

# The Explorer

April 2008



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Subscriptions and orders should be sent to:

Sandra Judge  
10 Montrose Terrace  
Whiting Bay  
Isle of Arran  
KA27 8QN  
email: sandra.judge@tesco.net

## Puzzles

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

Mrs Kirsteen Murray  
35, Crathes Gardens  
Murieston  
Livingston  
EH54 9EN

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.



### Explorer Editor

Rev Harry JT Woods  
Free Church Manse  
Beauly  
Inverness-shire  
IV4 7EJ  
Tel: 01463-782-303  
Email: harrywoods@fccontinuing.org

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6 Tyock Ind. Est  
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# Denial

We used to have a cockerel called Fergus on the farm. He was white with green wings and he did look quite spectacular. He was so proud and was often seen strutting around the farm or preening himself. He had an annoying habit of crowing about five o'clock each morning outside our house so he wasn't popular with the whole family!

He was very jealous and when my Mum would be feeding the hens he would try and chase her. Although he was quite a distance away he would still come running with his feathers all ruffled and try and peck her.

We can read about a cockerel in John chapter 18. Jesus had been taken away to the High Priest's palace and Peter had followed.

Peter was standing by a fire with the servants and officers and a maid asked him if he was one of Jesus' disciples but Peter said to her that he wasn't.

Then someone else asked Peter if he was one of Jesus' disciples but again Peter said that he wasn't.

Peter was then asked if he was in the garden with Jesus but he denied it. When Peter denied Jesus the third time, the cockerel crowed and he remembered that Jesus had told him that before the cockerel would crow he would deny him three times. Peter had told Jesus that although everyone else would deny him, he would not.

Peter was so sad that he had denied his Lord that he wept bitterly.

When we are asked if we know Jesus, do we say that we know him as our Saviour and friend or do we like Peter pretend that we don't?



# LAURA AND THE CHOCOLATE EGGS

Laura just loved chocolate eggs. She loved the feel of the thin shell as it broke between her teeth and the joy of finding the surprise sweets hidden inside. She had lots of aunts and uncles and so it came about that she had been given lots of chocolate eggs for presents. She wanted to eat them all, but Mum had hidden them in the dining room so Laura had to ask before having a piece. She asked lots and lots but Mum would always say 'No' or give her a very small piece — it wasn't fair.

One day Laura was playing in her room when she remembered about the chocolate eggs. 'I'm going to go and get one; they are mine not Mummy's so I shouldn't have to ask,' she said to herself.

So she ran downstairs checking all the time to make sure Mum wasn't looking. She went to the dining room and opened the cupboard, they all looked so lovely. She took two whole chocolate eggs and hid them behind her back as she ran up to her room. She was so scared that her Mum would walk in and catch her so she hid them under the bed.

'I will eat them later,' she thought. 'when Mum thinks I am sleeping.'

Laura started to play with her doll's house but couldn't stop thinking about the chocolate eggs. 'Maybe I'll just have a little bit,' she thought. She got them out from under her bed and started to eat one. Before she noticed she had finished the whole egg. She quickly hid the other one under her bed again and went back to playing with her doll's house. But she couldn't stop thinking about the other egg. She just loved chocolate so much. 'I'll just have another small bit,' she said, but again before she realised she had eaten the whole egg. Now she felt a bit guilty and was sure Mum would notice, she ran downstairs but Mum was busy making dinner.

'Good,' Laura thought, 'Mum hasn't noticed yet.'

She had just gotten back upstairs when she heard her Mum shouting 'Dinner time'. Laura didn't feel like eating but knew she would have to try and eat a little or Mum would know for sure what she'd done — she always seemed to know when Laura was naughty. It was chicken pie for dinner and Mum had even made a trifle for dessert. Laura loved it but when she started to eat she felt sick. As she ate she thought, "I have to eat lots or Mum will know about the chocolate eggs."

She managed another two spoonfuls but then she had to run to the bathroom. Her Mum ran after her but Laura quickly locked the door and flushed the toilet so that Mum wouldn't see.

"Are you alright darling?" her Mum shouted.

'Yes,' shouted Laura, feeling sicker than ever.

