the Explorer

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Free

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Inverness-shire IV2 6XF
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Puzzles

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

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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SKIPPER AND THE EMPTY DISH!

From time to time we have lovely visits from our grandchildren. They love to get up early and have breakfast on their own with me in the kitchen and it is a fun time because there are no mums and dads getting in the way! Well, one day a few of them were staying with us and they got up in the morning and had bowls of cereal and glasses of milk, and a lot of fun and noise was going on. Eventually they all went up to get dressed and ready for the day and I went around tidying up and getting the living room nice and ready for the mums and dads to get up and sit and wait for their breakfast. Funny how mums and dads notice if the place is tidy but grandchildren don't care; they just like lots of laughs and cuddles.

Well, I went into the kitchen to clear the table and reset it for the adults and there was Skipper sitting as straight as you like on one of the chairs at the table! Of course, he knows, and you all know, that dogs are not allowed to sit at tables. In fact the Bible even mentions this and says "the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table" (Matthew 15:27) Now, I will admit to giving Skipper the odd titbit from my plate and, yes, I KNOW it's naughty but grannies are naughty sometimes! However he'd never sat up on a dining chair before and I was amazed. He didn't look a bit guilty, in fact he was quite confident and just looked at me and stayed there! Of course I said 'DOWN' very sharply and he obeyed me immediately, but then he went to his dish and pushed it towards me. It was empty! I had been so busy feeding the children and getting tidied up that I had completely forgotten to feed poor Skipper. He must have thought that this was a new rule and if he was to get breakfast he would have to do what the children did and sit nicely at the table. Quite clever, if you think about it really.

It made me think of another kind of food we all need; the Word of God which feeds our souls, but if we are going to be fed we need to be in the right place. One of the most important places is church. Of course, we can read the Bible for ourselves and we can have it explained in

Skipper's Tales

family worship but the Bible tells us that we should come together often to worship and praise God and listen to his Word and in doing that we will feed our souls and come to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ. Skipper maybe got it a wee bit wrong but he was in the right room and very close to his dish where he could expect to be fed. We need to be in the right place too and be as eager and keen as Skipper was. I forgot all about poor Skipper but the Lord never forgets or overlooks anyone who has a hunger in their heart for the Lord and for his Word. Maybe everyone else might overlook you and not notice you at all, but the Lord never will.

From the Editor

Dear friends,

By the time you read this we will all be well on the way towards summer but today as I sit here at my desk we are still in springtime. Amongst other things, this means that right now on the Isle of Skye we are in the midst of lambing. It's that time of year when lambs are being born. I like this time of year but it often comes with its own problems.

A few days ago a young sheep lambed but did not have enough milk to rear the little one. To help it along I began to give it some milk from a bottle and I'm glad to say that it worked and that it seems to be managing now on its mother's milk. Trying to bottle feed a lamb is never easy at first. The mother tried to run away with the lamb when I went to catch it, and at first it didn't want to take any milk from the bottle. I was only trying to help, but they resisted my help. Isn't that a picture of the way we often respond to the Lord? We try and avoid him. We try and run away. We refuse his help. Perhaps that is how you are. Like the lamb and its mother you are doing your best to avoid him and resist him. That is foolish and dangerous. We should submit and come to him in order to be saved and cared for.

After a day or two the lamb became very friendly: running towards me if he saw me coming. It is funny to watch the reaction of the other lambs to all this. They looked at him as if he were mad. They ran away if I came near, but here was this little fellow running about my feet! Those who have never met the Lord can't understand why the Christian loves him. They look at us as if we were mad. But like the little lamb we have found a good shepherd. I hope you are not still trying to run away from him!

Murdo A N Macleod

THE HOLY WAR

2. Mansoul Falls To An Enemy

Last month we began to look at The Holy War, John Bunyan's book about the great city of Mansoul. Last time we saw how the great King El Shaddai built this city to be both beautiful and strong. However, very quickly the book moves on to tell us about a great enemy that faced the city - a mighty giant called Diabolus. Can you guess who he might be? Yes, that's right, Diabolus is none other than Satan. Diabolus hated the good king El Shaddai. He decided to take revenge by attacking the good King's favourite city: Mansoul!

