



The G.E.M.

Volume 3 Edition 1

The Grace Electronic Magazine

January 2009

REFLECT ON THE WORD

A new year is always seen as a time of change and starting new things. With that in mind, we at Grace Media are planning on doing just that. During the coming year you will begin to see some new things, and some changes.

One such change is a shift in the themes of *The G.E.M.*

In a society where the Bible is under constant attack, and Christians are being challenged on what the Bible is about, and what it says; there is a great need to go back to the basics of The Word. Therefore, we have changed our monthly 10/40 Window Missions Spotlight to a "survey" of the Bible. Each month we will have a basic introduction to a book of the Bible to help you become more acquainted with its contents.

Our main article on page 3 will also have a new focus that is based solely on key issues from the Word, starting with a very brief tour of its main message.

Our focus this year is to equip you with the tools that you need to better study and teach the Bible. It is therefore with great pleasure that we would like to inform you that we are now official stockists of LifeWay and Koinonia House (Chuck Missler) resources in the Bedfordview/Edenvale area.

Please visit our store or website today for more information on the products available.

Well, we wish you all a blessed and prosperous 2009, and may we all go from strength to strength in our service of The Kingdom of God.

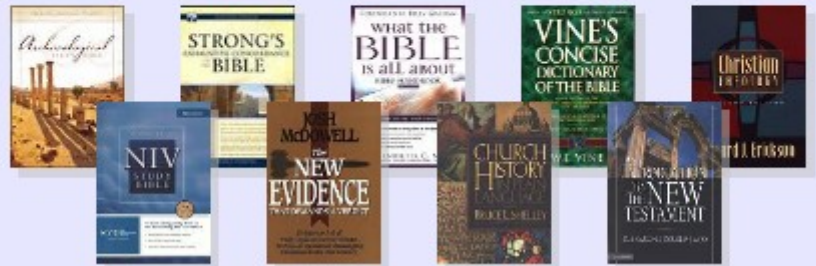
Until next time, God bless.
Glyn and Linda. †

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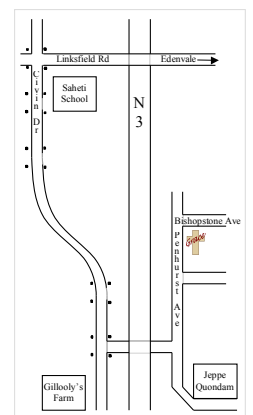
Saturday:

9am – 2pm

Closed Sundays and
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BIBLE BASICS

Genesis

The Book of Beginnings

Genesis takes its name from the Greek word meaning "origin". In Hebrew, it is referred to as Berê'shiyth, the first Hebrew word which is translated as "In the beginning".

Author and Date: Technically the book's author is anonymous. However, in both Christian and Jewish tradition the first five books of the Old Testament are called the Torah [Hebrew], the Pentateuch [Greek] or the Law. Both Jesus and Paul affirmed that Moses wrote the Law (see John 7:19 and Romans 10:19), therefore it is generally accepted that Moses is the author.

As a result, the earliest possible date for Genesis' existence in its present written form is about 1450BC. The contents however, would have been passed down orally through the generations.

Theme: The general theme of the book is that of beginnings, and through it we can see the following beginnings:

1. the world (1:1-25)
2. the human race (1:26-2:25)
3. sin in the world (3:1-7)
4. the promise of redemption (3:8-24)
5. family life (4:1-15)
6. civilisation (4:16-9:29)
7. nationalities (10,11)
8. the Jewish nation (12-50)

Structure: Genesis is divided into two major sections. Chapters 1-11 present the personal nature of God's creation and his relationship with humanity. Chapters 12-50 tell the story of the direct ancestors of the Israelites through the lives of four men: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, and presents God's plan to save the world as a result of the fall in chapter 3.

Basic Outline:

Chapter 1-2	The Creation
3	The Fall of Man
4	Cain and Abel
5	Genealogy of Noah
6-9	The Flood
10-11	The Tower of Babel
12-20	The Life of Abraham
21-26	The Life of Isaac
27-36	Jacob and the 12 Tribes
37-50	The Life of Joseph

Purpose: Genesis lays the historical and theological foundation for the whole of the Bible. As the Bible is the story of God's redemption of His creation, Genesis 1-11 tells us why redemption is necessary: man is a rebel and unable to redeem himself.

