the Explorer

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Free

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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 SCARY STAGS

One day recently Skipper and I were out for our walk and had just gone through the gate to the field that leads to his favourite wood when we heard a strange noise. At first I thought it was a horse as there are two Shetland ponies in the next field. It would have had to be a horse with a sore throat since the noise was a bit rough! Then I thought it might be a dog but it was not really a bark. A few days later I spoke to a farmer and he said it was probably a deer 'roaring'. It was quite far away and we couldn't see anything so that made sense as deer are very shy animals and difficult to spot.

Anyway, as you know, Skipper is not the bravest of dogs and he was not very happy. He stayed right beside me even though he was off his lead and when we got halfway to the woods he just sat down and would not move! As soon as we headed for home he was quite happy and ran all the way. You see, even if we couldn't see the deer Skipper has a very, very good sense of smell and he would have been able to smell it. If it was a stag he would be very afraid as they are large and can be quite bad tempered around dogs.

Sometimes when we take Skipper a short walk it takes us past the gate and up a wee hill. Normally Skipper is very reluctant to go past the gate but if we keep walking he will

Skipper's Tales

follow us. Well, next day I didn't have time to take him a long walk into the woods so off we went, to go up the hill. Skipper reached the gate and as usual he sat down, as if to say, I am waiting for you to open the gate. Normally when I walk past a few yards he just accepts it and runs after me but not this day. He would not move and just sat down with his ears back and a sorry look on his face. I thought he was sulking because we hadn't gone to the woods so I just kept walking thinking he would catch up. I went up the hill until I was almost out of his sight but he would not move. This is very unusual because dogs don't like to let you go too far, especially Skipper. Oh well, I thought, you are just going to miss your walk because I have to get home to make dinner before the prayer meeting so we can't stay out any longer. When I got back to him he was shaking and miserable. Poor Skipper. I hadn't noticed he was scared. Since then he will not go up that hill at all. My farmer friend says this is because the deer are down from the hills just now and the dogs get scared. I was sorry I hadn't noticed how afraid he was and for a few weeks we will just have to get in the car and go somewhere nice and safe to let him run around.

We all get afraid from time to time. I didn't even know Skipper was afraid but God always knows and he promises to listen to us and help us to overcome our fears. God loves to hear us pray to him and ask him to lead us and guide us and protect us. In Psalm 56 David says that when he is afraid he trusts in God. Another one of our favourites is Psalm 46 which tells us that God is our refuge and strength in times of trouble. Ask someone to help you look up these psalms and learn some of the verses.

From the Editor

Dear friends,

I am writing this editorial on the train between Inverness and Kyle of Lochalsh. It is a beautiful autumn morning and this journey is one of the most beautiful train journeys in Scotland. You pass by high mountains and lovely stretches of water with plenty of wildlife along the way. As well as being a nice journey I think it has some lessons for us.

The first lesson from today's journey is that you have to catch the right train. At the station in Inverness there were other trains leaving a little later in the morning. There were trains for Aberdeen and Wick, but they were going in the opposite direction to the one I wanted. No doubt these journeys were also very beautiful but no matter how nice the journey might have been it would be of no use if I was going the wrong way and ended up in the wrong destination at the end of it all. How important it is to make sure that our souls are going the right way: the way to heaven.

I also had to make sure that I got to the station in time. The train was due to leave at 8.55am and it wouldn't wait until I wandered along at mid-day! The Bible has many warnings about leaving it too late to seek the Lord. We are told again and again to come to the Lord now and not delay for tomorrow is not promised to any of us.

To travel today I needed to buy a ticket. In order to arrive in heaven a price must also be paid. Not by us of course: but by the Lord Jesus Christ, who by his death has paid the penalty for his people's sins and made it possible for them to go to heaven. He opens the way to glory and we can only get there through him. Are you going the right way? Are you delaying seeking the Lord? Has Jesus become your Saviour?

Murdo A N Macleod

THE CHURCH

Last month we saw some of the errors and corruptions of the church at the time of the Reformation. This month we will look at the way in which the Reformation developed. It has often been compared to a little spark which eventually became a flame bringing warmth and light into the darkness.

