

# **the** **Explorer**

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## Puzzles

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

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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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*We are grateful to Rev. David M. Blunt, minister at North Uist & Grimsay and Moderator of the 2018 General Assembly for giving us a New Year message.*

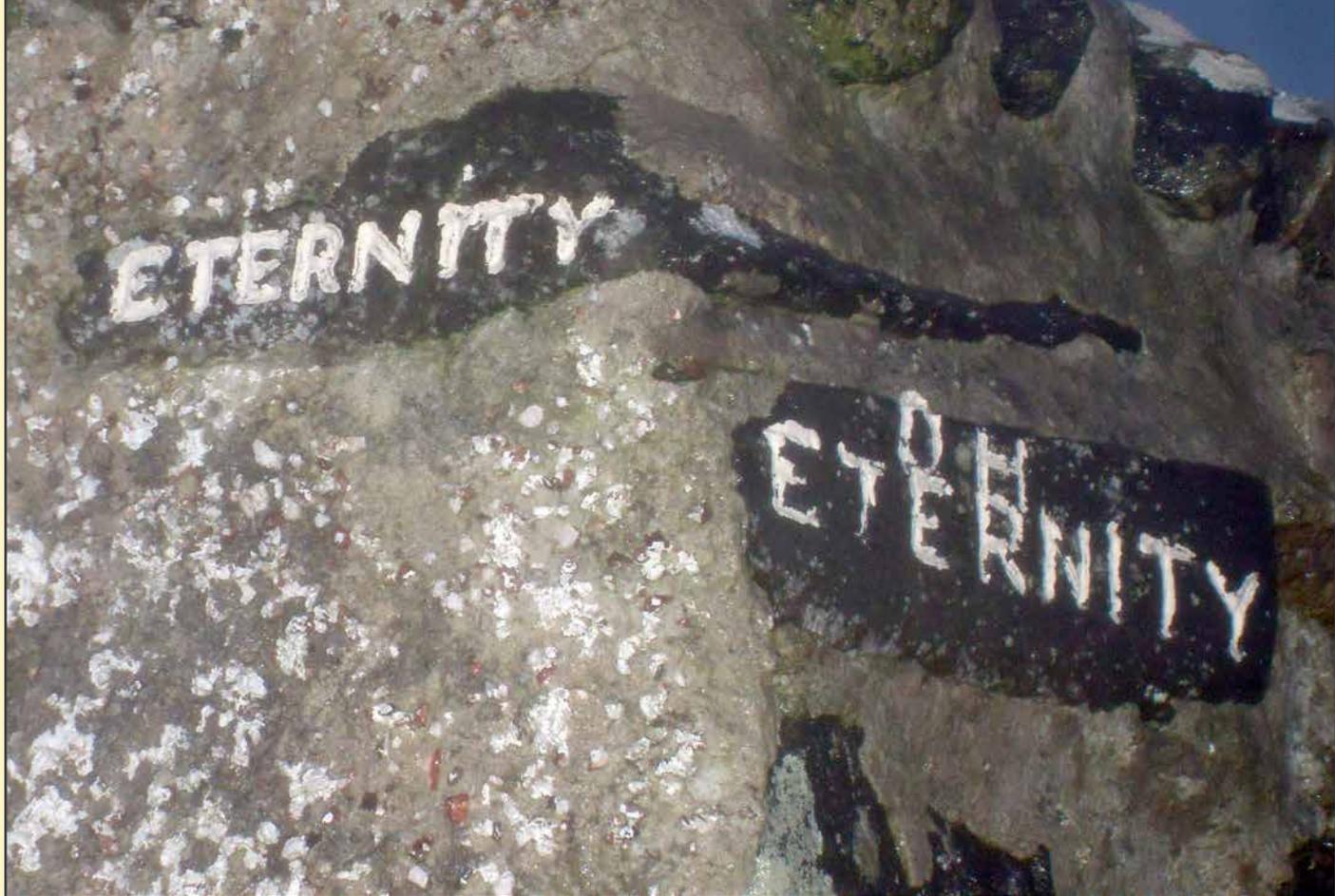


## Moderator's New Year Message

A year seems a very long time when we are young. There are so many things you can do in 365 days – and every four years there is a ‘leap year’, which gives us an extra day! No doubt you have had a busy time in 2018. Can you remember all the people you have met, the places you have visited, and the things you have learned?