Diabolus approached Mansoul, and sat down near to Ear Gate. The important men of the city came near to the gate to see who this stranger was and what he wanted. Men like Lord Innocent, Lord Willbewill and Captain Resistance arrived at the scene and they were wary of this stranger. They did not know if he was a friend or an enemy. At first Diabolus spoke to them as if he was a faithful servant of El Shaddai, and had come to help them. But he cunningly dropped into his speech hints that the King had lied to them, that their laws were in fact a form of slavery and that he was offering them real freedom. This is Bunyan's way of speaking about Satan's suggestions and lies which he whispers into our ears and hearts. He did this when he first spoke to Eve and he has been doing it with great success ever since.

As Diabolus was speaking a hidden helper shot an arrow into the town. The arrow struck and killed good Captain Resistance, who was the only man of war in the town. So Mansoul lost its Resistance to the cunning Diabolus! The real trap now sprang forward, and the enemy made a suggestion to Mansoul to break and defy the laws of El Shaddai, and to go to the middle of the market square, where was a tree forbidden by the King - the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Tempted by his evil words, the townsfolk began to desire the tree, and so they took that fruit and ate it. Now came a second loss, as Lord Innocent collapsed and died on the spot. When Adam and Eve sinned they lost their innocence. We sometimes speak of little children as being innocent but the truth is that none of us is innocent. We are all sinners and every child is born a sinner with a sinful nature.

Without either resistance or innocence, the town was in a sorry state. They then opened the gates of the town - and in swarmed not only Diabolus himself, but all his hidden helpers, called "Diabolonians". These represent all the evil thoughts, emotions, desires and feelings of the sinful soul of man.

What a great tragedy it was that the City opened its gates to their enemy! How suddenly she had fallen from her purity and goodness. And Diabolus was not finished yet!

Once in the city, the tyrant made a bee-line for Heart Castle. He knew that he had to take control of Heart Castle if he was going to direct things in the way in which he wanted. As usual he was very cunning and warned the people that soon El Shaddai would come and destroy them. The people of Mansoul (so blinded by their sin and fear) then did another wicked thing. They asked Diabolus to be their new ruler - and with that the Dragon took possession of Heart Castle, as his new home.

Still the wicked one pushed for more. Next he set about discrediting and silencing Mr Conscience - Diabolus never could endure his outcries! We all know that Satan hates the voice of our conscience. But where were the other leaders of the city while all this is happening? Is there no one to help Mr Conscience? Well, sadly not all the townsmen spoke against their new Master. Lord Willbewill, a man of great determination, now chose to fully endorse the Dragon and go over to his side. He was rewarded with a leading role in the new order. Now this character illustrates the Will of a person. The Will is that part of our character that makes decisions, that chooses and acts. It is very important. We use our will all the time. But here Bunyan shows that as Man fell into sin, so our will became the servant of sin and Satan. It is a deeply sad picture. It is also why we cannot just try harder to make ourselves a little better. Our will is Satan's servant. This is why we need a whole new will by being born again.

One last thing to mention about Diabolus' wicked acts. In the market square there was a fine golden statue of King El Shaddai. This image was just exactly a perfect image of that good King. Diabolus hated this image most of all. So he made sure that it was ruined, spoiled and broken. No one would even recognise what it once was any more. In its place he set up a new statue - of himself! What a horrid thing that was, ugly and black. So Mansoul became just like the Devil who had captured it.

By doing this Diabolus tried to make Mansoul utterly detestable to the good King. Surely El Shaddai wouldn't even want to reclaim such a broken and corrupted place?

Next month we will find out!

BIBLE FACT FILE

The Acts of the Apostles
Chapter 28
From Malta to Rome

Last month we saw the way in which Paul, on his way to Rome, was shipwrecked on the island of Malta. This chapter opens with an experience Paul had on that island.

A SNAKE ON MALTA (vv 1 - 10)

It was cold and Paul gathered sticks for a fire but a viper, a deadly snake, jumped out of the firewood and bit Paul on the hand. The islanders expected him to die immediately but the Lord prevented any harm being done to him. We are reminded as we read this of a promise the Lord gave whilst he was still in the world. You can read about it in Mark 16 verses 17 and 18.

The father of a nobleman was seriously ill. Paul came and prayed over him and the Lord healed him. The islanders now came to Paul so that God would heal them and God gave Paul the ability to perform these miracles.

