

# The Explorer

December 2016

Free



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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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[Unattributed articles ought not to be considered the work of the Editor.]

# Skipper's tales



## SKIPPER AND THE LEAVES

As you know, Skipper just loves running about in the woods. A few weeks ago we were driving to another wood and, as we approached, the trees on either side of the road were absolutely beautiful. The sun was shining through the leaves and some of the leaves were changing colour as the sun shone through. The colours were stunning: bright orange; yellow, and even some red. I am sure you have noticed this yourself and been amazed. When we got to the wood, a lot of leaves had fallen to the ground and as it was a nice dry day they made a crispy crackly sound as we walked on them and Skipper was just delighted running around. Sometimes a leaf would fall just in front of him and he would look amazed; one even landed on his nose! I think he was a wee bit offended at us laughing at him! When we came home I decided I had never really thought about how or why the leaves change colour in the Autumn so I looked up a book I have at home and got an explanation.

The way plants turn water and carbon dioxide into oxygen and sugar is called photosynthesis. That means "putting together with light." A chemical called chlorophyll helps make photosynthesis happen. Chlorophyll is what gives plants their green colour. As summer ends and autumn comes, the days get shorter and shorter. This is how the trees "know" to begin getting ready for winter. During winter, there is not enough light or water for photosynthesis. The trees will rest, and live off the food they stored during the summer. They begin to shut down their food-making factories. The green chlorophyll disappears from the leaves.

As the bright green fades away, we begin to see yellow and orange colours. Small amounts of these colours have been in the leaves all along. We just can't see them in the summer, because they are covered up by the green chlorophyll. The bright reds and purples we see the leaves are made mostly in the autumn. In some trees glucose is trapped in the leaves after photosynthesis stops. Sunlight and the cool nights of autumn cause these leaves to turn this glucose into a red colour.

The brown colour of trees like oaks is made from wastes left in the leaves. It is the combination of all these things that make the beautiful autumn foliage colours we enjoy each year.

I was amazed and thrilled to read how the Creator has made all things well, even the way in which the trees prepare for winter. We have been preparing for winter too, as I am sure your household has. We fill the oil tank, or buy in coal so that we can turn the heating on and keep cosy. We buy winter coats, hats and gloves, and thick soled-shoes or boots. Have you noticed, if you have a cat or dog, that their coat seems to get thicker? If you have a hamster it will burrow down for winter. We make all these preparations to keep ourselves safe and warm. We look to the future and start even now looking forward to the weather getting warmer!

At this time of year we have a service in church called the Harvest Thanksgiving service. We thank God for another year and particularly for sending rain and sunshine so that the crops can grow and be harvested to feed us throughout the year. It is very important that we never forget that it is God who is in control of all of nature and that it is he who has arranged seed time and harvest time. Even though there is a scientific explanation for the tree's leaves changing colour, their beauty and the glorious sight they make remind us of the glory of God who has made this world a very beautiful place.

God has promised us seed time and harvest until the end of time; he has promised the sun will rise every morning and set every night. Everything is in his hands.



## From The Editor

Dear Friends

Recently I saw a news item about a stone that was being moved from one location to another in Argyllshire. I can't recall any of the details other than the fact that the relocation of the stone had caused quite a bit of dispute. Some people were quite content to see it removed from where it had been. Others were upset that a local landmark would be no more. The stone had been there for a long time and they wanted it left where it had been for so many years. Some folk dismissed these concerns saying, "It's only an old stone!"

What does all of this have to do with the Explorer? Well, it set me thinking. Isn't this how some people treat the Bible and more particularly the Ten Commandments? The Lord gave us the Ten Commandments as our rule for life. They are there like a big marker showing how we are to live our lives. When they were given to Moses they were written on stone. This was God's way of reminding us that they were permanent. They were given for all generations and we are required to keep them just as the Children of Israel were.

Because of our sinful hearts we tend to rebel against God's commands. When we do we find excuses. When some people are challenged about their failure to obey the Lord they respond by saying that the Commandments are very old and no longer relevant. "It's only an old stone!" They tell us that we don't need to keep the Commandments any more. They are old-fashioned and out of date. The world has moved on. "It's only an old stone!"