1) The Reformation Spark

The immoral lifestyles and false teaching in the Church were challenged. A variety of groups arose, most of whom rejected the authority of the Pope, such as the Waldenses in northern Italy and the Albigenses in southern France. They did not always teach the same doctrines, or all that was Biblically true; nevertheless they agreed that the Roman Church was guilty of false teaching. For years the Albigenses suffered incredible persecution and were nearly extinguished, but despite horrendous and murderous attacks on their men, women and children the spirit and beliefs of the Albigenses remained firm. Undoubtedly, when some brave person takes a stand it encourages others to do the same. It only takes one!

John Wycliffe (1320-1384), a Roman Catholic priest and greatest Oxford University scholar of his day, was one such fearless leader. He declared that the only '*head of the Church is Christ. The pope, unless he be one of the predestinate* [chosen by God] *who rule in the spirit of the gospel, is the vicar of Antichrist*'. Known as the 'morning star of the Reformation,' Wycliffe rejected the corrupt teachings of the Roman Church, and believed what later Protestants believed at the Reformation. He organised the Lollard preachers and translated the Bible into English – the first English translation ever.

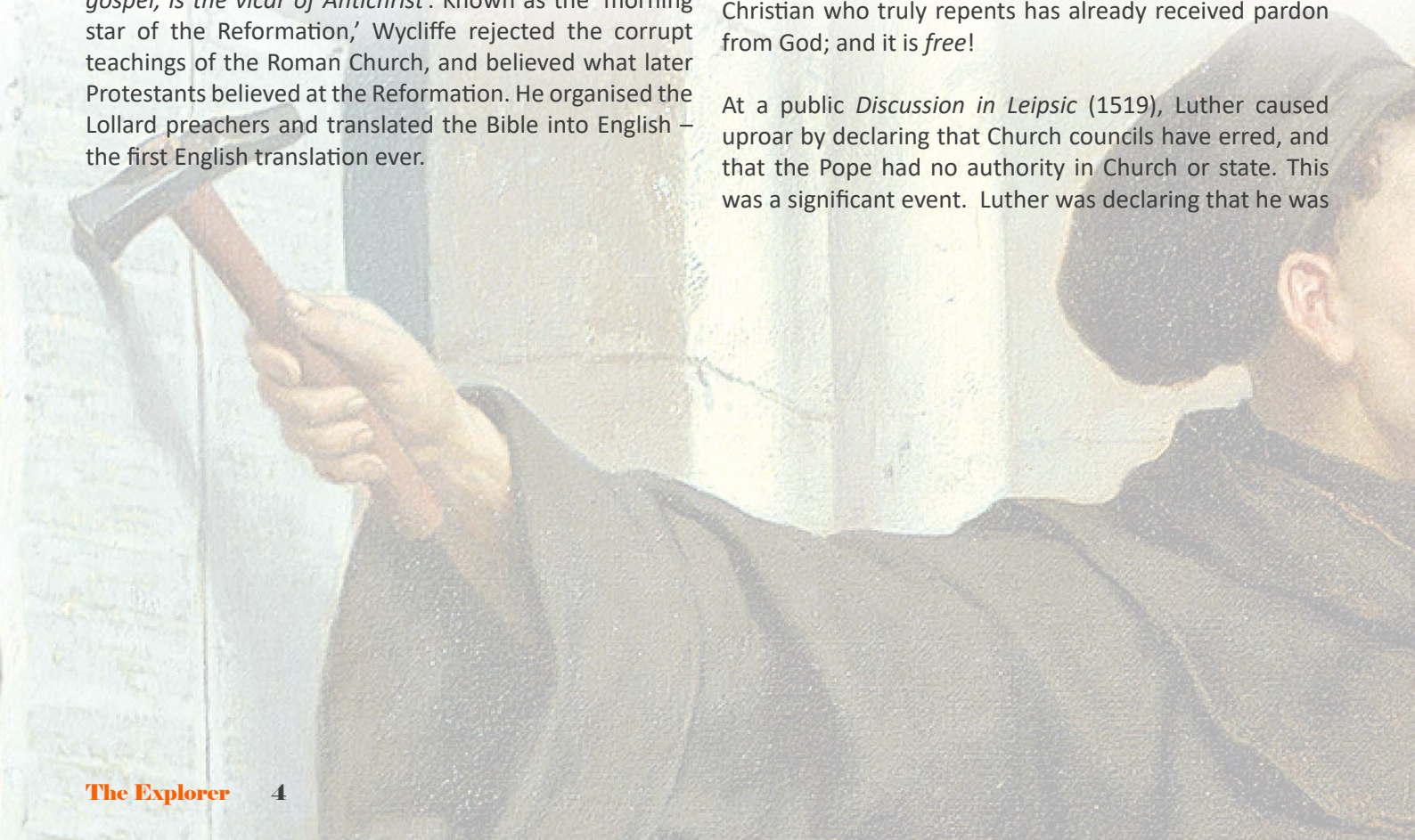
2) The Reformation Kindled

Wycliffe and others had an impact. Purgatory and Indulgences were one sign of a corrupt Church: for in wishing the new building of St. Peter's Church, Rome to be as spectacular as his lavish lifestyle, Pope Leo X needed money. The sale of Indulgences seemed lucrative. One notorious Indulgence-seller, a Dominican monk named John Tetzel, came to a place near Wittenberg, Germany saying:

as soon as the coin in the coffer rings,
the soul from Purgatory springs.

