

GRUNIONS

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! “ (Rom. 11:33)

California grunions are a species of marine fish found only along the coast of southern California and northern Baja California. Their name comes from the Spanish word “grunon” which means “to grunt” and their fame involves their unique spawning behavior. These fish, who cannot survive out of water, actually risk leaving the water to reproduce. Thus, while other fish spawn in secret, these remarkable fish actually come out of the water to spawn so that we can watch them. Why? Remember that Job wrote: **“let the fish of the sea inform you” (Job. 13:8)**. Perhaps God created the lowly grunion to teach us something.

Somehow God made the grunion so it would know precisely when to come out of the water. The high tide necessary for their successful spawning is so unusual that according to the California Department of Fish and Game it can be predicted a year in advance. Shortly after this special high tide, thousands of grunions flop their way out of the water and onto the beach. For four consecutive nights, beginning with the new and full moons, the grunion takes advantage of the high tide to get as far up the beach as possible. The female arches and twists her body to dig a “nest” in the sand with her tail. Then, half buried, she deposits her eggs in the nest. The males curve around the female and release their milt that flows down her body to fertilize her eggs. As many as 8 males may fertilize these eggs in a single nest. Some of these fish remain on the beach for several minutes. Females lay between 1,600 and 3,600 eggs at a time and their eggs are kept moist by residual water in the sand. While the eggs are initially only 2 to 3 inches deep, the outgoing tide covers them to a depth of 8 to 16 inches. They will be ready to hatch in about 10 days, but remain viable until they are freed from the sand by the next series of high tides to reach them. The baby grunion hatches 2 or 3 minutes after the eggs are freed from the sand and are washed out to sea.

While there may be many lessons we can learn from the grunion, one thing for sure, the grunion can only survive with a predictable future. If the tides, for example, were erratic and unpredictable, the grunions would be extinct. The fact that they are not extinct tells us something about God. Early in the Roman letter Paul said: **“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:” (Romans 1:20)***. The word translated as “made” is the Greek noun “poema”. While the verb form of this word occurs hundreds of times, the noun is only found two times in the Bible. Interestingly, it is the basis of our English word “poem”. In Romans it refers to the “poem” of God’s physical creation, and in Eph. 2:10 it refers to the “workmanship” or “poem” of God’s spiritual creation. Just as there is rhyme, meter and design in nature, there is also rhyme, meter and design in the church. Believers are also God’s “workmanship” or “poem”.

Just as God’s dependability is necessary for the grunion to survive, it is also necessary for

believers to survive. The consistency of God is a constant theme throughout the book of Romans and also in the rest of the Bible as well.

- God is consistent in His condemnation of sin. In this regard He treats everyone alike. It doesn't matter whether you are a Jew or Gentile, all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23).
- God is consistent in His desire to save mankind through Jesus Christ. This "mystery" was kept secret since the world began, but has now been revealed (Rom. 16:25).
- God is consistent in justifying man by faith. It doesn't matter whether it was Abel, Abraham, or you and me, God has always justified man by faith (Heb. 11:4: Rom. 4:3).
- No matter what it "appears" like, God is not unrighteous (Rom. 3:5).
- God's dealings with Israel have been consistent. God has always wanted all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). Israel was merely one vehicle used by God to make this happen.
- The gifts and calling of God do not change (Rom. 11:29). God has consistently looked upon man's unbelief with the desire to have mercy on them all (Rom. 11:32).
- That's when Paul, by inspiration, marveled at what God was doing and wrote: **"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33)**

While no man or group of men can explain all of the details about grunions, the fact that they continue to exist is proof that their unusual means of reproducing works.

While no man or group of men can explain the depth of God's wisdom and knowledge, the existence of Jews and Gentiles in the same church is proof that His eternal plan for mankind is working.

Because God is trustworthy and consistent the risk the lowly grunion takes is not in vain!

Because God is trustworthy and consistent the risk the believer takes in trusting Christ is not in vain either!