Is this what you say at times? Maybe you have done something wrong and your conscience bothers you. Perhaps someone else has pointed out some sin in your life. You feel guilty but instead of confessing your sin to God and seeking forgiveness through the Lord Jesus Christ you try and convince yourself that the sin wasn't really that bad. "It's only an old stone!" At other times we are tempted to do something wrong and Satan will try and persuade us that it doesn't matter if we listen to him. In the middle of it all our conscience reminds us of God's law and then Satan says "It's only an old stone!". Let's not fall into that trap and instead let's try, with the Lord's help, to honour his Commandments and his rules for life.

*Murdo A N Macleod*



# *The pearl of great price*

Most boys and girls know what pearls are, and where they come from. Have you ever seen a real pearl? There are plenty of imitation pearls but real pearls are scarce.

There is a parable in the Bible which tells of a merchant who was searching for precious pearls. One day while searching the market he came across the most precious pearl he had ever seen. The pearl was so beautiful and valuable that he gladly sold everything that he had in order to buy it. He would have given all the other pearls he had collected, all the money he possessed, everything to get this wonderful pearl.

The parable is a picture of every lost sinner who has found the Lord Jesus. This is a picture of how he or she feels about Jesus.

Perhaps others had a glimpse of the pearl but did not understand how valuable it was, but when the merchant saw it he knew how precious it was. Many people hear about the Lord Jesus Christ but do not recognise how valuable he is. The rich young ruler who wanted eternal life did not recognise how valuable Christ was (Luke 18: 18-23). He turned away from the Lord; he preferred the riches of this world. When the Holy Spirit begins to teach us, he opens our understanding. We come to realise that there is nothing in this life as valuable as knowing the Lord Jesus.

If any blemish were found on the pearl the value would be gone. The merchant would hold it up to the light and examine it carefully all round. No matter from which side we examine Christ we can find no blemish or flaw. He is perfect in every way. He never sinned, He could turn to everyone whom he met in this world and say, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" He could even say about the most cunning tempter of all, the devil, "He found nothing in me."

If something is very rare it becomes valuable. If pearls were as plentiful as the pebbles on the beach, they would no longer be counted as precious. Again this applies to Jesus. He is the only Mediator between God and men ( 1 Timothy 2:5). There is only "One name whereby we must be saved." He was the only one who could pay for our sins. The only one who could satisfy God's justice. He is the only one who can save your soul and mine! If we would look everywhere in the universe, if we would search the whole world; search the Church; search heaven, search eternity there is only one Saviour. If we miss him we miss heaven and lose our soul.

He is so precious that if we find him and make him our own, we will never lose him. Other valuables may be stolen, or lost if your house goes on fire. Even our loved ones may be taken away. But the devil himself cannot rob you of Christ once you have him as your own.

How precious the Lord Jesus is to all his people when they find him as their Lord and Saviour. They have eternal life! They have forgiveness for their sins! They have a place with the Lord Jesus in heaven! They have the best friend of all in this world! The apostle Paul counted him more precious than anything else when he said he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Long ago some people would put money or some valuable thing into the grave of the person who had died. They thought it would help them on the other side of death. We know that we cannot take these things with us when we die. We leave all behind in this world. But if we have Christ as our Saviour then we will have him still even in dying. If we leave this world without Christ how poor we will be for ever! But if we have Christ, then we are rich for ever, as we have the pearl of great price which we won't lose even when we die.

The one who is the Pearl of Great Price, the Lord Jesus Christ encourages you to seek just as the merchant man did. He says, "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord". (Proverbs 8: 34-35)

# PUZZLE PAGE



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

Find their brother or sister in the puzzle

GAIN

MOSES

SOLOMON

MAHLON

MARTHA

JAMES

JACOB

SHEM

JOSEPH

ISAAC

DAVID

RACHEL

Why do you think God gave us families?



## October entries

Well done to everyone!

