

God's power is revealed

"On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, 'This is the voice of a god, not of a man.' Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died." (Acts 12:21-23)

Other rulers had believed they were gods and didn't die like Herod. What was the difference? Herod was a Jew, and knew better than to accept such praise. This was a direct sin against



Pastor Robert Forsberg
Contributing columnist

God that needed judgement. Herod's pride received the praise of the people (non-Jews), as to being a god, and was struck by an angel with a deadly disease. God will answer with His power when there is a direct attack upon His integrity.

Yet, we note, that this death was not a result of human hands. God did it directly through an angel.

Pride does go before a fall, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Prov. 16:18) Herod was full of it. And

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Achieving a life of faith through connection with Christ

Philippians 4:13 "I can do everything through Him Who gives me strength."

When we believers walk through difficult situations, we are not alone. Christ lives within us. While we may feel powerless in our grief and pain, we can experience victory beyond human understanding because our strength comes from Someone stronger than we are. Achieving a life of faith comes through our connection with Christ.

Recently I remembered an experience I had in my young adulthood that illustrated the strength we receive from God when we feel weak. During my teen

years, I lived in a lake community in northern New Jersey and sometimes in the coldest months of winter the lake would freeze over enough so we could ice skate.

I didn't have formal ice-skating training but liked trying to skim across the frozen surface. One day I was jerking my body back and forth with my arms splayed out to my sides trying to keep my balance when I sensed someone approaching behind me. Before I knew it my strong, 6'4 dad had grabbed my left



Sandra Sheridan
Contributing columnist

hand in one of his while wrapping the other arm around my waist and we were off!

As I sat, remembering this experience, I could still feel the thrill of flying across the lake propelled by someone else's power and expertise. Instead of stumbling around trying to stay upright, I was flying, without fear of falling because I was completely enveloped in the arms of a strong, expert skater I could fully trust.

The Apostle Paul in writing to the Philippians encouraged them not to be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition,

with thanksgiving, [to] present their requests to God. A few verses later he explained, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation ... I can do everything through Him Who gives me strength."

No matter what Paul faced, a feast or a famine, living in plenty or want, he experienced victory because of his connection with Christ. Christ's strength became His strength and Paul could rejoice despite his circumstances.

We will all face difficult and sometimes excruciating trials in life. But when we are floundering

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'All' in the Bible

Mathematical theorems are universal truths about numbers, geometric figures, and other mathematical objects. When words like "all" and "every" appear in mathematical

statements, they are meant in an absolute sense.

For example, one theorem about numbers says that for all odd numbers x and y, the sum x+y is an even number. In other words, the sum of two odd numbers is always even, with no exceptions.



Dr. Doug Ward
Contributing columnist

Outside of mathematics, though, words like "all" and "every" typically are used less carefully. When we say that "everybody's doing it," we mean that something is popular, not that every single person is doing

it. As one humorous tee shirt says, "Surely not EVERYBODY was kung-fu fighting."

