

Dragons in the Forest!

There be Dragons...



Ever been chased by a ferocious dragon in your local forest?

I was sitting down today thinking of how, in just a few short years, I have gone from being very active to having a problem with walking any distance without strong painkillers. It was only about three years ago that I had to stop walking nearby mountains.

Then, I remembered the time I took my sons out for the day when they were quite young. We did this frequently and I was able to do everything they did! This particular day we went to a local forest and ran through it with wild abandon!

I stopped and made them listen intently, while I picked up several bits of stick. I threw one in the opposite direction and said "Listen – that's a dragon!" I threw a few more, pretending the sounds were coming closer, and gasped to increase the tension! "Quick, the dragon's coming!"

Then, I slipped and fell onto my back. Thinking the dragon was just behind them the two boys ran over me, jumping onto my body as if it were a bridge, and ran into the undergrowth yelling! At home, they couldn't stop chattering to Mum about almost being caught by a dragon!

In those days I took them out on 'death defying' days. Before too long all the boys in the family (their cousins) joined them and we all went on a day of adventure once a week. We hiked over farmland, up and down cliffs and beaches, into quarries, through forests and even into the sea! They loved it... and I was well able to lead the way. What lovely memories.

Now, it seems I must have been someone else, as I find it hard to be all that mobile. It seems we must move with the times and accept our lot in life. Look at my eldest son in his forties – extremely active and then, suddenly, requiring an emergency operation on his spine!

He will not be as he used to be, as his limp is more pronounced right now. But, even so, I thank God that he was kept safe from paralysis. Some folks have a far worse time, and some seem to hardly ever have any health problem, not even colds.

Yet, we all are born and all will die, whether accompanied by maladies or not. What matters most of all is not fighting dragons and tottering around cliffs, though it is grand fun... but whether or not we are saved. If we are unsaved it does not matter how exciting our lives may have been before or now, or how much money we have, or fine things. Nothing matters like our eternal state.

Dragons. In scripture a dragon equated to a large snake, or a sea/river monster, or a dinosaur. I have no problem with accepting a fire-breathing dragon. Look at the much smaller modern-day Bombardier Beetle, that can blast out bursts of fire! Satan is also described as a dragon – he and his angels will do war against the archangel Michael and the holy angels.

Bio-Magnetic Bracelets

Thousands of folks use bio-magnetic bracelets. I have a leaflet here claiming that by wearing one, the person can get rid of a host of ailments, from arthritis to headaches, anxiety to IBS symptoms.

Immediately I see such claims my mind says ‘snake-oil salesmanship’! There is no way that relatively weak, static magnets can bring about healing of pain. Scientifically and medically, it is simply not possible.

So, save your money and don't be fooled by these claims that resemble the claims made a few hundred years ago for the efficacy of electricity! (For more details see my article on [‘Magnets and Health’](#))

. Behind this reliance on quack medicine is a deeper problem, of not trusting God and accepting one's growing failings with age... something I have to juggle in my own life!

Is It Just Me??

In my younger days before marriage I was once told by a girl I was flirting with, that she expected me to wear buckskin clothes. She was referring to my masculinity. I was quite proud of that at the time, when so many young men were wearing flowery clothes and acting foppishly!

Maddeningly for some, my preference of masculinity for men carries on today. Which explains my shrinking-back from all those ads on TV and in the rest of the media, selling 'fragrances for men'. Every so often (as I have said before) I reply to those ads with "Stop being poofs – it's perfume!" Not proper language? Oh yes it is... I expect homosexuals to wear perfume, not masculine men.

Masculinity is the province of real men, who are created by God to be masculine. Yes, I mean what I say. They don't wear perfume. (Calling it 'fragrance' does not alter the fact that what they are wearing is – perfume). I don't care if the perfume is actual spray, dab, or roll-on, or even if it comes as after-shave. It is in the female province and should not be part of any real man's life. Nor would it be unless homosexuals took control of the media and product design.

It is about time men stopped this blurring of the sexes and returned to being masculine. To my mind, wearing perfume is to enter the world of gender-bending. I don't mean to say men must stink! I just mean to say that perfume should not be in a man's toiletries. Women seem to like 'feminine' homosexuals (probably because they act in a feminine way), so they may like smelling something nice on their men. But, it is still a nod in the direction of homosexual bids to mix male and female to the point of having no gender at all. Think about it, men. Instead of wearing poofy stuff, try washing more! (I know a few will not like my use of 'poofy' – but it adequately describes what I mean)!

Alongside this wearing of perfume is the trend in clothing to be tight-fitting (wouldn't look good on me anyway!) and, like female clothing, fashionable. It is all part of the same homosexualisation of the sexes. Don't let female approval deter you from returning to the way God made you.