**1st Prize:-** Kenny MacKinnon, Partick

**Runners Up:-**

**Duthil-Dores:-** Kenneth Hutton, Anna Marie Morrison, Calum Arie Morrison

**Lochalsh & Strath:-** Sandy Iain MacInnes, Mina MacInnes

**Ness:-** Annie MacDonald, Hugh MacDonald, Murray MacDonald, Owen MacDonald

**Partick:-** Mairi MacKinnon

**Stornoway:-** Lily Craig, Sarah Craig, Thomas Craig

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

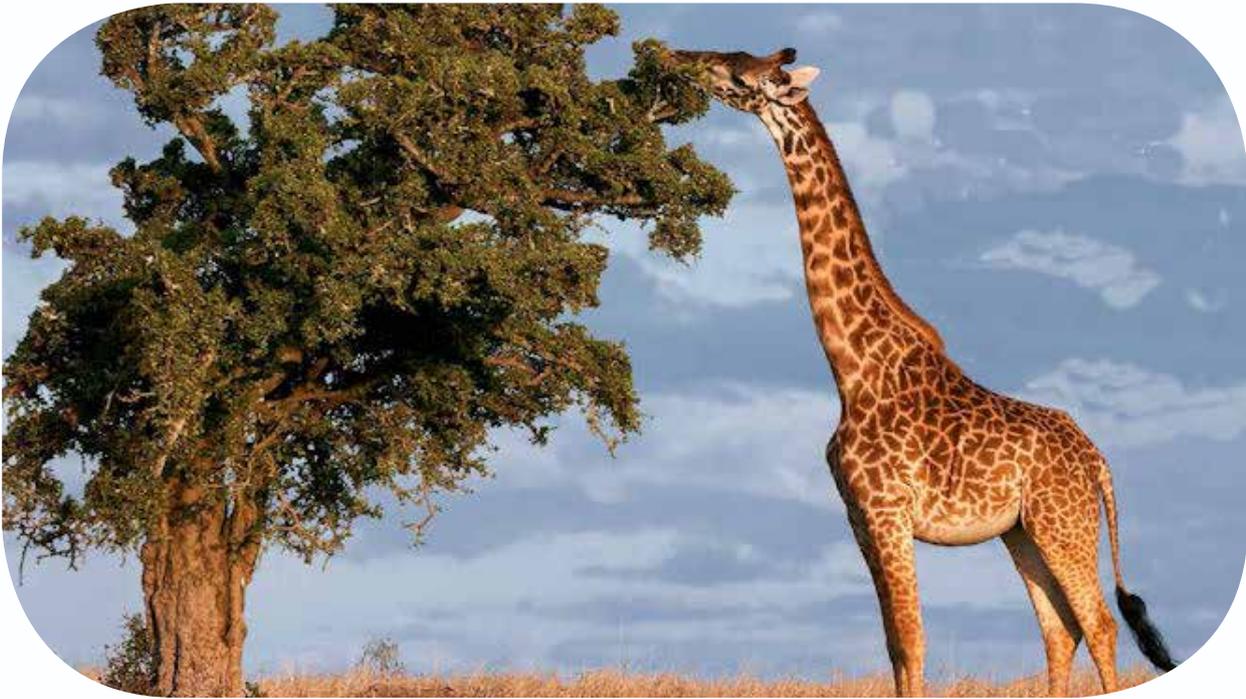
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# Have you ever been close to a giraffe?



There are four species or types of giraffe and there are about 90,000 giraffes in the wild. They live in herds and eat leaves, fruit and flowers. What is the first thing you notice about a giraffe? Probably their height. Look at the one in the picture eating the top of the tree. Do you know that a fully grown male giraffe is about 18 feet tall! How tall are you? How many times taller than you is the giraffe?

Very tall people have problems getting into small spaces and so does the giraffe. However the giraffe could face a bigger problem than that - a dangerous problem in fact. A problem to do with its blood supply. Because of its long neck the blood would have difficulty working all the way up against gravity unless it was being driven by a strong pump. The giraffe would need a big heart.