Learning is the most important of these. People come and go, and places sometimes change, but learning is for a lifetime. I hope that you enjoy learning, whether from your parents and teachers or through your own reading. Without knowledge, we cannot make our way in this world. And, even more important, without knowledge, we will never make our way to a better world. Sin separates us from God, and we need His forgiveness for our sins if we are to go to heaven.

David urged his son Solomon, “know thou the God of thy father” (1 Chronicles 28:9). But how may we, as sinners, know and enjoy a holy God? God has spoken to man, and His words are written down for us in the Bible. They tell us of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came into the world to die in the place of sinners, and save them. Paul was able to say to Timothy: “from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15).



Why does this matter so much? It matters because of what will happen to us when we die. Our soul will return to God, from whom we received it (Ecclesiastes 12:7). If we have trusted in Christ, and our sins have been blotted out by His precious blood, we shall dwell with the Lord and His people in heaven. If we have refused to repent, and continued in our sins, we shall be cast down to hell, the place of torment. You can learn about these vital truths from the words of Jesus recorded in Luke 16:19-31.

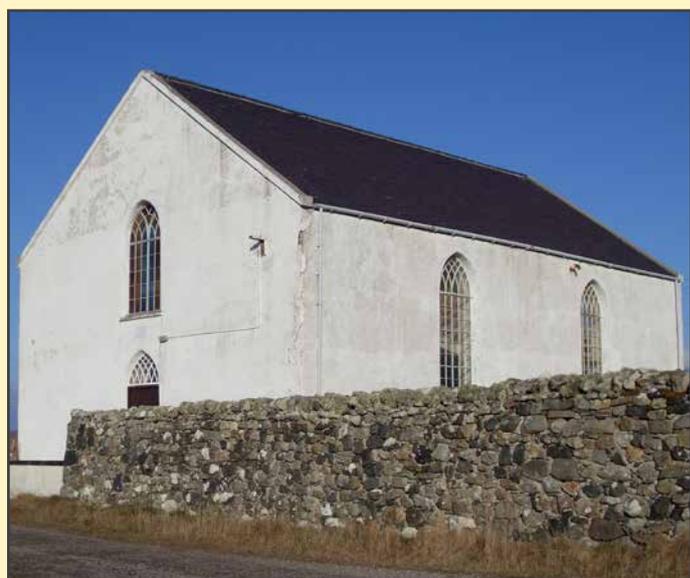
You may reckon that you do not need to think about death just now. There were many in Israel in Moses' time who were like that; it was not only the young but the old too. The Lord lamented over them all: "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" (Deuteronomy 32:29) They had God's word, and perhaps attended worship, but they were proud, careless, and lacking in understanding. They were in danger that the judgement of God would overtake them. Do not follow them in their folly!

I would like to tell you something about our church in North Uist. To the right of the entrance there is a stone wall, which is a common sight in our highlands and islands. The unusual thing about this wall is that it contains two special stones. They came from the Monach Islands, or *Heisgeir* in Gaelic, a group of three small islands a few miles west of North Uist. When the people who lived there left in 1942, they brought these stones with them, and they were placed in the wall. The stones have striking words engraved upon them: one has 'ETERNITY', and the other has 'OH ETERNITY'.

These stones have a powerful message for us all. Many do not want to think about eternity, but we need to hear that word, and hear it again, and again, and again. We are heading to eternity. If a year can feel a long time to you, what about eternity? Eternity is *beyond time*. Eternity is *forever and ever*! Think about that for a moment. As we leave this world, so shall we be for all eternity. We must come to Christ now, before it is too late.

Dear friend, are you learning for eternity?

*Yours in Christ Jesus,  
Rev. David Blunt*



# A DOOR THAT LEADS TO A BETTER PLACE (2)

*This story was written by eight year old Grace Webster who attends Newcastle Christian School.*