Sadly, too many males are now hooked on perfumed after-shave, sprays and deodorants. They will just ignore me. But, I hope Christian men will heed the call and get back to wearing buckskin!

Christmas...

Perhaps some of you have noticed that we say relatively little about the period called 'Christmas'. There are a number of solid reasons for not entering the fray.

One reason is that too many Christians love to denigrate their brethren who have yet to understand the whole topic, using quite strident, if not hateful, language and terms; there is a distinct lack of love for our fellow believers, even if they do show ignorance (note I say 'if'). I even came across one Christian teacher who wrote scathingly about these Christians, going so far as to say they were unsaved heathen. God forbid! I was compelled to write to him with words of admonition and caution.

Another reason is that so many of the 'Christmas fighters' seem to come out of the woodwork at this time, all regurgitating the same old information, every single year, creating a 'Christmas fog' in large numbers of publications! So, we stay out of it.

Another reason is that only the Holy Spirit can convince a Christian of an actual error. So, to constantly harangue those who still practice Christmas is, well, without warrant. All we can do is present the truth as and when it is needed.

Yet another reason is that most of the accusations and supposed 'facts' are definitely mixed-up, with truth fogged-up by what amounts to misinformation.

Please don't curse me or throw me onto the trash pile, but there is yet another reason, one that I have not previously talked about! The reason is this – referring to December 25th as Jesus' birthday has early church history behind it. Did you know that?

The strident-ones only point to the 'fact' of paganism adjoining the statements of the Roman Catholic 'church'. This is a bit of a mistake. In fact, when I read most of the anti-Christmas material I come across a large number of suppositions and errors of thinking.

Firstly, some in the early church thought December 25th was Jesus' birthday well before the Roman Catholic institution began its foul journey roughly 300 years after Christ! There was also an alternative date – 6th January. Both dates were taught about two hundred years before 'Christmas' became the official (Catholic and paganised) holiday under Emperor Aurelian, in 274 AD.

In terms of strict academic truth (do not dismiss academic research), the idea that 'Christmas' always has a pagan source is sheer assumption. Closeness of similar dates and an association with a paganised Roman church do not constitute strict evidence.

In 192 AD Clement of Alexandria thought Jesus was born on 6th January. In the early 200s Hippolytus said Jesus was born on 25

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December. In reality, both were making 'educated guesses'... just like our modern-day anti-Christmas thinkers. Thus, even if we take the last date by Hippolytus, it is about 80 years before

Rome used the date of 25

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December as a paganised holiday!

For myself the situation is very simple – I do not accept nor practice nor advocate anything put forward by Rome. But, if a Christian wishes to accept the birth date as 25th December, and does so sincerely with good conscience, wishing to mark the day with a religious ceremony, none of us may think evil of him. This is because his sincere observance is in accordance with New Testament teaching (even if it appears to others - including myself - that the date is wrong)!

The main point is that Christians should not Romanise their beliefs or practices. Also, whilst certain peripherals, such as Christmas trees, etc., are displayed, again any association with paganism is questionable, though these practices can be found amongst early pagans, they are also found amongst much later non-pagans, if not Christians! The trouble is, then, too many Christians are harsh about the matter, and too willing to hotly decry their fellow believers over matters that are assumptions rather than strict proofs, with fact and fiction swirling around with great abandon.

For myself, I do not practice the usual churchy Christmas traditions because I see no warrant to do so. But, I do not thereby show anger towards those who do practice such things. The only real thing I would like to see is the dropping of the word 'Christmas' because of its Romish connotations (though this would make ordinary reference to the time of year rather difficult). But, the rest I will leave with the Lord... there are enough actual enemies of believers around us today without adding strident believing voices to their wicked cause.

No doubt some of the strident ones will now think I have 'crossed to the other side' to join pagans! Not so! I am simply pointing out the flaws in the argument, which I am bound to do as a teacher of God's word.

Can We Pray for Unbelievers?

I was asked this question a few days ago at one of our Sunday meetings. Let me give a few notes (they are not exhaustive).

Generally, we have no real reason to pray for unbelievers for general purposes. I receive many calls to pray for this or that person or group... but I have no inward compulsion to do so. This is partly because I know nothing at all about the one being prayed for. Yet, recently, though not asked to pray for a girl who had suffered a stroke after childbirth, I had the burden within to pray for her and her boyfriend.

It is this kind of burden that is usually missing in most cases. This is why, on the rare occasions I ask people to pray, I always, without exception, request prayer ONLY if the person is prompted by the Holy Spirit to do so. Without this burden any prayers are useless and wrong.