'Have you got a bug?' her Mum asked.

Laura knew she hadn't and that it had just been all the chocolate, but she couldn't tell her Mum that, so she said it was a bug. Mum took her up to bed, and gave her a hot water bottle and even said she would save her a bit of trifle since she wasn't well.

Mum went downstairs to finish her dinner and tidy up. When she put the trifle bowl away in the dining room she noticed two of the chocolate eggs were gone. Then she understood. She knew how much Laura loved chocolate and realised just what was wrong with her and went upstairs to Laura's room.

'You don't have a bug do you Laura?' she said.

'Yes I do!' said Laura.

'No you don't,' replied her Mum. 'You've been eating chocolate eggs and that's why you're sick.'

Laura looked at her Mum and started to cry. 'I'm so sorry Mum please don't be angry.'

Laura's Mum would punish her when she was better, but for now she reminded her of part of a verse from the Bible that Laura would never forget — 'be sure your sin will find you out.'

In this story Laura broke three commandments. Can you think what they are? And can you find where in the Bible the verse is that Laura's Mum quoted from?



Prof. John Murray

# JAMES VISITS BADBAE

'Are we there yet Dad?' I asked.

'Almost James,' Dad replied. 'We're just coming up to Bonar Bridge and our cottage is only a few miles further on.'

'What is the place we're staying at called?'

'The cottage is called The Old Library and it's in a wee village called Altass,' Dad replied.

'Why is it called The Old Library Dad?'

'Well James, according to the brochure it was built by a man called Andrew Carnegie who was a very rich man who made his money making steel in America. When he came back to this country in 1898, he spent a lot of his money repairing roads and building libraries to help the local people. The cottage we're going to used to be a library but now it's a house for people to stay on their holidays,' Dad said.

When we arrived at the cottage Calum and I helped to carry in our cases. We had a nice big room with bunk-beds just like in our own house! There was a wee shelf beside the top bunk where I could put Fimble and Lunar Jim.

The next day we went to church in Brora where Calum and I went to Sunday School and learnt about the Apostle Paul from a lady called Mrs Murray.

'Is everybody called Murray around here Dad?' I asked.

'No James but there are lots of us in this part of the world! Granddad grew up in the next village called Dornoch, the place where Uncle Willie stays.'

We had a great holiday. We visited all sorts of places. One day we went to the Falls of Shin where we played crazy golf and went on a fantastic adventure playground. Another day we went fishing at the edge of the loch in Lairg. We didn't catch anything but it was lots of fun.

One day we went down to a place called Badbea behind Bonar Bridge.

'Is there a park down here Dad?' I asked.

'I don't think so James, we are going to see the house of a very famous man called Professor John Murray who lived in Badbea.'

'That's really boring!' I said, sighing in the back of the car.

'Well Professor Murray certainly wasn't boring James, he was a wonderful man and a great Christian.'

'What was so amazing about him?' I asked as we parked the car.

'Well for a start James, he built this house himself when he was 70! Your Dad couldn't do that and he is much younger!' Dad said laughing.

We looked in the windows but there wasn't much to see. Calum and I sat on the steps and had a competition to see who could throw a stone the furthest.

'Did you know Professor Murray was a soldier,

James?’ Dad asked.

‘I thought he was a builder?’ I said.

Dad and Mum laughed. ‘He built this house when he retired James but before that he was a soldier, a minister and then he trained other men for the ministry over in America.’

‘What kind of soldier was he?’ Calum asked. ‘Did he drive tanks?’

‘No Calum, Professor Murray fought in the First World War before tanks were widely used. He was in the Black Watch Regiment and was in the Infantry which means he was an ordinary soldier. During some fighting there was a shell blast which damaged his eye and meant that he had to have a glass eye for the rest of his life. When he came back from the war he trained to be a minister. Eventually he went out to teach at a University called Princeton and then Westminster Theological Seminary where he wrote lots of books that have helped thousands of people.’

After we visited Professor Murray’s nephew, we went to see my uncle at a place called Lonemore. We went down a road called The Fairy Glen Road to Spinningdale. ‘This is the road that Professor Murray had to cycle every Monday morning to attend Dornoch academy. He had to cycle twelve miles on Mondays, stay in digs in Dornoch and then cycle twelve miles on Friday afternoons back to Badbea,’ Dad said.

