

Can I start today by giving you a bit of information of which you might not be aware. This year there is going to be a Christmas. I have checked in my diary and yes, December is there. I have looked on the calendar and December is also one of the months. As far as I can recall we had a Christmas last year, and the year before, and the year before, and..... there has been one for the past 1991 years. Why is it then, that so many of us seem to be taken by surprise at the approach of Christmas? I would say that the two most frequently asked questions at this time of the year are, "Have you written your cards yet?" and "Are you ready for Christmas?" Often the reply to both is, "No." How strange that it takes us by surprise when we have known about it all our lives!



Talking of surprises, I had a lovely surprise a couple of weeks ago when my daughter-in-law and grand-daughter arrived with an early Christmas present. It was a lovely penguin, (Whom I have named 'Percy') complete with nice red Christmas hat and scarf and a plant attached. I think they had really meant it to go in the garden, but I thought that his hat and scarf would go all soggy in the rain so I have put him on the end of my kitchen unit where I can have a chat to him. (Don't know if that is a sign that I am cracking up!)

I have been wondering if Jesus was ever surprised. We have to remember that when Jesus was on earth He was fully a human being who experienced the same sort of feelings that we experience. We can read in the Bible of Him being upset, grieved, hungry, tired, tempted and needing to spend time on His own. At the same time, He was fully God; however, even though we are talking about two separate natures, we are not talking about two separate persons, but one person. It is something that is very difficult for us to understand, yet one of the most wonderful concepts that we can read about in the Bible. As God we can read how He had knowledge of things before they happened, such as knowing that the Pharisees were trying to trick Him into saying certain things. I know that Jesus can heal today, but we can also read how He touched the lives of absolutely hundreds of people as He travelled around, sick people being brought to Him wherever He went. We have been told of the miracles that He did. Who else could feed almost 10,000 hungry people with a few loaves and a couple of fish? I suppose the most important indication as to the person He really was is found in what He said about Himself. He knew who He was. He knew why He was on the earth as a human being and He knew exactly what lay ahead of Him.



If Jesus was and is God, was He ever surprised? As far as I know there is no record of Him actually being surprised, but, there are two occasions when it seems to me that He might have been. (Purely my own opinion – Have a think about it and see if you come to the same conclusion.) The first is when He was twelve years old and His family had travelled to Jerusalem for the Passover. When it was time for them to return to Nazareth it would appear that those who lived in the same village travelled back as a large company for safety reasons. They had travelled for a day, realized that Jesus was missing, spent another day travelling back to Jerusalem and then a further three days looking for Him. They must have been fairly distraught after all this time – although rather remiss of them not to have counted their children before they had left, especially as we are not looking at a five minute trip to the village, but a trek of about eighty miles! When they eventually found Jesus and He was scolded by His parents, His reply was, "Did you

not know that I must be in my Father's house/About my Father's business?" He seemed surprised that they had spent three days looking for Him without thinking where He was expected to be found; particularly as He had reached the age of twelve and would be considered an adult and be able to take part in the discussions in the temple for the first time.



The other occasion when it looks to me as if Jesus was surprised was when He went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane just before His death. He had taken a number of disciples with Him, then had taken three of them a little further and asked them to watch with Him. After praying, He then found them asleep. Was He surprised? I don't know. I expect that He would have been very disappointed at their lack of support and such a lapse on their part on so important an occasion as this when, as a human being, it would have been really helpful to know that they were praying for Him.



Was Jesus ever surprised when He was on earth? What do you think? I know that He often surprises us by the things He does in our lives today. Ask Him to give you a special surprise this Christmas. No, not a material gift, (Although a nice surprise gift would be very acceptable!) but a blessing that will show you how very much He loves you.

Related Bible readings:

Luke 2: 41 – 52 Jesus left behind

Matthew 26: 36 – 46 Jesus in Gethsemane

Philippians 2: 3 – 11 Jesus God and man



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