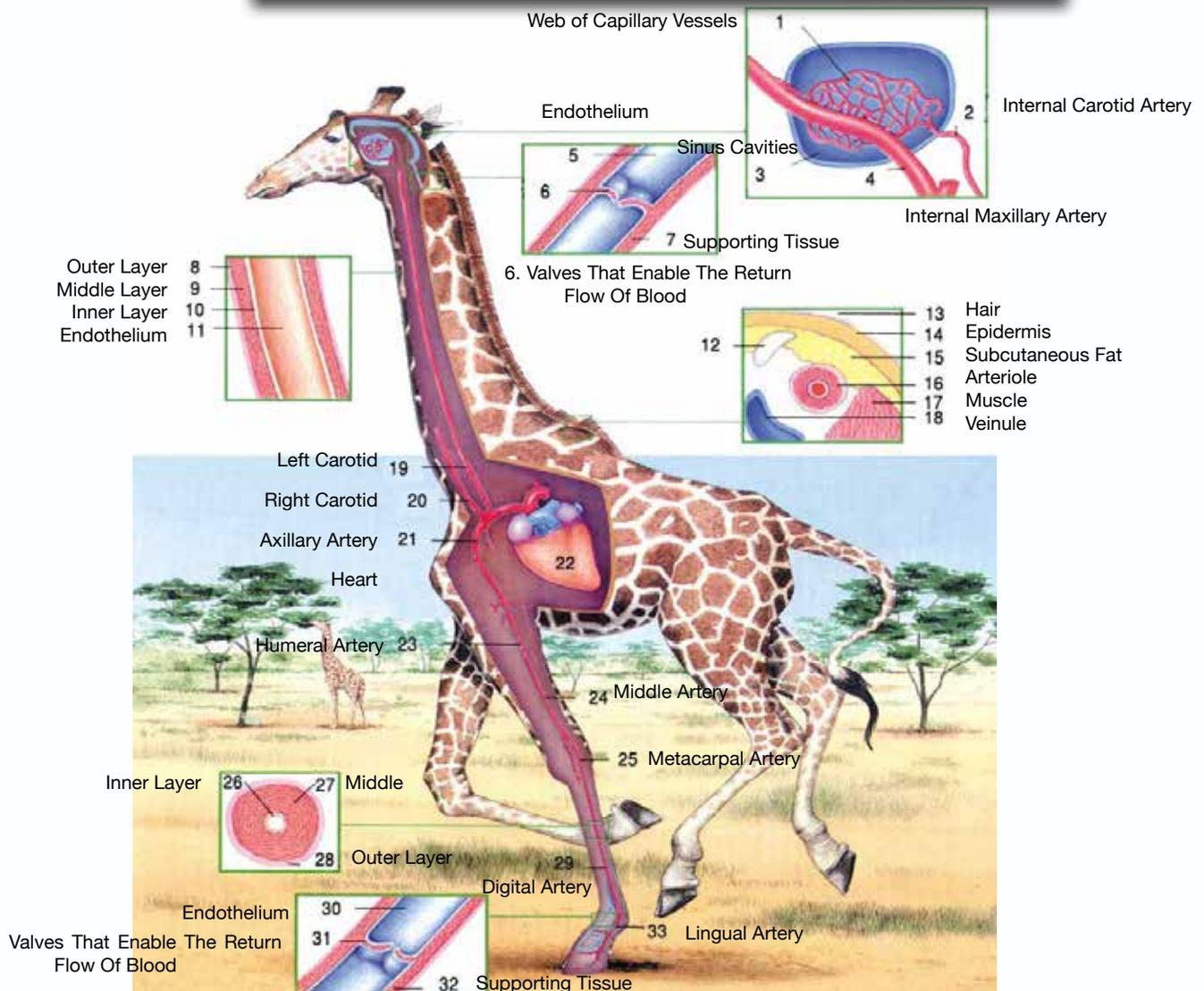
Scientists tell us that God designed the giraffe with a very powerful heart. In fact the heart in the adult giraffe can be as much as two and a half feet long. Do you remember how tall you were? That would be about half your size, or maybe a bit more, wouldn't it?. When God created the giraffe he gave it this huge heart which was big enough to pump the blood all the way up that long neck.

That long neck also brings other difficulties. You know how dizzy you can get if you sit up a bit too soon? Well, the poor giraffe has a lot of bending to do. It has to bend down every time it wants a drink of water. The danger then is that all the blood pushed by this big pump will suddenly flow to its head. If this happened it could damage its brain. In fact it could kill the poor animal!