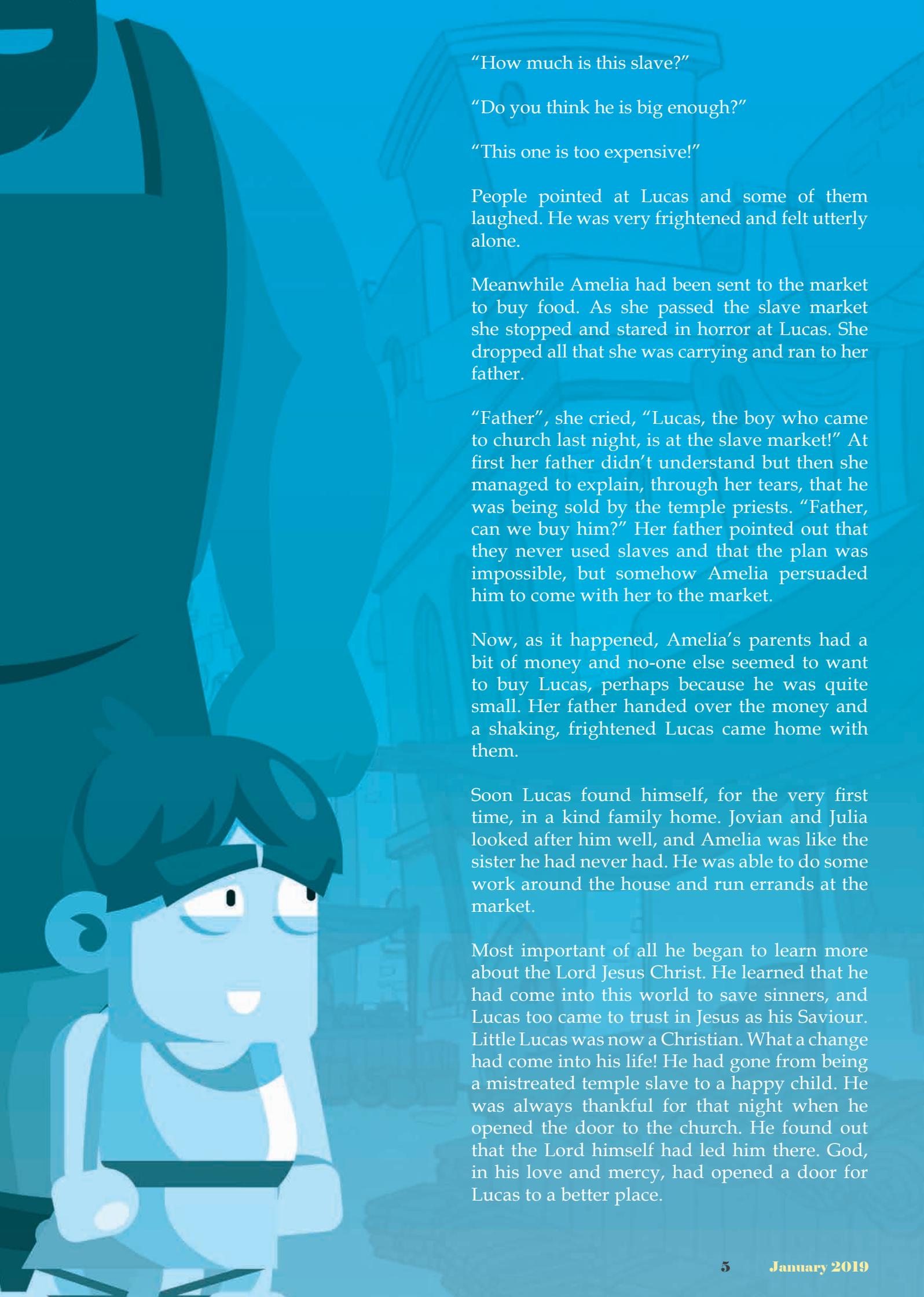
*Last month we met Lucas, a young boy who lived in a temple where he was worked hard and treated cruelly by the temple priests. An older boy called Gaius bullied Lucas and treated him badly. One night Lucas left the temple and whilst he was wandering around found his way to a Christian church where he met a girl called Amelia. She and her parents showed him kindness and introduced him for the very first time to the Christian faith and the Lord Jesus Christ. However there is trouble ahead for Lucas because his enemy Gaius saw him leave the temple and is determined to make trouble for the young boy.*

The next day Gaius spread word around the temple. He told people how he had seen Lucas go out the temple door the previous evening. "I don't know what he was doing, but it was probably something bad. I bet he was trying to escape", said Gaius with a nasty smirk.

Some boys had run away from the temple before and the priests were very angry with poor Lucas. He was badly beaten with a rod. His body ached and his heart was filled with pain and sorrow. He hated the temple and its idols and the cruel priests. Once more he cried out to God for help.