Lonemore is where Granddad lived when he was a wee boy. I told Uncle Willie all about our cottage and Mr Carnegie. He said that the huge house along the road called Skibo Castle used to be Mr Carnegie’s house and my great grandfather used to work for him. Apparently my great grandfather worked in the woods cutting down trees on the Skibo Estate. History is amazing!

Uncle Willie took us out for a lovely meal. I had chicken nuggets, chips and beans (my favourite). After we left the croft Dad drove past Skibo Castle so we could have a look.

‘Mr Carnegie must have been an amazing man to have such a big house Dad’ I said.

‘He was one of the richest men that ever lived James. He made millions of pounds in steel and railways over in America. He retired back to Scotland the same year Professor Murray came back to Scotland and bought Skibo House. The amazing thing is, he was very unhappy. All his money didn’t bring him lasting happiness. He gave lots of money to build libraries and even gave to churches to help them buy organs, but he never really found peace. Mr Carnegie believed

that if people were given the right kind of houses and if they had enough money then peace would eventually come to the world. He organised a number of big ‘Peace Conferences’ and met with some of the most powerful leaders in the world. He believed that people were fundamentally good and not sinful, but when the First World War broke out he saw the true nature of man. He died shortly afterwards.’

On our last night at the cottage we helped Dad carry in the sticks for the stove. Dad put more and more sticks in the fire until it was very cosy. We all had supper in front of the stove.

That night at worship we read from Psalm 37. Dad said that people who loved the Lord will shine like lights for the God who they love (Psalm 37 v 6). ‘Isn’t it amazing to think about Mr Carnegie and Professor Murray boys?’ said Dad. They both lived beside each other and yet had very different lives. Mr Carnegie was one of the richest and most



Andrew Carnegie

powerful men in the world but died an unhappy man. Professor Murray was not rich, he was not very famous or powerful, and yet his books and sermons are still helping people thirty years after he died. He died contented and happy because he loved the Lord and was confident that he was going to spend eternity with him.’

Our holiday to Altass was great. I love learning about history. Some people think its boring but I think its great. Maybe you can ask you Mum or Dad to read you a story about a great Christian who lived in the past. I promise, it won’t be boring!

# PUZZLE PAGE



## SAMUEL WORDSEARCH

You can find the story of how Samuel was 'given' to the Lord by his mother Hannah in 1st Samuel chapter 1.

Can you find the words listed below in the grid opposite?

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

HANNAH	COAT	PENINNAH
SAMUEL	ELI	TEMPLE
PRAYING	UNHAPPY	HIGH PRIEST
TEASING	DRUNK	ELKANAH

What do all the extra letters in the grid spell?

\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Here is a picture of Jonah for your to colour in. Can you say what kind of plant he is under and what happened to the plant? You will find the answers in Jonah ch. 4



Fill in this form if you are sending the puzzles in.

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Congregation: .....

# DOWN INTO EGYPT

Last month we reached that remarkable moment when Joseph reveals, to the brothers, his true identity. He then sends them home to their father with the good news and tells them to gather together their possessions and their families for they will come down and live in Egypt. This month our focus will be on Jacob as much as it will be on Joseph as we consider his journey to be reunited with his son.

## HEARING THE GOOD NEWS

I am sure we have gone home with some exciting piece of news, which we just cannot wait to share. We burst through the door eager to find someone to whom we can pass on our story. I often wonder about that moment when the brothers arrive back in Canaan. Did they rush in or did they decide to break the news more gently? Whatever happened we read in chapter 45 v.26 that "Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." It was just too wonderful, almost too good to be true. How wrong he had been when he had earlier reached hard conclusions about the plan and purpose of God. He had concluded that everything was working against him and now he discovers that the very opposite is true. Perhaps you are tempted to think hard thoughts about the Lord and his providence in your own life. Maybe you wonder, at times, if there is a God at all, and question if there is, why is it that you are facing some of the problems you are experiencing? For Jacob it all seemed to be one terrible, confusing mess, without rhyme or reason. There are times when it is like that for all of us, even for the people of God. That day when his sons returned with their news Jacob saw, once more, that there was a God who was in control of it all and was working everything out, as he always does, for the good of his people. You can also be assured that it is not a vain thing to trust in the Lord and commit your way to him.