Of course the Lord has provided for that too. As the giraffe bends down there are special valves in its neck which close, stopping the flow of blood. Alongside these valves the giraffe's brain has a special spongy compartment which gently expands to hold the remainder of the blood that was in the neck. This avoids the dangerous pressure that the brain might have suffered.

The problem however does not end there; when the giraffe would raise its head up again the same difficulty would arise. If the blood would rush from its brain it would faint. Collapsing

# It's a Tall Tale



every time it raised its head wouldn't be much fun for the giraffe. Besides being a bit of a nuisance, if there were any enemies about, for instance a lion, it would be killed. In order to avoid this the valves which closed when it bowed its head open once more. You remember the spongy material in the brain? It gently squeezes the last of the oxygenated blood back down the veins in the neck.

It's nonsense to imagine that a giraffe evolved in this way over many years. In the first place it would need a heart big enough to cope with a body this size and a neck that long. It would also need to evolve all of these valves and the spongy area in the brain and, of course, the giraffe would need all of them in perfect, final, working order. It would be no use if, as the evolutionists say, these parts slowly grew and developed over millions of years. The poor giraffe would have been extinct long before this sort of process would have become complete with functioning valves and a special brain area.

The only way in which the giraffe could survive is by having all of these parts from the very beginning. The only way that would be possible is if the giraffe was created this way. The Bible tells us that God created the animals fully grown and fully developed. We believe the Bible is true and our friend the giraffe is one more piece of evidence that this is the case.

To find out more about the giraffe and the rest of God's wonderful creatures why not visit the Creation site [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org).

# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - CHAPTER 11



## THE GENTILE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH

Last month we saw Peter preaching to people who weren't Jews (Gentiles) and we read about the way the Lord blessed that when Cornelius and some other people were converted. However not everyone in the church was pleased that Peter had gone to Cornelius and preached. In this chapter Peter explains why he had gone there.

### PETER'S DEFENCE

Peter tells them that he went at the Lord's command. He also explains that all of this was the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 42 vv1-6 and 49v6). The witnesses who had accompanied Peter confirmed that the Holy Spirit had come in power and that these Gentiles had come to faith in Christ just the same as the Jewish believers. The gathered church agreed that this was the work of God and "glorified God" for the salvation of the Gentiles. These new Gentile converts showed that they really were born again and alive in Christ through their repentance. Repentance, like faith, is granted and gifted by God himself. This was a very important meeting and marked a new stage in the history of the church.

### THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH

Satan had brought terrible persecution on the church with the aim of stopping it in its tracks. Instead of preventing the gospel from spreading, this persecution, after the death of Stephen, had the opposite effect. The trouble acted like a wind which scatters the seed far and wide to Cyprus, Cyrene in North Africa and north to Antioch in Syria. The hand and power of God took hold of sinners there and turned them to himself (v21). News of this reached the church in Jerusalem and they sent Barnabas to Antioch to examine the work there. He saw that it really was a work of God's grace and encouraged them to continue in it. The Lord continued to build up the church in Antioch and Barnabas realised that he needed help. He went back to look for Paul, now back in Cilicia, to be his assistant and in verse 26 Paul arrives. The people of Antioch couldn't but notice that something remarkable was going on and called these new believers "Christians". This was the first use of this name with which we are so familiar. Why did they choose this name? Surely it was because they spoke about Christ, his person and work, and also because there was a likeness in them to Christ: in their character and lifestyle. Would this description fit you? If you are a Christian is it obvious to others that you are? Do they see any difference in how you live your life? In the early church the Lord still revealed certain things to some men called "prophets". This, like much else in the early New Testament, was temporary and these days and gifts are long gone. One of them, called Agabus, warned of a coming famine and the disciples at Antioch decided to send money and food to the church in Jerusalem. Barnabas and Paul were given the responsibility of taking it to the elders of the church in Jerusalem. They were very different in their history and background to the folk at Jerusalem but these believers showed that they were part of the same spiritual family. They shared, by adoption, the same Heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit united them all to Christ and to one another. Christians should help and support one another, not only by their prayers but in practical ways too. Perhaps you can try and find out what your church does to help other Christians in need.