Genesis 12-50 then shows us the steps that God initiated to establish a redeemed people and to make a way for the Redeemer to come. He did this through His unconditional covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and with His heaven-sent care of Joseph.

It is with this purpose in mind that we should be studying the book of Genesis. †

PRODUCT REVIEWS

THE LOVE DARE



The Love Dare, as featured in the new movie *Fireproof* (see review in the December 2008 edition of *The G.E.M.*), is a 40-day challenge for married couples to understand and practice unconditional love.

It does not matter whether your marriage is hanging by a thread or healthy and strong, *The Love Dare* is a journey all couples need to take. The time has come to learn the keys to finding true intimacy and developing a dynamic marriage.

This book makes you take a serious look at your marriage and make decisions on what needs to be changed, and gives insight on how to change them. Designed as a 40-day guided devotional experience that will lead your heart back to truly loving your spouse while learning more about the design, nature and source of true love. Each day's reading includes a Scripture, a statement of principle, the day's "dare", a journaling area and check box to chart progress.

This is an excellent book to read together as a couple and discuss those issues that keep your marriage from being what God intended it to be. Makes the perfect gift for any married couple along with the *Fireproof* DVD. Go on, I dare you!

Our price: R160

COMPASSIONART CD



CompassionArt is the result of a historic songwriter's retreat in Scotland during 2008 that brought together twelve internationally recognised songwriters – including Israel Houghton, Matt Redman, Michael W. Smith, Steven Curtis Chapman, and Darlene Zschech – to write songs to raise money for those suffering in the poorest countries.

And with such a varied group of songwriters comes an album that is not like any normal compilation album, but rather an eclectic mix of sounds and styles. From hip-hop to worship, from rock to pop, this album is one that will please many varieties of tastes.

The amazing thing about this album is that all proceeds derived from the songs written for *CompassionArt* will go directly to charity. Half will go to the charity of the songwriters' choice and the other half will go toward four collective projects – Hand of Hope, Stop The Traffik, Ray of Hope, and Watoto.

Our price: R100



Looking for ministry resources?

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Top 25 Must Reads

Hell's Best Kept Secret by Ray Comfort

Why are so many unbelievers turning away from the message of the Gospel? Does the Bible not tell us how to bring sinners to true repentance? If so, have we missed it? The answer may surprise you.

Discover when, why, and how the enemy buried an important key needed to unlock the unbeliever's heart. Now Ray Comfort boldly breaks away from modern tradition and calls for a return to Biblical evangelism.

If you are experiencing frustration over lost souls, unrepentant sinners, and backslidden "believers," then look no further. This radical approach could be the missing dimension needed to win our generation to Christ.

A book that belongs in the hands of every Christian.



R 130

A QUICK TOUR OF THE BIBLE

About 400 years after Joseph and his brothers settled in the land of Egypt, the Israelites had become quite numerous and Pharaoh had made them his slaves.

Life had become exceedingly difficult for the Israelites and they cried out to God. In Exodus 3 we read that God had seen their affliction and heard their cries (v7).

God did not ignore them, He acted, and the book of Exodus is all about God's response to that cry as He rescued His people from Egypt's oppression.

But why were the Israelites in Egypt in the first place? In order to fully understand Egypt and the Exodus, we have to go all the way back to the beginning; to the Garden of Eden.

Genesis

God had created the perfect dwelling place for man, and man was in relationship with Him. But Adam and Eve went their own way. They pushed God's boundaries.

A little while later, their son Cain killed his brother Abel. All it took was one generation from stepping outside God's boundaries to murder. In fact it only took six generations, the first six chapters of the Bible, for the whole world to be headed for destruction.

From fruit; to murder; to the entire world; at odds with God.

One would think that man would learn his lesson, but no. Six generations later, the Israelites found themselves in Egypt under the rule of a pagan pharaoh. Sin had been passed down through the generations and had permeated society.

Exodus

Then we come to Exodus. A book about a people being liberated from slavery. A tale of adventure and drama, leading the people to the foot of Mt Sinai.