In the Bible "all" is sometimes used in a

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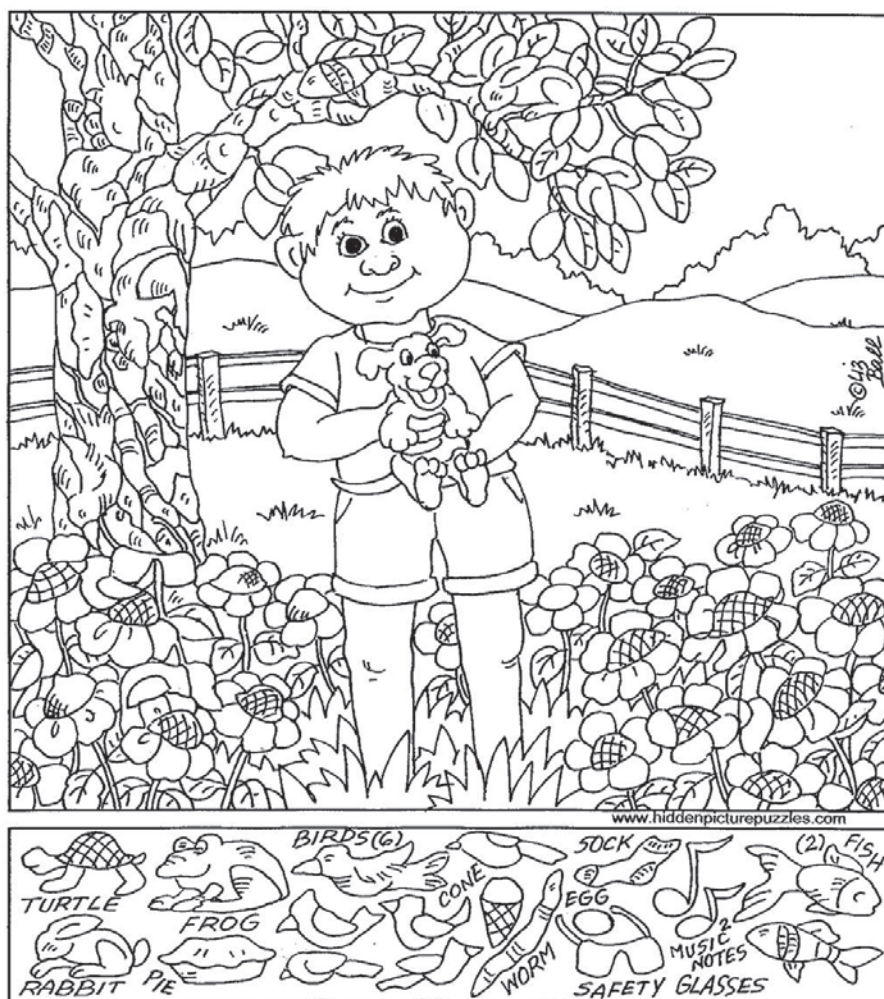
Jeremiah Hull was recently sworn in as assistant director of the Greene County Detention Center. He comes to the court from the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, where he was a deputy in Harrison Township. A native resident of Xenia, Hull said he looks forward to having time to personally engage with the youth of Greene County, and coordinate programming that will encourage good choices and behaviors. He was sworn in by Juvenile Court Judge Amy Lewis.



Courtesy photos | Greene County Juvenile Court



HIDDEN PUZZLE



Power

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Herod died of it. There are some today who have promoted themselves as a god, or becoming a god. They are committing a very dangerous sin. Such pride will only lead to their eventual destruction. God will not be mocked in this way and His judgement will certainly be seen. We must humble ourselves before the Lord, and not be full of ourselves.

Heavenly Father, Your control over all Your creation is supreme. You order everything and make Your true presence known through Your Son, Jesus. We humble ourselves and confess any sin of pride we may have that keeps us from giving You all the glory. May we glorify You more. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Pastor Robert Forsberg is retired from Light of Christ Lutheran Church in Fairborn.

Connection

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and wondering how to stay upright, our connection with Christ will be our sustaining power. Don't be anxious, but call out to Him in prayer. Present your requests before Him and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. We, like Paul, can do

all things through Christ Who strengthens us. So relax into His strong arms and let Him provide the power and expertise you need to take a wild and exhilarating ride across the ice. It is only in this connection that one achieves a victorious life of faith.

Love, Mama

Sandra Sheridan is a midwest wife and mother of five. She shares her letters to her children with our readers. Visit her at www.VersesFromMama.com.

'All' in

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mathematical sense to make a universal statement, as when Paul says that "we will all stand before the judgment seat of God" in Romans 14:10. Another example appears in 1 Corinthians 15:27, which states that Jesus the Messiah will one day rule over the entire universe, with the exception of God himself.

In other passages "all" is intended less precisely, as in Acts 19:10, which says that after Paul had shared the gospel in Ephesus for two years, "all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." This verse is saying that both Jews and non-Jews heard the gospel, not that every last person heard it.

Ancient battle accounts tend to use universal language loosely to emphasize that one army won a decisive victory. This is somewhat comparable to modern sportswriting. If we say that a game was a "complete rout," we mean

that the final score was not close, not that the winning team chased every member of the losing team out of town.

This is helpful to keep in mind in reading verses like Joshua 10:40, which declares that in a victory over the Canaanites, Joshua's forces "struck the whole land" and "left none remaining but devoted to destruction all that breathed." As we read on, we find that many Canaanites remained among the Israelites, and Joshua instructed the Israelites not to intermarry with them (Joshua 23:12-13). Joshua 10:40 is employing hyperbole for the sake of emphasis, not using "all" in a mathematical sense.

Being aware of ancient writing conventions and reading verses in context, not in isolation, can help us determine what the Bible means when it uses universal language. Remembering these principles will enhance our understanding of Scripture.

Dr. Doug Ward is an elder at Church of the Messiah in Xenia and an avid reader.

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