Many coins rang in the Indulgence money-box, and this corruption weighed heavily on a nearby Augustinian monk, Martin Luther (1483-1546). Publicly (and fearlessly) he moved against this corrupting un-Biblical practice by nailing ninety-five theses (or arguments) to the Wittenberg Castle Church door, on 'All Saints' Day,' October 31st 1517. This public holiday would see thousands attending church, and so the confrontation with the evils of Rome could not be better timed. It was God's timing! While the Ninety-five Theses did not counter every false doctrine in the Church – because we must remember that Luther at this stage was far from being Reformed and Biblical – he was saying that the Pope and the Church have no authority to change the Scriptures. Luther's attack goes to the heart of what the Gospel means: (a) Indulgences can never take away the guilt of sin: only God can; (b) they cannot take away the punishment deserved; only God can; (c) the Christian who truly repents has already received pardon from God; and it is *free*!

At a public *Discussion in Leipsic* (1519), Luther caused uproar by declaring that Church councils have erred, and that the Pope had no authority in Church or state. This was a significant event. Luther was declaring that he was



now a free man under God and his law. A Papal Bull (or a letter) came in 1520 excommunicating Luther from the Church. This meant no sacraments, no burial, and all were forbidden to communicate with, or give him shelter or food, and if he were murdered the murderer would receive pardon, because Luther was going to hell. Even powerful kings were terrified of being excommunicated. How would Luther respond to the Pope's greatest weapon? A large crowd gathered to an organised bonfire, and with the Papal excommunication and other documents in his hand, the brave ex-monk went to the fire and threw it all into the flames. This bold act encouraged many others.

Two Biblical principles became associated with Luther. Speaking about his anxiety over Romans 1:17 the Holy Spirit impressed upon Luther, some two years after the Ninety-Five Theses event, the truth of Justification by faith alone. Luther says:

