



The G.E.M.

Volume 3 Edition 6

The Grace Electronic Magazine

June 2009

REFLECT ON YOUR HEART

There comes a time in everyone's life where they have to make a choice about who they choose to serve. A choice that will affect them for the rest of their lives. A choice of the heart.

In our main article on page 3 of this month's issue of *The G.E.M.* we deal with that very choice. Based on the words of Joshua, we are reminded that it is a choice that not only is for the non-believer, but one that we as Christians need to constantly remind ourselves of.

Our usual product reviews are on page 2, along with the next instalment of *Bible Basics*, this time on the first of the history books, Joshua.

Last month mom's had a day where they were spoilt by their children, I hope. This month it is dad's turn. Father's Day is on Sunday 21 June, so be sure to pop in to the store and pick up something for that special man in your life.

Not sure what to buy? Have a look at a few ideas on the right.

And if these winter nights are becoming a little too cold for you, then wrap yourself in a blanket and enjoy the games on the back page.


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



THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME

In This Issue

- Bible Basics**2
- Product Reviews**2
- Top 25 Must Reads**2
- It's Time** 3
- Coming Soon**3
- That's in the Bible?**4
- Word Search**4
- Diary of Events**4



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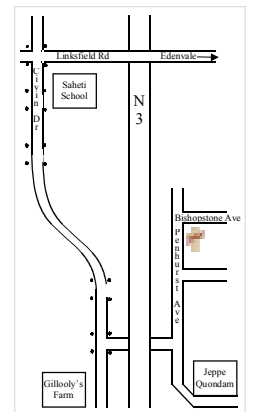
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BIBLE BASICS

Joshua

The Book of Conquest

The book of Joshua tells the final part of the story of Israel's journey out of Egypt into the Promised Land. God has shaped the nation, and now they are ready to take possession of the land of Canaan.

Date: It is traditionally accepted that this book was written around 1400BC.

Author: The author of the book is not known. The story unfolds as an eyewitness account and some have suggested that Phinehas, son and successor of the high priest of Joshua's time, being the last person mentioned in the book, could be the author.

Basic Outline:

The book of Joshua is simply historical narrative and the material is selected to fit in with the author's theme.

- 1:1-18 The Commander Prepared by God
- 2:1-5 Israel Prepared
- 6-9 The Central Campaign
- 10-12 Northern & Southern Campaigns
- 13-24 The Land Divided

Characters: The main character in the book is obviously Joshua, successor of Moses as the leader of Israel. He was a militant leader (see Exodus 17:8-16), and was one of only two adults who left Egypt who was allowed to enter the Promised Land (see Numbers 14:6-9; 26:65; 32:11) – the other being Caleb.

Previously in Numbers, Joshua and Caleb both saw the problems of entering the Promised Land to be small compared to the size of their God.

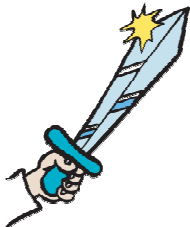
As a spiritual leader, Joshua is an example for the nation of Israel as an obedient servant of the Lord.

Summary: For forty years God had miraculously preserved the nation of Israel through their wandering in the wilderness by providing them with water, manna and quail. Now that Joshua had led them across the Jordan into the Promised Land, the manna stopped. They was no more than enough food and water for them to look after themselves.

At Gilgal, all the males were circumcised. For forty years they had failed to observe the rite of circumcision which God had ordained for all the descendants of Abraham.

Canaan would be a battleground with some very powerful nations. Among them were the Amorites, who were the biggest and most powerful, with their capital in Jericho.

The book of Joshua is an exciting book of military conquest., but more than that, it is also about the victory of faith. The faith of a nation dedicated to God. †



PRODUCT REVIEWS

TAHN and RETURN TO ALASTAIR

by L.A. Kelly



It has been a while since I have read a fiction book that I could not put down.

This is an incredible story of forgiveness and love in the face of much pain and suffering. As you walk with the character of Tahn you begin to understand his heart, seeking not only forgiveness for himself, but also to find forgiveness for other people even when they themselves do not want to accept it.

Even though this is a fictional story, the true characteristics of God are accurately portrayed, especially the aspects of His love, forgiveness, and His desire to be in a relationship with us. God's grace goes so much deeper than we sometimes realise, and this is displayed in the life of Tahn.

This is a beautiful story that involves action, adventure, mystery, intrigue, romance, and faith. The characters are very believable and are easy to relate to, and you are drawn into the story from the first paragraph.

Even though some aspects of the lives of mercenaries and criminals are part of the story, there is no compromise in focussing on the violence itself. The severity of it is understood by the context rather than in gruesome details.

This is a story that represents Christianity in a fictional setting, yet it is in no way boring.

Fantasy buffs and romantics will love this tale of an unlikely hero! I cannot wait to get my hands on book 3 – *The Scarlet Trefoil*.

