What is it that sets it apart from every other book in the world? Well, there are probably thousands of answers to those questions. I would like to offer six reasons why the Bible is wonderful. We shall look at the first of these reasons this month and continue with some others next time.

The Bible was wonderfully put together. No book has ever been put together like the Word of God.

IT TOOK MANY YEARS

Most books are written fairly quickly; longer ones might take a few years. The great writer Edward Gibbon was twenty years in writing a history of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire". Occasionally some other books have taken a bit longer. The Bible took about 1,500 years! From the time in which Moses wrote the Book of Genesis until the Apostle John wrote the Revelation many, many years had passed. What a wonderful book it is that covers all these ages of human history and yet it never contradicts itself! Despite all the centuries that passed between the writing of the first part and the last it is one book. When we think that ideas and understanding change even over a century it is wonderful that the Bible is so consistent. This consistency is one of the things which set it apart and make it obvious as the Word of God. God never changes and his Word is the same.

IT INVOLVED MANY DIFFERENT WRITERS

If it involved many years, it also involved many writers. We have some of these wonderful men in the early Old Testament: Moses and Samuel. We have great kings like David and Solomon. We have that long list of prophets all the way to Malachi. In our New Testament we have Luke who was a doctor and Peter a Galilean fisherman and, of course, the very learned Apostle Paul. Surely with so many people involved they will all disagree with one another? Not at all. They are all in perfect harmony. Men have spent many years trying to find differences between the books of the Bible but all their efforts (and failures) only go to show that there is a wonderful harmony throughout God's Word. Old Testament prophets and New Testament Apostles are in complete agreement. There is only one explanation for this. All the thoughts in the Bible are God's thoughts. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." (2 Timothy 3:16) The apostle Peter tells us that all these writers, so different in their lives and characters, all had one thing in common, "They spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:21)

IT IS VERY CLEAR AND ORDERLY

We might imagine that so many writers over so many years would leave the final product very mixed up and confusing. However, when we come to the Bible we find that it is very orderly. It has a beginning, a middle and an end. It moves along slowly but surely in a clear and logical way. We see in it the Lord gradually revealing his truth and way of salvation, generation after generation. Like a beautiful painting it is composed of small pieces which together make a wonderful whole. Next time we shall see something else about our Bibles which makes them wonderful.

In the meantime why don't you see what reasons you can come up with?

BIBLE FACT FILE



A Shocking Turn of Events! Esther 6

Last month we saw how pleased Haman was with himself. He was invited to several banquets at the palace and he was arranging for a gallows to be built on which he would hang Mordecai the Jew. Chapter 6 marks an important turning point in the story and we begin to see, more clearly, the hand and purpose of God in all these events.

A SLEEPLESS NIGHT (6:1-3)

As part of his plan God kept King Ahasuerus awake that night. The sleepless king had someone read to him from the history books of the kingdom. When he heard that part about Mordecai saving his life he was concerned that Mordecai had not been rewarded for this. In those days it was particularly important to reward someone who had done something like this. If they were not rewarded others might not be so eager to defend the king. They would think he was mean and ungrateful. Ahasuerus knew that loyalty should be rewarded, besides that it would make the king popular when this was publicly announced! The Persian empire would be glad to have a festival, good news, after recent defeats. Unlike this king, the Lord does not forget our loyalty to him and no one will ever lose their reward from him. (Hebrews 6:10) Having said that, the Christian of course does not seek any honour for themselves but wishes all the honour to be given to the Lord himself.

HAMAN GIVES ADVICE (6:4-9)

In the providence of God, selfish, power-seeking Haman seeks an audience with the king. During this meeting the king asks for Haman's advice, how should he honour a faithful servant? Haman, being so proud, immediately thought that the king must be referring to Haman himself. Haman knew exactly what honour he himself would like to receive and advises the king to arrange for a grand procession through the city on a horse where everyone would see and hear how great he was. In Jeremiah 45:5 we are advised not to seek great things for ourselves and it is good to remember that as we go through life.