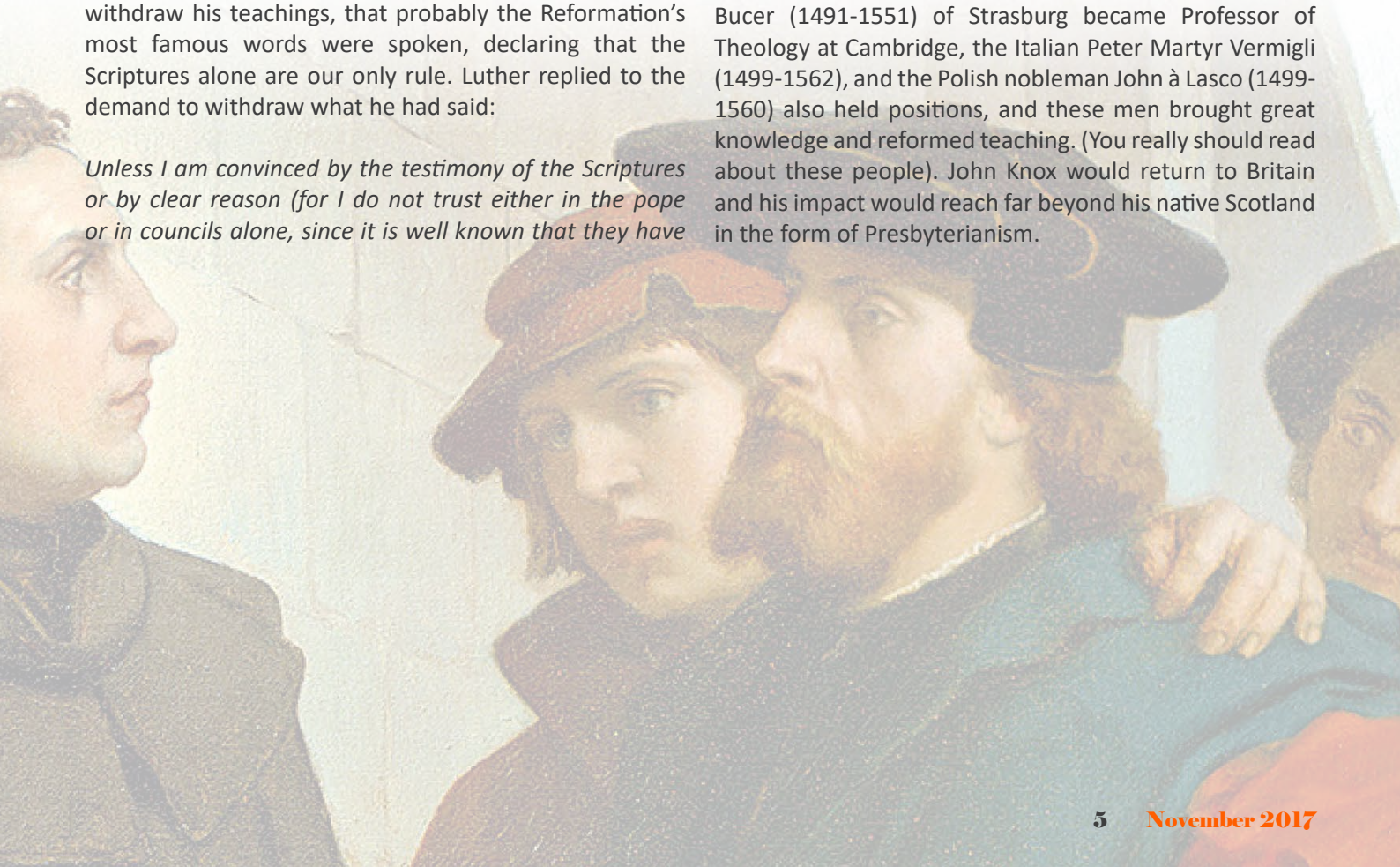
But I, blameless monk that I was, felt that before God I was a sinner with an extremely troubled conscience. I couldn't be sure that God was appeased by my satisfaction [good works]… I meditated night and day on those words until at last, by the mercy of God, I paid attention to their context: "The justice of God is revealed in it, as it is written: 'The just person lives by faith'…"

Secondly, it was before the *Diet of Worms* (1521), called by the Emperor Charles V in order that Luther would withdraw his teachings, that probably the Reformation's most famous words were spoken, declaring that the Scriptures alone are our only rule. Luther replied to the demand to withdraw what he had said:

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen.