Our Price: R 140 each

Trust Jesus Christ

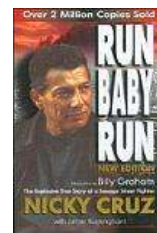
Top 25 Must Reads

Tough kids and gangs are not the issues of the past, or limited to city streets. Violence is alive in our families, schools, communities and in the media.

Run Baby Run is the dramatic testimony of Nicky Cruz, a warlord of a vicious New York gang and his dramatic battle against a life filled with drugs, alcohol, stealing, mugging and extreme violence.

This is a gripping story and one that over the years, thousands of teenagers have read and turned their lives over to Christ.

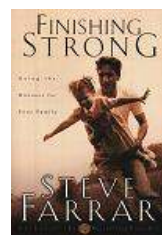
An inspiring story of how God can transform the worst of lives to one that declares the Gospel and glorifies His name.



R 120

FINISHING STRONG

by Steve Farrar



Bestselling author Steve Farrar has good news for the average man: it does not matter if you have had a good start in the Christian life, or a rough one. It does not matter if you have stumbled time and again, or even fallen flat on your face.

What matters most in this all-important race of life is how you finish. According to Farrar, the man who hangs in there through to the end with his wife, his children, and his Lord is an exception these days.

In the beginning, using anecdotal evidence and some statistics, Farrar paints a grim, yet accurate picture, of how few men finish strong in the faith. This is a great wake-up call.

Other points Farrar covers include:

1. Proven character is essential for ministry.
2. Be careful of relationships with women other than your wife.
3. God's and the world's definitions of success are radically different.
4. Do not allow a busy lifestyle to come between you and your relationship with God.
5. Uninterrupted success for a prolonged period of time can result in a dangerous form of pride.
6. Characteristics of people who think they are leaders but are not.
7. God will use our times of unemployment, obscurity, waiting, and loneliness to mould us into the people He wants us to be.
8. God can use the failures and disappointments of our lives to mould us into His likeness.

If you are a man desiring to make a difference for God, in your family, at work, or in your community, find out from this book how you can finish strong for Christ.

Our Price: R 130

Run baby Run by Nicky Cruz

IT'S TIME... TO MAKE UP YOUR MIND

"But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." - (Joshua 24:15)

The setting of this verse is at the end of the nation's journey from their slavery in Egypt. They had defeated their enemies and claimed the land of Canaan. Each of the tribes had received their inheritance and now they could settle down and enjoy life.

It was a time of hope, but it was also a very dangerous time for them. For there existed the danger that they would forget where they came from, how they had arrived there, and what the Lord had done for them. There was also the danger that they would adopt the idolatrous religion of the Canaanites who still lived around them.

In the midst of this, Joshua delivers a challenge to the people from the Lord. God requires their dedication to Him and Him alone. He does not want them to live for Him and the gods of Canaan at the same time. He wants wholehearted dedication or nothing.

May I remind you that these are dangerous times for the church as well. Just as the Lord issued a call through Joshua over four thousand years ago, for Israel to make up their minds as to whom they would serve, so He issues the same call to His people today. Let us look into this chapter and hear the call God is giving to us.

Time of Reflection (vv1-13)

Joshua begins by calling the nation to a time of reflection; to remember who they are, where they came from and, more importantly, what the Lord has done for them.

Firstly they are reminded of God's choice and call of Israel. How He redeemed them and delivered them from Egypt. How He manifested His glory and power throughout the journey. They are reminded of the many victories and the blessings they received from God.

So too we need to remember all that God has done for us. Remember where He found us. What He has done for us. How He has answered prayer and met our needs.

Next Israel is reminded that God was always with them. In everything they faced, He was there to help them and to see them through.

We also need to remember that ever since the day we were saved, God has never left us nor forsaken us (see Hebrews 13:5 and Matthew 28:20)

Finally they are reminded of how they enjoy blessings that they do not deserve. They are partakers of grace and have more than they could have ever imagined!

We are to remember the fact that we have much in our lives that we simply do not deserve. Think of it. We are saved, secure and Heaven bound. We have the promised Holy Spirit. We have more than we could ever hope for or imagine.

Time of Reckoning (vv14-15)

Joshua then calls the nation to make a decision, and this is done by giving them a command, a choice and a challenge.

Joshua's command to the people was threefold: to "fear" God; clean up their lives by putting away other gods; and to serve the Lord. If they did this, then they would be in a position to put God first in their lives.

But this is a command that we need to take heed of today. We are to:

- 1) Fear the Lord, that is, to revere and honour Him for who He is.
- 2) Do away with our other gods. Those things in our lives that come before God, remove them forever.
- 3) Serve the Lord wholeheartedly. The word "serve" here means to "worship or pay homage to" [Webster's Dictionary] The implication is that God requires us to worship Him with sincerity and truth.

The choice that Joshua challenges them to make is simply who is it that they are going to serve.