There are times when God does prompt us to have concern for unbelievers, and this will eventuate in a heavy burden for the person being prayed for. Such a calling is always specific, even when we have no real idea why we should pray.

Perhaps (so long as we tell the person we are praying) it is to give credence to God and His work before an unsaved person, so that when the thing being prayed for comes about, they will remember God and perhaps be born again as a result (Jesus spoke of this when He raised Lazarus – see the relevant article on why He delayed His visit). Even so, this is not a general calling, but very specific.

It might also be that the prayers, perhaps successful, will 'start the ball rolling' towards an eventual regeneration – but this will be by Holy Spirit appointment, not by our prayers alone. We do not know; it is simply our duty and obedience to pray when prompted.

Cross-Dressing

A friend in Greece has noted an increasing trend in the media to now portray cross-dressing as 'good'. It is the next big item to be pushed by homosexuals, alongside paedophilia and bestiality.

Sob-stories are being published to exonerate those who cross-dress, when, in truth, they are simply homosexuals of another brand! It does not matter what causes a man or woman to cross-dress, because the activity is banned by God, Who hates it.

The sexual hype will continue and get far worse as time races by. Don't be fooled and don't show sympathy. It is all included in Satan's wish to subdue and destroy all of mankind.

News of Wife, Son and Sick Girl

For those not on our general news list and who say they have prayed for both my son and for a young mother who had two strokes.

My son, Barry John (BJ), was wrongly diagnosed by his former GP as 'getting older' (he is now 46) so he was 'bound to feel aches and pains'. Yet, he suffered sudden strong jerks of his arm and leg and had pain in his neck, problems with his vision, plus a limp!! When he moved to his current GP he immediately sent him to see a neurosurgeon. She put him on an urgent operation list because she feared he could be paralysed very soon. Anyway, the operation went well, but has left him with a bad limp, worse than before. This may improve with time, but no promises. I thank God that He spared BJs life.

The young girl is unsaved (see above item), as is her boyfriend (one of my nephews). Sadly, they lived together, because it is now so common. A short while after having their baby the girl was struck down by two simultaneous strokes, front and back, again after receiving a wrong diagnosis. Though unsaved some promised to pray for her wellbeing, that if she was spared by God she would remember that He kept her safe, and may listen to the Gospel.

As her father is a general in the Thailand military such salvation would have a great impact. For reasons I cannot tell I had a burden to pray for this girl, though such a burden for unsaved folks and their problems is not usual. I further pray that the desired result will come about. She was

kept in an induced coma and is now being brought out of it. Doctors expect at least some residual effects, though one doctor feels she will die. So far signs are encouraging but we must wait for further, hopefully better, news. Her baby son needs his mother!

Diane (my wife): There is no improvement, as one can expect with dementia. She continues to have sporadic arm 'jerking', which can result in dropping cups or food. At times her movements are very slow indeed, and I can see a time when I will have to move the bedroom downstairs. She is eating less and has IBS pain more often now... and each time it happens (every day) she does not remember what it is. There is a lot more to her condition than that, but I don't like to remind myself of it. Thanks for prayers.

The Work of God

I am often asked what is the 'work of God', or, what work of God should a man or woman be doing. We find the best summary of all given by Jesus, when He advised His followers not to rely on the meat of this earth, but on the eternal meat of God.

“Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?”

Jesus answered and said unto them,

“This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”

(John 6:28,29).

Many Christians think that a work of God 'must be' something far more important than whatever they are doing. So, they waste years wondering what to do and seeking out a mysterious thing God might have for them to do. Well, in my experience, God does not leave His work to the flimsy, flawed ideas of man! As with anything so important, he tells us what His work is.

His 'work' is... belief in the Christ. Simple as that. Once you have this belief everything else will be given to you, because everything else is predicated on your true belief. Once you believe, you are already doing the work of God.

To constantly seek what you already have is fruitless and time-wasting. How many waste their days on earth seeking a work they already have, but cannot see it because their understanding is based on their own finite ideas of what a work of God is? How many therefore waste time on

this seeking when God has already given them the most important work of all – belief. By not understanding this, they are fruitless and wandering in the desert, of no use.

Why not start the New Year with this most basic of Jesus' teachings? Instead of wandering why you are not yet a famed preacher, a 'better witness', or someone with a greater task... just remember that you are saved by the Lord Christ. When saved you have the Holy Spirit within. Do you think the Holy Spirit likes to live in a shell of a person who is always looking for 'something else'? He will lead you along His path. Follow it. Belief is the key!

“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” (John 10:9). Simple!

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