3) The Reformation Wildfire

Both Luther and the Pope believed that these views would remain in Wittenberg, but how wrong they were! Copies of the Latin theses were translated into German, and spread quickly, as did Luther's translation of the New Testament (1522). Providentially the invention of the printing press was used to spread Protestant principles to the Scandinavian countries, where Protestantism became the recognised state religion. However, a somewhat distinct biblical teaching would eventually spread to Holland, France, Hungary, England and Scotland. In Switzerland, a patriotic priest Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), was already denouncing idolatry in 1516, a year before Luther, and his reformed sermons were blessed by God. In a simple but powerful rejection of Rome he publicly repudiated 'lent' in 1522 by eating a 'sausage,' and in 1525 Zurich became a reformed city, followed by Basel and Berne. Switzerland was opened to a greater reformer, John Calvin (1509-1564) whose teaching is directly related to our own. His teaching was outlined in a work called the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and in his *Commentaries* on the Bible. England under Edward VI (known as the 'British Josiah') accepted European Protestant refugees fleeing persecution: Martin Bucer (1491-1551) of Strasburg became Professor of Theology at Cambridge, the Italian Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499-1562), and the Polish nobleman John à Lasco (1499-1560) also held positions, and these men brought great knowledge and reformed teaching. (You really should read about these people). John Knox would return to Britain and his impact would reach far beyond his native Scotland in the form of Presbyterianism.



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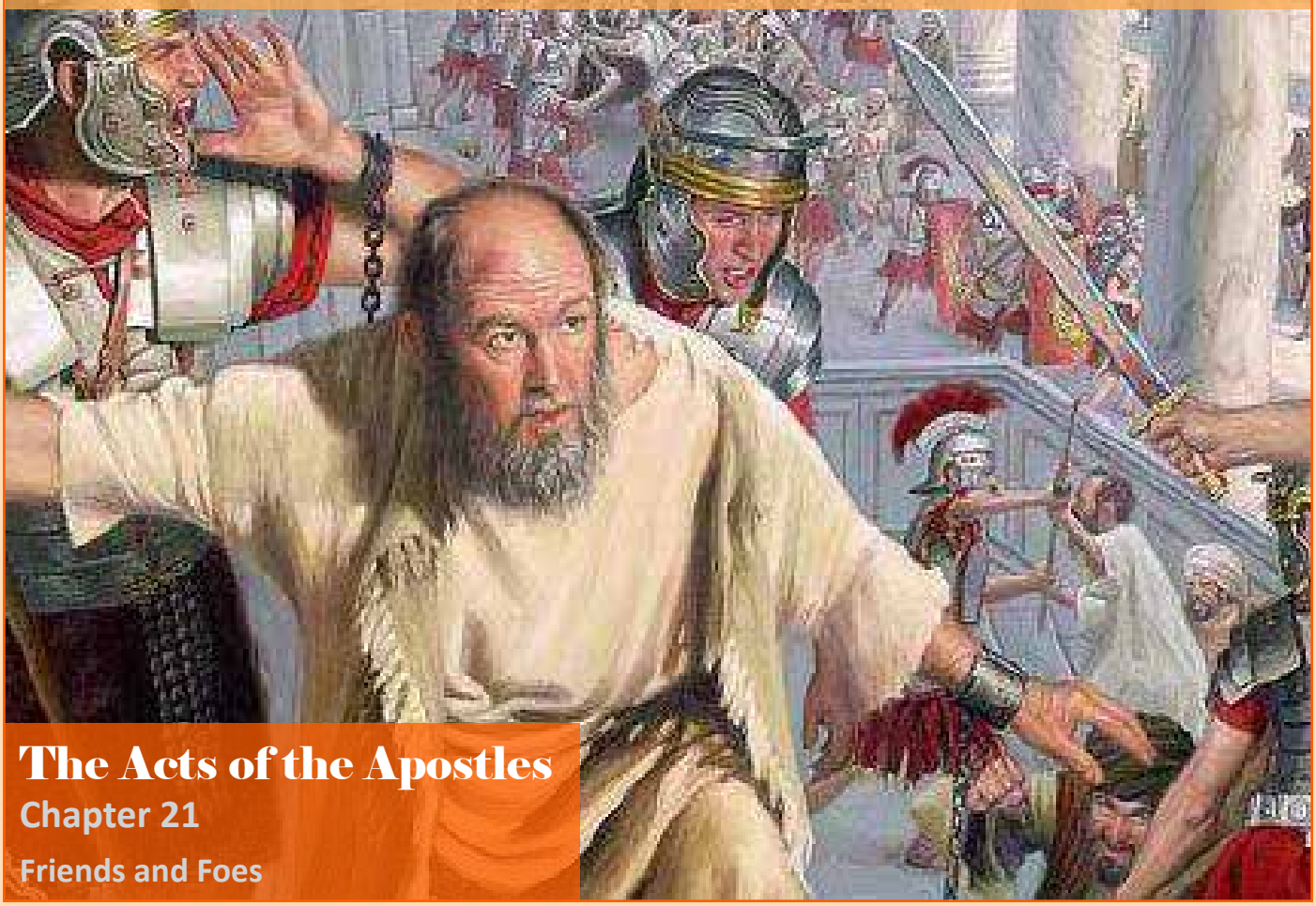