Here God reminded them of who He is and tells them that *"Although the whole earth is Mine, you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."* (19:5b-6a)

God was calling the people of Israel to be different from the rest of the world. To be His representative here on earth, to teach His ways and to draw men to Him. He was telling them to be the opposite of Egypt.

This sums up the books of Law (Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Numbers), where God gave them a new way to live and move. To live right. To not be another Pharaoh.

Solomon

But now let us skip to a few hundred years later where we find the people of Israel in Jerusalem. And what was happening? Solomon was building a temple.

But guess what, he was using slaves. The oppressed had become the oppressors. The ones who cried out were causing others to cry out (1 Kings 9:15).

"you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"

Solomon also had the slaves build his own palace and the cities of "Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer." He had chariots and horses imported from Egypt (2 Chronicles 1:16,17). Jerusalem had become the new Egypt!

The Scriptures are clear: God heard the oppressed and blessed them and called them His chosen people.

But Israel mistook blessing for favouritism. They forgot to be priests. They had earned power and wealth but had forgotten their purpose.

The Prophets

But God is patient. He waited and later sent His Prophets. But Israel would not listen to them. So, Babylon came, and the Israelites were slaves all over again.

God's people cried out again. God heard and acted again. Sending prophets to remind them of who they are meant to be and what God's plan is for the world.

He sent Isaiah who told the people of Israel that God had prepared a way for them, and that a voice would call out from the wilderness urging them to *"Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him"* (Isaiah 40:3 and Matthew 3:3).

Out of Exile

So they headed back home to Jerusalem, and started rebuilding the city. But then the Greeks came, and after a short period of independence, the Romans. Israel was occupied.

After living in Egypt as slaves for 430 years, and in exile until Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to build the wall, all hope seemed to have vanished. Living in a country occupied by a foreign nation, the question on everyone's mind was, "where is the promised Messiah". But then the Good News came.

The Gospels

After centuries of silence from God, a man appears on the scene healing the sick, taking care of widows, and preaching Good News. He came serving instead of being served, blessing others instead of receiving. Living life differently.

Hope was being revived until He was arrested, crucified and buried. Hopeless again, people started to head back home to the life they knew before the stranger came.

But then, on the road to Emmaus, two men met a guy, a stranger, who explained it all to them. They thought Jesus' death highlighted failure, but instead they were shown that it was all part of God's plan way back in the beginning.

Jesus had risen from the dead.

Acts

We are almost done with the story... for now we arrive at Acts and here we find all sorts of people gathered together for the day of Pentecost.

Remember Sinai? People ready to hear from God. Ready to receive a covenant. Ready to be invited to be priests.

At Pentecost, it all happens again. They were gathered together in one place, waiting for the expected promise of the Holy Spirit, and God spoke to everyone in their own tongue and through Peter's awesome sermon.

Only this time, God is not living in a tent – He is living in hearts. He is not inviting just the Israelites into a relationship with Him – but all men.

And how many people were added to their number that day? About 3000 (see Acts 2:41).

How many had been lost at Sinai when they worshipped the golden calf? About 3000 (see Exodus 32:28).

Full Circle

We have come full circle. God is reminding His people of the day

He invited them into a relationship with Him. And why?

Because God has, and always will, want *"a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God"* who will *"declare the praises of Him"* (1 Peter 2:9).

He still hears the cries of His people in their own personal Egypt. He still wants to bless and rescue us. He still wants us to live holy lives as His representatives here on earth until He comes again.

But so often we tend to misunderstand and end up in Exile. We mistake God's blessing for favouritism and forget to be His priests.

Revelation

As we enter 2009, we will be faced with many challenges, choices and difficulties. We will be tempted to take over things and try to do them in our own strength.

But God has promised us life, and to have it to the full (John 10:10). Though we feel as though we are in our own Egypt or Exile, God will see us through.

And one day, in the not too distant future, Jesus will come again and *"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain"* (Revelation 21:4).

"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). †

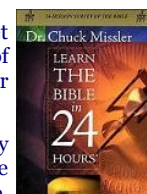


Get to Know the Bible

Learn the Bible in 24 Hours by Chuck Missler

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THAT'S IN THE BIBLE?

How well do you know the Good Book?