HAMAN IS HUMILIATED (6:10-14)

What a shock for Haman when the king ordered him to carry out his advice but it is not going to be Haman who is going to ride on the horse, but Mordecai! Haman had no choice but to obey the king. He even had to walk alongside Mordecai's horse and call out to everyone that Mordecai was the man to whom the king wished to give special honour. This was not a good day for Haman but it was about to get much worse. He didn't feel in the mood for a banquet but he had to obey the queen and come to her feast. Haman was driven by his own selfish ambition and he walked right into a secret trap which had been prepared for him. Perhaps he hoped that he could still influence the king and get his own way. We shall see next month how he gets on. All of this reminds us of the enemies of Christ who plotted his death. Like Haman, Judas Iscariot was driven by selfish greed and he came to a terrible end.

At the beginning of the chapter we saw that the king had a sleepless night. Perhaps many Jews throughout the kingdom also had sleepless nights as they feared for the future. What a mercy that the keeper of Israel does not sleep nor slumber! He was putting into practice his plans and in the next chapter we shall see more of these plans.

Jesus' Birth

Find the following words in the puzzle below:

Bethlehem

Mary

Joseph

Shepherds

Manger

Star

Herod

Simeon

Anna

Wise Men

Angels

Stable

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

Name:

Age:

Congregation:

Address:

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Latest entries

1st prize - Hannah Keddie

Runners up

Ness - Angus Morrison

Partick - Kenny MacKinnon

Shettleston - Abigail Keddie

Stornoway - Sarah Craig

THE ADVENTURES OF CEDRIC

CEDRIC TELLS US ABOUT FRIENDSHIP

Recently, I had a friend 'round for a visit'. I became really excited when I heard she was coming, as I hadn't seen her in ages. Now, this friend of mine is not another monkey like me, but a cat, and her name is Kitty. We have a number of differences; but in spite of those differences, we seem to find a common ground to share good times and bad. Can you imagine the sort of fun and mischief a cat and a monkey can get up to?! Well, let's just say there was a lot of tidying up to do afterwards! Kitty taught me how to play cat games and I showed her how to swing from the ceiling – at least that is what my owner said when she walked in! It was great fun learning new tricks from my friend and also enjoying her company. I hope we can meet up again soon, but Kitty is a very busy cat, so I may be waiting a while!

You know, the Bible has a lot to say about friendship, and I'd like to share that with you right now. Let us first take a look at the book of Proverbs in the Old Testament. Perhaps, if you attend Sabbath School or church, then you may have heard your minister referring to this book as 'wisdom literature', and that is because it has been given to us for our instruction and understanding in order that we may be able to live well in God's world.

First off, we read in Proverbs 17:9 that "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends." Here, we learn that we are to forgive and not hold grudges or go about saying unkind things about our friends, whether it is true or not. The best way to live a peaceful life and keep a hold of your friends is to treat them in a way you would like to be treated; for example, if your friend stole something from you, but had later on felt really terrible and said "sorry" to you, hopefully you would choose to forgive that friend, but say



you still held a grudge and in your anger you repeated the story to others? How terrible that would make you and your friend feel! It is a very hard thing to do, but ask the Lord if you are struggling with this.

Next we read in Proverbs 17:17 that "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity". This is basically telling us that a true friend will stay being our friend no matter what may happen to us. That is what I love about my friend Kitty – she is not embarrassed to have me as her friend, even though I'm a bit different. She accepts me as I am and I don't have to do anything to impress her. Even when I got very ill, Kitty still wanted to be my friend. I hope I can do the same for her if she ever needs me. Do you have a friend like this? They can be hard to come by and as nice as they are, we can't and must not put our *whole* confidence in them, because no friend, but Christ, deserves our unlimited confidence.

This brings me to our next verse; Proverbs 18:24, where we read that "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." That friend is Jesus, and he will never forsake those who love and trust in him. May we be such friends to others!

Cedric