The Acts of the Apostles
Chapter 21
Friends and Foes

AT PHILIP'S HOUSE (vv 1 - 14)

Last month we read about Paul and his farewell to the Ephesian elders. Paul, Luke and other friends now sailed to Syria on their way to Jerusalem. Having landed at Tyre, they made their way to Caesarea and lodged at Philip's house. This is the same Philip whom we met in chapter 8. A man called Agabus foretold that Paul would lose his freedom at Jerusalem. He would be arrested and imprisoned. Paul replied that he would follow Jesus, even if it meant death. The Lord Jesus told those who followed him to "count the cost" before they began as many would fall away once the initial excitement wore off. Those who love Christ will remember what it cost him to open Heaven to sinners.

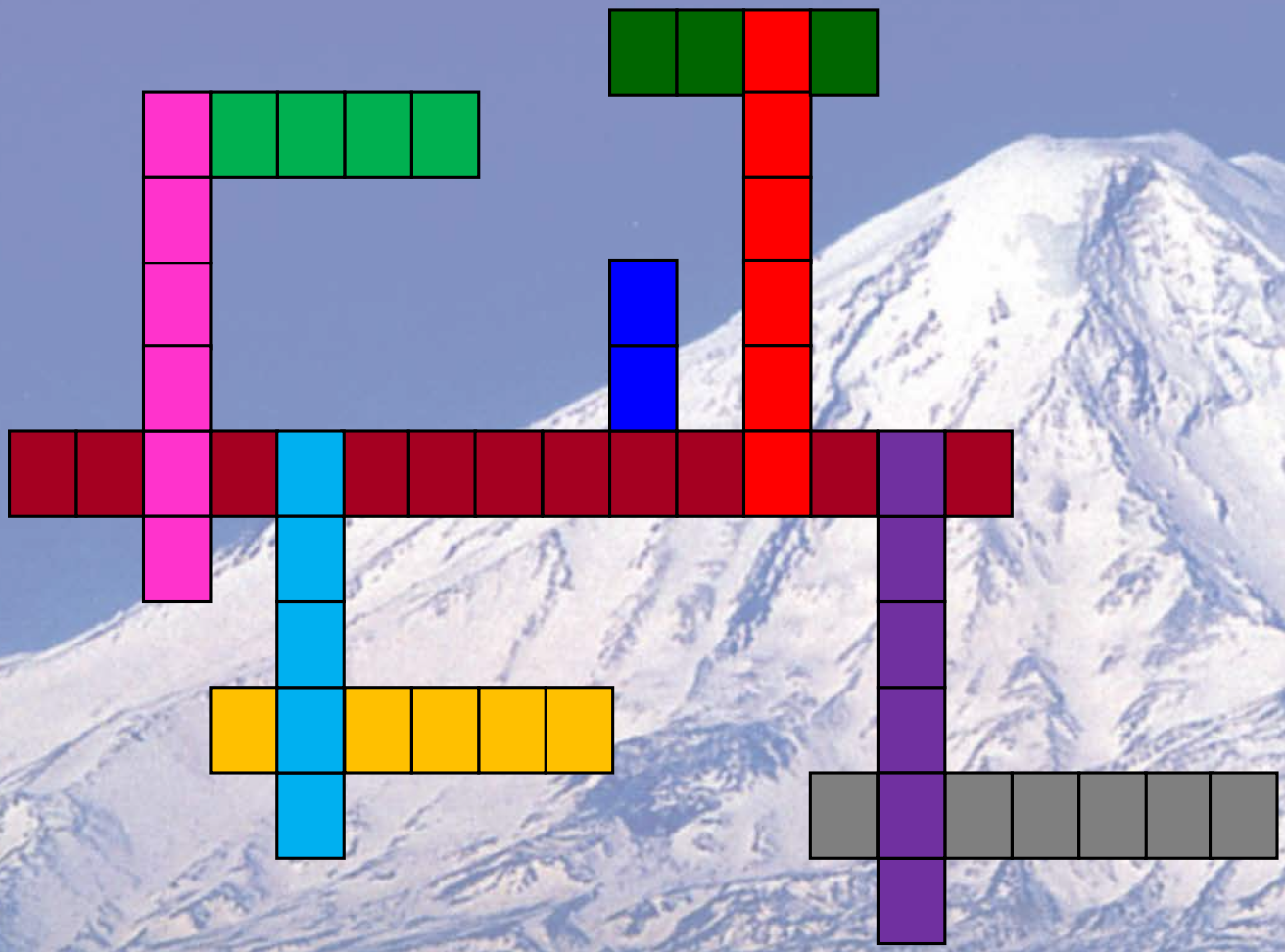
TERRIBLE DANGER (vv 15 - 40)