- When He sent Cain into exile, the Lord placed a mark on his forehead so all would know he was:
 - A murderer
 - Protected
 - An outcast
 - Cursed
- When Sarah overheard the Lord tell Abraham that she would bear a child, she:
 - Gave thanks
 - Fainted
 - Laughed
 - Wept
- Laban tricked Jacob into marrying his daughter:
 - Rachel
 - Judith
 - Rebekah
 - Leah
- Laban pursued Jacob after he left his territory because he believed Jacob had stolen his:
 - Money
 - Daughter Rachel
 - Household gods
 - Cattle and sheep
- When God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, He placed cherubim at which end of the garden?
 - North
 - East
 - South
 - West
- Who did God tell: "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you"?
 - Abraham
 - Isaac
 - Jacob
 - Moses
- God's record of the creation of the world is found in the Book of:
 - Genesis
 - Jeremiah
 - Psalms
 - All of the Above

Answers in the Next Edition

Last Month's Answers: 1. God our Salvation (Lk 1:31) 2. Sarah (Mt 1) 3. Jairus's daughter (Mk 5) 4. Rock (Mt 16:18) 5. John the Baptist (Mt 14:2) 6. His wife (Mt 27:19) 7. Two turtle doves (Lk 2:24) 8. A demon (Mk 1:24)

SHEKEL CARD HOLDERS

Until 14 February, all Shekel Card holders will receive double points on all purchases of the *Fireproof* DVD and *The Love Dare*.



DVD available end January. Order your copy today!

IN THE BEGINNING

N	R	R	Q	G	F	Y	L	T	E	Z	Q	K	N	O	W	L	E	D	G	E	N
C	A	I	E	Q	N	N	E	L	V	N	A	T	R	V	I	A	Q	K	A	K	E
B	L	M	B	P	A	Y	A	U	E	Q	G	I	C	H	W	B	Z	A	R	Z	Q
S	G	Y	O	A	U	X	F	F	C	N	H	U	A	F	G	E	R	U	D	C	O
Q	E	U	C	W	N	F	N	E	D	E	N	R	I	L	F	L	F	K	E	X	T
B	Z	N	V	P	U	I	E	R	G	I	O	F	N	C	I	M	J	F	N	L	S
M	K	M	M	H	R	K	M	L	A	U	I	J	A	G	T	F	X	S	I	N	N
Q	X	A	T	S	A	T	U	A	H	B	T	Y	H	M	W	H	G	F	C	D	E
S	D	R	P	N	S	R	U	E	L	L	A	T	N	A	M	O	E	Z	A	H	V
A	A	C	S	T	Z	E	E	S	O	S	E	C	N	X	D	J	Y	O	X	T	A
E	R	F	A	N	G	E	L	W	C	P	R	Y	V	Y	T	Z	Z	O	A	B	E
J	G	N	I	N	N	I	G	E	B	C	C	M	Z	A	N	H	I	X	U	V	H

Find the following words in the above grid.

Abel	Adam	Angel	Animals	Beginning	Cain
Creation	Earth	Eden	Eve	Fruit	Garden
God	Heavens	Knowledge	Leaf	Life	Light
Man	Rib	Sin	Snake	Tree	Woman

FINAL THOUGHT

A Christian traveller was once packing his suitcase when he remarked to a friend, "Well, I still wish to pack a guidebook, a lamp, a mirror, a telescope, a book of poems, a number of biographies, a bundle of letters, a hymn book, a sharp sword, a small library containing 66 volumes..."

"But," his friend interrupted him, "you only have about six inches left in one side of your suitcase. How are you ever going to manage to fit it all in?" The Christian smiled and his eyes twinkled, "That will be very easy," he said. "You see, all I have to do is put my Bible in the suitcase, for it is all the things that I have mentioned."

DIARY OF EVENTS

Ester Konferensie 2009

13-15 Maart 2009
NG Moreletapark, Pretoria

Daniel 2009 Mannekonferensie

20-21 Maart 2009
NG Moreletapark, Pretoria

Children's Ministry & Sunday School Teachers Conference

21 March 2009
Bryanston Methodist Church

Beauty for Ashes Women's Conference

22-24 May 2009
Rivers Church, Sandton

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