Later, two of the priests came in and dragged a very frightened Lucas out of the temple. To his horror he realised he was being taken to the slave market! He was going to be sold as a slave!

The slave market was a noisy place full of people and questions.



“How much is this slave?”

“Do you think he is big enough?”

“This one is too expensive!”

People pointed at Lucas and some of them laughed. He was very frightened and felt utterly alone.

Meanwhile Amelia had been sent to the market to buy food. As she passed the slave market she stopped and stared in horror at Lucas. She dropped all that she was carrying and ran to her father.

“Father”, she cried, “Lucas, the boy who came to church last night, is at the slave market!” At first her father didn’t understand but then she managed to explain, through her tears, that he was being sold by the temple priests. “Father, can we buy him?” Her father pointed out that they never used slaves and that the plan was impossible, but somehow Amelia persuaded him to come with her to the market.

Now, as it happened, Amelia’s parents had a bit of money and no-one else seemed to want to buy Lucas, perhaps because he was quite small. Her father handed over the money and a shaking, frightened Lucas came home with them.

Soon Lucas found himself, for the very first time, in a kind family home. Jovian and Julia looked after him well, and Amelia was like the sister he had never had. He was able to do some work around the house and run errands at the market.

Most important of all he began to learn more about the Lord Jesus Christ. He learned that he had come into this world to save sinners, and Lucas too came to trust in Jesus as his Saviour. Little Lucas was now a Christian. What a change had come into his life! He had gone from being a mistreated temple slave to a happy child. He was always thankful for that night when he opened the door to the church. He found out that the Lord himself had led him there. God, in his love and mercy, had opened a door for Lucas to a better place.

# BIBLE FACT FILE



## Esther's Petition Esther 5

You will remember that last month events became very dramatic for Esther as she came to understand that she was the only one who could save the life of her people.

### ESTHER'S REQUEST (5:1-8)

Esther prepared prayerfully before she went in to the king. You will remember from the previous chapter that to go in uninvited was to risk the king's anger and perhaps even death itself. Doubtless she would have prayed for wisdom but it was not enough just to pray. She would actually need to go in to the king. At last the great moment arrived and to her huge relief the king saw her and held out his golden sceptre. This was a sign that she could come in and speak with him.

The Bible speaks of Christ as a king with a royal sceptre. As sinners we have no right of access to God but in the Gospel we are encouraged to come through the Lord Jesus Christ. The law denies us access but we come by faith and are granted access to the King of Kings. (Romans 5:1)

What should Esther say? Should she begin immediately to tell the king of her problem? Well, at first she says nothing about the danger her people were in. She invites the king and Haman to a banquet! What a strange thing to do! Does she have a plan at all, we wonder? If so, it must be an extraordinary one considering the danger the Jews were in because of Haman. Well, they both came to Esther's banquet and the king asked her again what she desired. What do you think she said this time? She invited them both to another banquet the next day!

### HAMAN IS PLEASED WITH HIMSELF (5:9-14)

Haman was delighted with the way things were going. He was doing really well. The king and queen must like him a lot before they were inviting him to come so often to their banquets! However his confidence was a false confidence; God was working, and working against him. (Proverbs 19:21) Sometimes the wicked seem to prosper but it will not last. God is patient, even with his enemies, but final destruction awaits them unless they repent of their sinful ways. (Proverbs 16:18)

Haman's joy was interrupted when he saw Mordecai again. Mordecai still would not bow down to him and Haman was furious. It made him all the more determined to destroy this man and his Jewish people. On reaching home his wife and friends congratulated him on his success and suggested a way to get rid of Mordecai. They said he should be hanged on a public gallows. Haman liked this idea but little did he know that he was building the gallows on which he himself would die.

Haman had a plan; everyone has a plan. God also has a plan. He will save those who trust in Christ and he will not save those who do not trust and honour him.