In verses 27-28 his sons show him the evidence that Joseph was indeed alive. They tell him of Joseph's power and authority and show him the wagons he had sent for them. Slowly his disbelief gives way to joy and before the chapter closes he will say "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." Perhaps you are a Christian struggling along with fears and doubts. Look, as Jacob looked, at the evidence, of the goodness and mercy of God and be encouraged to go on depending on him. Look at all that he has done for you in the past and all he has promised in his Word to do for those who trust in him. Perhaps you are not

a Christian but you do think seriously about spiritual things. Well you must also look and see the provision God has made for sinners, in sending his only begotten Son into this world to die in their place. It is time for you to do more than take an interest in these things; it is time you went to the Lord for pardon. It is time you said, like Jacob, "It is enough". For too long you have delayed. Tomorrow is not promised, tragedy can come in a moment, there is not a moment to lose; you must come to Christ now before it is too late. We can imagine someone speaking to Jacob and reminding him that the journey to Egypt would not be easy, especially at his age. He would say that for all the difficulties he might face he was determined to go because his eye was fixed on the great goal of seeing Joseph. In the same way there will be plenty of reasons for you to delay coming to Christ but remember that unless you are born again you will be lost forever. Whatever difficulties there might be the end goal of salvation is too precious to be lost.

## SEEING FOR HIMSELF

It was good to hear from his sons the news about Joseph. However it would be better, far better, to experience it for himself. Others might have asked Jacob prior to his meeting with Joseph, what Joseph was now like and he would have to say that he had not yet seen him for himself. Judah had seen him, Simeon had seen him and even Benjamin had seen him but as yet he had not seen him. In just the same way it is very important that you meet the Lord Jesus Christ for yourself. Maybe your parents and friends have seen him but as yet you have not. There is no substitute for personal experience. The Queen of Sheba had heard many wonderful things about Solomon but she concluded, having seen it all with her own eyes, that the half had not been told her. The new Christian can say the same thing. We might have heard from others of how wonderful Christ was but in reality there is nothing like experiencing it for ourselves. There was once a boy who was born blind. His mother would describe to him the world that he could not see. Eventually they ventured to operate on the boy and it proved wonderfully successful. The first day that his mother showed him the world outside he was amazed and asked her why she had not told him it was so wonderful. She replied that, of course, she had tried but no amount of telling was as good as experiencing. Thomas heard from the other disciples that the Lord had risen; he doubted their report and said he would only believe if he saw it for himself. Soon he did and in a moment all his doubts vanished as he cried "my Lord and my God."

Joseph sent a message to his father to come down to Egypt and he went and what a blessing he experienced. In the providence of God he enjoyed 17 years with the son he thought he would never see again. You are called by the Lord to come to him and what a blessing you will forfeit if you do not come. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)



The Colosseum where many Christians died

# NO OTHER GOD

Hannah and her family had been to Egypt on holiday. They were so excited by what they had seen there that Granny and Grandpa decided they must visit the special Egyptian exhibition in London over the winter. It is called after the Pharaoh 'Tutankhamen' who died young but became famous when his tomb was discovered untouched with most beautiful gold objects in it. But Hannah's grandparents found out something they had not known when they went around the well presented showcases. They learnt about the unusual Pharaoh Akhenaton, who is believed to be the father of the young Tutankhamen.

In the middle of the Egyptian desert there is a forgotten city, only now being rediscovered. What really interested Granny and Grandpa was the story behind that city. It was an attempt by Pharaoh to start up a new religion in Egypt, the worship of only one so-called god, the sun, named Aten, instead of the many gods then worshipped by the Egyptians. This Pharaoh was right in rejecting the worship of many different gods but sadly worshipped the sun itself rather than the God who had created it. After his death the dramatic failure of this new worship showed how strongly the Egyptians clung to the many gods they believed in. As well as the sun, they worshipped the crocodile, the scarab beetle, Pharaoh himself and even the River Nile.