ON TO ROME (vv 11 - 16)

For three months they stayed on the island. and then sailed to Puteoli, the port of Rome, on a corn ship from Alexandria in Egypt. At Puteoli they waited seven days and then journeyed to Rome. Some Roman Christians came out to welcome Paul who was then handed over by the centurion to the palace guard.

CHRIST'S AMBASSADOR IN ROME (vv 17 - 31)

Three days after his arrival Paul called the chief Jews together and explained to them why he had been sent from Jerusalem to Rome as a prisoner; it was for the "hope of Israel" (v 20). They wanted to hear more about the Christian church and they returned to Paul to hear more about the "kingdom of God" (v23). Paul explained to them that the Christian church was the continuation of the Kingdom of God from the Old Testament and that Christ was the true king.

Sadly the Jews were unwilling to believe this and Paul solemnly reminded them from Isaiah 6: 9-10 that their unbelief was predicted and described there. The Lord Jesus also quoted this passage to the Jews (Matthew 13:14 and John 12:39-40). However God would not be left without a people for himself as the Gentiles would accept the truth which the Jews rejected.

For two years Paul continued to be Christ's witness to all who visited him. The most important person in the Emperor's palace was the prisoner kept down below! Paul had little reputation in this world but he had one in heaven. At the end of the day that is what counts.

This takes us to the end of our studies in Acts. I hope you have enjoyed it and profited from it. Our next study will be from the Old Testament where we will learn about a queen. Can you guess which one?

TYPES OF MIRACLES

There are 4 main types of miracles. Can you think of **two more** for each category? Remember there were miracles in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament.

Nature Miracles

1. The parting of the Red Sea

2. _____

3. _____

Healing Miracles

1. The woman with the issue of blood

2. _____

3. _____

Raising the dead

1. Lazarus

2. _____

3. _____

Abundance Miracles

1. Manna provided for Israel

2. _____

3. _____

Latest entries

1st prize - **Peter MacDonald**

Runners up

Partick - **Kenny MacKinnon**

Stornoway - **Lydia MacDonald, George Kenneth MacDonald, Susanna MacDonald, Sarah Craig, Thomas Craig**

Name: .....

Age: .....

Congregation: .....

Address: .....

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Spring Conference 2018

The Afternoon Session (Part 2)

After lunchtime, the older boys and girls came back to their classroom to learn about the Parable of the Builders. To begin with, we talked about different kinds of houses we had stayed in, and storms that we could remember. We all agreed that even if you are inside a building, storms can be very scary…. especially if you are in a caravan!

Next, everyone had a turn holding two small stone houses. Although they were little, they had to be held with both hands, as they were heavy! Both houses (specially made for the conference) looked and felt very strong.

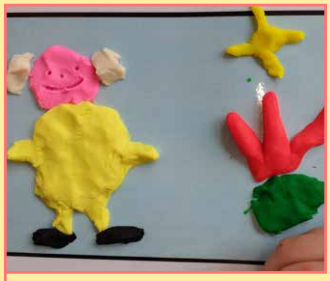
Then we did an experiment. We had a big plastic box. Inside the box, we placed one of the stone houses on damp sand, and the other house on a rock. Four of the boys and girls pushed the box back and forth on a special table with wheels. Can you guess what happened as they kept pushing? The damp sand turned watery. The house on the sand started to sink down into the muddy mess. It had looked strong, but it wasn't safe on the sand. On the other hand, though the children kept pushing the box, the house on the rock did not move – it was safe.

When the experiment was finished, the boys and girls listened as we read about the parable that Jesus told in Matthew 7:24-27. We learned that everyone who puts their trust in Jesus will be safe forever – even in sad and difficult times (the storms of life). Nobody who builds on sand will survive when the storms come.

Ruth Gathering Sheaves
by Thomas Keddie

David the Shepherd Boy
by Lois Brooks

Joseph in his Coat of Many Colours
by Sarita Fraser



Moses and the Burning Bush
by Anna Marie Morrison

We finished learning about the parable by completing a worksheet. The children wrote about the wise builder and the foolish builder, and coloured in a Bible text from the story. Then they decorated the blank side of their worksheets to look like houses. Hopefully they will all remember that the best foundation to build their life on is Jesus Christ!

A big thank you must be given to all the people who helped with the children's activities – because without them, it would have been impossible to run a program! Some provided practical and technical help in the preparation of resources whilst others helped with supervision on the day. God willing, we look forward to having some different activities organised for next year's conference!