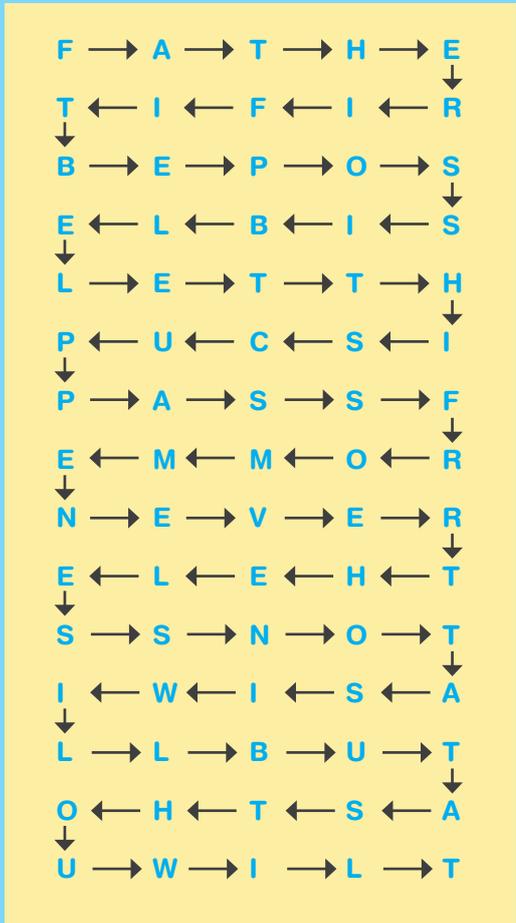
To a spectator it looked as though Esther was failing and Haman was winning. Often we struggle to understand God's ways and only much later do we begin to see why some things are allowed to happen. We should be wary of jumping to conclusions about how things will end. We don't know what God will yet do in any situation. Esther trusted in God, she prayed and then she acted and so should we. There is a promise that "none perish that him trust" (Psalm 34:22).

# PRAYERS OF CHRIST

## FATHER FORGIVE THEM FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO

Starting with the letter F in the top line follow the arrows to find the answer.

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	A	B	C	D
1	R	P	M	B
2	T	H	I	L
3	O	D	Y	N
4	U	E	A	P
5	F	C	S	G
6	W	V	X	B

### Use the code to solve the puzzle

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 B2 A3 D2 C3 A5 C4 A2 B2 B4 A1 D1 B4 B4 D4  
 \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
 A2 B2 A1 A3 A4 D5 B2 A2 B2 C2 D3 B4 A3 A6 D3 D3 C4 C1 B4  
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 A2 B2 A3 C5 B4 A6 B2 A3 C1 A2 B2 A3 A4 B2 C4 C5 A2  
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 D5 C2 B6 B4 D3 C1 B4 A2 B2 C4 A2 A2 B2 B4 C3 C1 C4 C3  
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 D6 B4 A3 D3 B4 C4 C5 A6 B4 C4 A1 B4

Name: ..... Age: .....  
 Congregation: .....  
 Address: .....

# THE ADVENTURES OF CEDRIC

## CEDRIC AND THE HOLE IN HIS LEG

**Hello everyone! How are you all? I have been dealing with a bit of a crisis since we last spoke. Let me tell you what happened. It all started off when a small hole began appearing in my left leg. At first I did my best to ignore it, but unfortunately that didn't work. Can you guess what happened? Exactly! The hole just got bigger and bigger until all my stuffing came out. What a sorry sight I was! I could no longer function as my usual Cedric self because I was empty! In fact, it felt rather like I was a prisoner – unable to live my life to the fullest.**

As I thought about my situation, I couldn't help seeing how the 'hole' in my leg compares to the sin in our lives. For example, it can often start off small and be easy to ignore. But the trouble is, sin, when left unattended, can also cause great damage. We can try to take care of it ourselves, but we won't get very far and the problem will just remain. Sin is not good for us because it separates us from God. We cannot have both because God is Holy and will not tolerate it. Some people may think they can get away with having both, but they are fooling themselves and essentially are 'prisoners', just as I felt.

So, what can we do?

Well, our first step is to turn to our Maker, the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone can repair us, fill us up and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, as it tells us in 1 John 1:9; "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Only Jesus can save us from our sins, because he died in our place on the cross, bearing the terrible shame and punishment of them so that we would not have to. Every one of us does bad things because it is in our nature to do so. Confession means telling God those things and being truly sorry for them, and if you do, then he will repair you and set you free from their imprisoning effects.

I'm sure you will be glad to know that I am now back to my usual self again! I have been repaired. I hope this little story will help you to understand the importance of confessing your sins to God. Don't be stubborn and delay as I did, for surely it is better to endure the discomfort of admitting you were wrong now than to suffer the eternal pain of it forever?

Bring the bad things to God as soon as possible and let him deal with them before they deal with you!

"If the son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." - John 8:36

*Cedric*