By verse 15 Paul has made his way to Jerusalem. There he met his greatest enemies, his fellow Jews who thought that by following Christ he had betrayed their traditional beliefs (vv 20 - 21). Paul pitied their blindness and the Apostle James suggested a way to show the Jews that he did not oppose the Law as far as ceremonies and vows were concerned. He obviously opposed them as a means of salvation; only the blood of Christ can save us but beside that he was not against them. To demonstrate this he accompanied four men, who were under a temporary vow, to the temple.

It went badly wrong. His enemies began to shout that he had brought non-Jews into the temple. This was a complete lie but they didn't care. They would say anything to attack the Gospel and we know that there are still people like that. The crowd got involved and dragged Paul out of the temple and attempted to lynch him (vv 30 - 31).

The Roman Captain in charge of the local garrison heard what was happening and he along with some soldiers rescued Paul. The Romans had a respect for law and order and the Captain allowed Paul to speak to the crowd and defend himself. As a Roman citizen he had that right. It is sad, but it sometimes happens that the world is kinder to Christians than 'religious' people are (v 11). Pray that God would give you the same courage as Paul. Next month we will hear what Paul had to say for himself.

MOUNTAINS IN THE BIBLE



1. **The Ark rested on this mountain** - Genesis 8
2. **Moses was given the 10 commandments on this mountain** - Exodus 19 v 20
3. **Elijah offered a sacrifice to God on this mountain** - 1 Kings 18 v 19
4. **Jesus often prayed at night on this mountain** - Luke 21 v 37
5. **This hill is mentioned in** Psalm 42 v 6
6. **Aaron died on this mountain** - Numbers 33 v 38
7. **Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac on this mountain** - Genesis 22
8. **Moses and Elias appeared with Jesus on this mountain** - Matthew 17
9. **Mountain for the blessings in** Deut 11 v 29
10. **Mountain for the curse in** Deut 11 v 29

Name: .....

Age: .....

Congregation: .....

Address: .....

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Latest entries

1st prize - **Lydia MacDonald**

Runners up

Partick - **Kenny MacKinnon**; Dores - **Callum Arie Morrison**; Stornoway - **George Kenneth MacDonald, John MacDonald, Peter MacDonald, Susanne MacDonald, Calvin MacKenzie, Thomas Craig, Sarah Craig**

Tarbat Picnic 2017

This happy picture shows the Tarbat Congregation on their annual outing. On this occasion they were joined by friends from Duthil-Dores and Kiltearn. They also had another very important guest and if you 'paws' for a minute I'm sure you will find him.