Four thousand years later and the choice remains the same. We need to climb down from the fence and make up our minds as to whose team we are on. We cannot serve both God and the world! (see Matthew 6:24) Either He is first in our lives, or we are serving other gods. Is the Lord your first choice? If He has to compete for your time, your attention, your money and your love, it calls your whole profession of faith into question. If you had to rank God on a list of priorities in your life, where would He end up?

Finally Joshua issues them with the challenge by being an example for the rest of the nation. He declares to them that he and his household will serve the Lord. His intention is clear, and he has declared it openly to the nation.

In the pluralistic society of today we need to settle in our hearts once and for all who we are serving, and openly declare it and live it for all the world to see. If it is Jesus we have chosen to serve, then we need to set the example for others. We need to have a backbone of steel and not allow anything to come ahead of God in our lives. Does your life stand as a challenge to godly living, or as an encouragement to godless living? It is one or the other!

Time of Restoration (vv16-28)

After Joshua has finished, the people then consider all that the Lord has done for them and they declare their allegiance to Him alone.

Joshua takes this opportunity to remind the nation that God is holy and righteous. If

they serve Him, He will bless them, but if they go back on on their word, there will be serious consequences.

We need to remember that while God is a God of love, grace and mercy; He is also holy and righteous. He does not tolerate sin in the lives of His children. Hebrews 12:6-12 reminds us that there is a terribly high price to pay for disobedience. Sadly, many people pay the price for their sins through their children, their health and in their homes. We need to understand that we will reap exactly what we sow (see Galatians 6:7).

Finally the nation responded by showing their commitment to serving the Lord through setting up a memorial. A record of their decision, permanently set in stone. A record that could be used to hold them accountable.

Unfortunately, Israel did not keep her vows to the Lord and paid a terribly high price. This can be seen throughout many of the later Old Testament books.

Even though we do not need a contract cast in stone or written down for us to hold to, God will still hold us to the vows we have made. A vow that was sealed in blood two thousand years ago by Christ's death on the cross. Should we walk in a way that does not please Him, then we can expect Him to discipline us, if we are truly His children.

Conclusion

God is calling all people today to make up their own minds. If the Lord is the God you choose to serve, then serve Him. If He is not, then go ahead and serve whatever has your heart. But whatever you do, stop trying to have the best of both worlds.

Christians who do not live wholeheartedly for the Lord are poor ambassadors of Christ. While a life lived in full service and honour to Him, putting Him first, is a powerful witness indeed. Which are you?

If you are not saved, then let me assure you of this, if you were to make that commitment to the Lord, your life would be far different than it is. It may not be a bed of roses, but it will be a life worth living. Today would be a great day to come to Jesus.

If you are saved, then let this be a spiritual check-up for you. Allow Him to change you so that the church can grow and give glory unto the Lord! †

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serve both
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THE BACK PAGE

THAT'S IN THE BIBLE?

How well do you know the Good Book?

All answers are found in the book of Joshua

- When Joshua and the children of Israel entered the promised land, how many cities made peace with Israel, rather than fight?
 - 3
 - 1
 - 7
 - 12
- Who was the high priest when Israel entered Canaan under Joshua?
 - Zadok
 - Abiathar
 - Eleazar
 - Eli
- Which of the following tribes had their inheritance east of the Jordan River?
 - Asher
 - Reuben
 - Judah
 - Benjamin
- Which king's body was thrown down at the city gate and then covered with rocks?
 - Ben-hadad
 - Achan
 - Ahaz
 - King of Ai
- What reward did Othniel receive for taking Kirjath-sepher?
 - Joshua's daughter
 - 12000 sheep
 - Caleb's daughter
 - 3000 talents of gold
- In the days of Joshua, the five kings of the Amorites had the misfortune to encounter a...
 - Whirlwind
 - Rainstorm
 - Hailstorm
 - Slime pit
- Where was the tabernacle first placed after the Israelites entered Canaan?
 - Shiloh
 - Ramah
 - Jerusalem
 - Bethel
- Whose daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah?
 - Meshullam's
 - Othniel's
 - Zelophehad's
 - Abiezer's

Answers in the Next Edition
All references are from Deuteronomy.

Last Month's Answers: 1. Ar (2:9) 2. Clothing (8:4) 3. Moseiah (10:6) 4. They will both die (22:23-24) 5. Cobra (32:33) 6. Moab (34:1) 7. The Lord (29:29) 8. Israel (34:12)

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Find the following words in the above grid.

Achan	Amorites	Bethel	Caleb	Canaan	Edom
Euphrates	Gibeon	Hebron	Hittites	Jericho	Jerusalem
Jordan	Joshua	Land	Mizpah	Nun	Promised
Rahab	Ramah	Shechem	Spies	Tyre	Zimri

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*But as for me and my household,
we will serve the LORD.*

Joshua 24:15b