The Hebrews, or Israelites, lived in Egypt for more than four hundred years, no doubt influenced by the religious practices around them. Then the dramatic day came when Moses came back to lead them out of captivity and to show them the power of the one and only true God. Soon after they left Egypt on their wilderness journey, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments as the basic rules to guide them as to how they were to live in obedience to Him. In spite of having seen the amazing power of God in their rescue from slavery in Egypt they still needed to understand that they were a people chosen by the only true God and that they must forget all the so called 'gods' they had left behind them.

The first four of Moses' Ten Commandments have to do with our relationship to God and the last six to do with our relationships with other people. Our relationship and obedience to God must come first in our lives, so commandments 1-4 tell us;

1. Whom we worship.
2. How we worship him.
3. The reverence with which we must use his name.
4. What time we must devote to him.

And of course, the first, most important rule was 'You shall have no other gods before Me' (Exodus 20 verse 3) or, as the old sampler verse put it. 'HAVE THOU NO OTHER GOD BUT ME.' The word 'before' means something like 'as a rival' or 'in opposition' to me.\*

It is often easier to remember the Ten Commandments for all the ways we are told to behave towards others, but right at the heart of them is this truth that there is only one God. The Israelites would forget this in the Old Testament times and suffered because they did, but right through history it has been a temptation to give honour to false gods. A refusal to do this by Christian believers could mean persecution and death and it was not long before the early Christians were tested.

Very soon after the death of Jesus thousands of Christians, from children to old people, were killed by wild beasts in the Arena

in Rome, to entertain the watching crowds. One reason for their deaths was that they obeyed God's command to believe in him alone and in Christ as their Saviour. Everybody in the Roman empire was expected regularly to offer incense to the spirit of the Emperor. When they did that, they were given a certificate to prove that they were loyal subjects who by sacrificing accepted that the emperor was a god. Christians of course, refused to do this and suffered death if they did not.

Four years after the death of the Apostles Peter and Paul, a little boy was born, probably in Ephesus. He moved on to the city of Smyrna (one of the seven churches of Asia) and was privileged to live during the early growing years of the Christian Church just at the end of the age of the first apostles. Tradition has it that he was a disciple of the apostle John and made leader of the church in Smyrna by some of the original apostles. His name was POLYCARP and he lived to be an old man of 86. Somehow or other he was spared arrest by the Romans all those years, even though he was well known for his writings and leadership, but one day soldiers discovered where he was and came knocking at his door. They took him to the Roman consul, who took pity on the old man and tried to persuade him just to do the very least which would save him from death. If only Polycarp would say "Caesar is Lord" and offer a little pinch of incense as a sacrifice, then he could let him go and say the old saint was loyal to the Emperor. If not, he would have to go into the Arena and be torn apart by animals. Polycarp stood firm for Christ and his words have become famous to this day. "Eighty-six years have I served Christ and he never did me any wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" Tradition has it that the soldier in charge refused to let loose a lion on the gentle old man and so, in response to the demand of the crowd, he was burnt alive at the stake in 155 A.D. His death was, according to the historical account, widely remembered and was even spoken of by the heathen. His was the first martyrdom recorded in post New Testament church history.

The Roman Empire persecuted the early Christians because they said that Jesus is not a lord but the only Lord. Polycarp died because he was not prepared to break the first commandment and to accept any other god but Christ. We don't live in the first century under Roman rule, and we have the freedom in Britain still to state that we worship the one and only true God as he has made himself known in Jesus Christ. Yet that doesn't mean it is easy for us to stand by the first commandment.

In school you may be taught all about other religions and be told that it really doesn't matter too much which god you believe in. Outside school you will find that many people do not accept that the God of the Bible is the only God we may worship. Even if we think we only worship the true God, it is very easy to put all sorts of other things, ideas and even people we love, before him. One preacher put it like this. 'Whatever you love more than God is your idol.' We don't need to worship the sun or a crocodile nor do we need to burn incense to an emperor to break the first commandment. But we do need to love our great God with all our being and to remember again; 'HAVE THOU NO OTHER GOD BUT ME.'

\* Check out the meaning by learning the answer to question 46 in the Shorter Catechism.