

The Pacific Ocean



God created everything that exists through the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle John said of Jesus, 'Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made' (John 1:3 NIV). He is the second Person of the Godhead who is 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit' - three Persons, but one God. My God created this world of ours and that included the huge Pacific Ocean.

The Portuguese explorer, Ferdinand Magellan, believed that by sailing west he would discover a short way to the islands of the Far East where he could buy the precious spices that were very popular in Europe. When he found his fleet was blocked by America he

The Pacific Ocean

sailed south and, in November 1520, rounded the southern tip of South America and into the new ocean which he named, 'Mare Pacificum' - the 'Peaceful Sea.' Magellan died on this expedition, but on 6 September 1522, *Trinidad*, the one remaining sailing boat, with just eighteen sailors, reached Spain. The journey took 3 years and it was the first ship to circle the globe.

The Pacific Ocean is the largest of our oceans measuring approximately 171 million square kilometres, which is about seventeen times the area of the United States of America, and about one third of the surface area of the world. The coastline around the ocean measures approximately 140,000 kilometres.

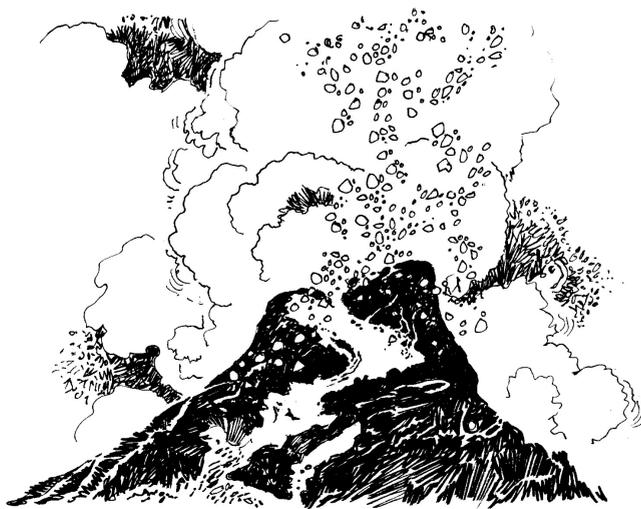


Pacific Adventures

The average depth of the ocean is over 4,000 metres, while the deepest spot is the Mariana Trench, which is over 11,000 metres below sea level - that's a long way down!

There are three island groups - *Melanesia* which includes Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Fiji, and the Solomon Islands; *New Caledonia* which includes Polynesia, New Zealand, Tonga, Samoa, the Easter Islands, and the Pitcairn Islands. Then there is *Micronesia* which includes Nauru, the Marshall Islands, Guam and Palau.

Along the western edge of the Pacific Ocean there is 'the Ring of Fire' which is a strip where there are still active volcanoes. Many





The Pacific Ocean

countries in the area suffer earthquakes. Some occur deep down on the ocean floor and cause 'Tsunamis' - waves that race across the ocean at speeds of up to 600 kilometres per hour. When they reach land they flood the coast, washing away homes, crops and people. Some Tsunamis have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people who live along the coastal areas.

In the ocean we find about 25,000 islands, most of which are the tops of volcanoes surrounded by coral reefs built by tiny polyps.

Not only does the equator cross the Pacific Ocean, but it is also the only ocean in which we find the International Date Line. This is a most important line, which, with the Greenwich meridian, sets the world's time and days.

Many currents flow across the ocean, one important one being the El Nino. The ocean water heats slightly off the coast of Peru and flows across the Pacific to Australia. This current of warm water affects the climate of many Pacific countries. When it fails to reach Australia the country suffers disastrous droughts.





Pacific Adventures

We should thank God for the rain that falls. He created this world and causes the warm ocean currents to travel many thousands of miles from Peru to Australia's coast.

Try to imagine the amount of water in the Pacific and think of the words of Isaiah 40:12, 'Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?'



When I go to the beach I can only scoop up about half a cup of the salt water into my hands.

