



The G.E.M.

Volume 4 Edition 6

The Grace Electronic Magazine

June 2010

REMEMBER TO ENJOY LIFE

The 2010 FIFA World Cup is finally here. What many have been planning and working towards these last few years has arrived. The tension is in the air. The fans are ready. The teams are ready. The stadiums are ready. On Friday 11 June, businesses will close early across the nation. South Africa is ready for the biggest sporting event to ever hit our shores.

No matter how you look at things, the nation and the organisers of the World Cup have done us proud. What many believed could not be pulled off, is about to begin. The only thing left is for Bafana Bafana to do just as well, and they will.

This month in *The G.E.M.* we have focussed on our outlook of the world. *Bible Basics* on page 2 takes a look at the next book of the Bible – Ecclesiastes. Tying in with the theme of the book and the World Cup, our main article on page 3 goes on to look at the different ways we perceive the world, ending with a challenge that applies to all of us today.

The normal *This Day in History* on page 2 looks at another event that happened on June 11.

The next two cards in the *God's Library Cards*, Deuteronomy and Joshua, and the ever challenging *Bible Sudoku Challenge* are on the back page.

We trust that you will have a pleasant time during the World Cup and over the school holidays. May the best team win!

And remember, if you are unable to come to the store, we will gladly send any item to you.

Until next time,
Glyn and Linda. †

"Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord"
(2 Peter 1:2)

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BIBLE BASICS

Ecclesiastes

The Book of Reasoning

Eccelesiastes is certainly a unique book. It is entirely philosophical in nature and seems to contradict the other wisdom writings of the Old Testament. It is not a book for those who are discouraged by life to read. Words like “*meaningless*” and “*vanity*” literally litter the book. Its inclusion in the Bible seems rather odd.

Basic Outline: Ecclesiastes contains a series of short discussions on the meaning of life, which can be broken down as follows:

	<u>Chapters</u>
Prologue	1:1-11
Theme Proven	1:12-6:12
Deductions from Theme	7:1-12:8
Epilogue	12:9-14

Date and authorship: Tradition and studies in the 1950's of the language use, tell us that the book was written by King Solomon when his pagan wives turned his heart from God.

Other ism's: When you study the book of Ecclesiastes, you learn about the other ideologies and ism's in the world.

- Materialism (2:12-26)
- Fatalism (3:1-15)
- Deism (3:1-4:16)
- Natural religion (5:1-8)
- Wealth (5:9-6:12)
- Morality (7:1-12:12)

And in each case, all are found to be a waste of time, even from a worldly perspective.

Contribution to the Bible: Ecclesiastes is not a book that contains direct communication of truth from God, but is a report of human reasoning by the world's wisest man. We cannot even use it to preach truths about God, the afterlife, or salvation. Why then is it in the Bible, and what value does it have for us today?

Quite simply it helps us to understand the true feelings of man. A glance at the inner thoughts of the people in the world around us. It shows us what life without God is like. The best that man can do without God.

Therefore, since it is showing us what life without God is like, it serves as a reminder of what life was like before we became Christians. It reminds us of the futility of things if we are not doing them for God.

It also serves as a wake-up call to make sure that we do not slip back into the mindset of the world. It reminds us to show others out there the benefits of serving a God who cares about His creation, so much so that He sent His only Son to die for it.

Without Christ it is impossible to live a life of true joy or happiness. This is the fundamental reason for the inclusion of Ecclesiastes in the Bible. †

PRODUCT RECALL

The Maker of all human beings (*GOD*) is recalling all units manufactured, regardless of make or year, due to a serious defect in the primary and central component of the heart.

This is due to a malfunction in the original prototype units code named *Adam* and *Eve*, resulting in the reproduction of the same defect in all subsequent units. This defect has been technically termed “Sub-sequential Internal Non-Morality,” or more commonly known as *S.I.N.*, as it is primarily expressed.

Some of the symptoms include: Loss of direction, Foul vocal emissions, Amnesia of origin, Lack of peace and joy, Selfish or violent behaviour, Depression or confusion in the mental component, Fearfulness, Idolatry, and Rebellion.

The Manufacturer, who is neither liable nor at fault for this defect, is providing factory-authorized repair and service free of charge to correct this defect.

The Repair Technician, *JESUS*, has most generously offered to bear the entire burden of the staggering cost of these repairs. There is no additional fee required.

The number to call for repair in all areas is: *P-R-A-Y-E-R*

Once connected, please upload your burden of *SIN* through the *REPENTANCE* procedure.

Next, download *ATONEMENT* from the Repair Technician, *Jesus*, into the heart component.

No matter how big or small the *SIN* defect is, *Jesus* will replace it with: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self control.

Please see the operating manual, the *B.I.B.L.E.* (Believers' Instructions Before Leaving Earth) for further details on the use of these fixes.

WARNING: Continuing to operate the human being unit without correction voids any manufacturer warranties, exposing the unit to dangers and problems too numerous to list and will result in the human unit being permanently impounded. For free emergency service, call on *Jesus*.

DANGER: The human being units not responding to this recall action will have to be scrapped in the furnace. The *SIN* defect will not be permitted to enter Heaven so as to prevent contamination of that facility. Thank you for your attention!

GOD

P.S. Please assist where possible by notifying others of this important recall notice, and you may contact the Father any time by 'Knee mail'.

Anonymous †

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

11 June

Parents' Footprints

In 1907 missionary Jesse Brand, young and unmarried, left for India, settling in the disease-ridden Chat Mountains. His friends shuddered at his descriptions of flea-covered rats swarming through the hills and spreading plagues with abandon. But one supporter longed to join him—Evelyn Harris, belle of a fashionable London suburb. She journeyed to India and married him in 1913.

The Brands laboured tirelessly, giving medical aid to thousands. Jesse organized economic assistance and cooperative programs so farmers could get ahead. He negotiated with government officials to use unemployed workers for labour. He took every opportunity to share Christ, in one year preaching 4,000 times in 90 villages. Churches were established. Congregations grew.

And so did the Brand family. Son Paul was born and taught by his mother under a tamarind tree. His nature-loving dad showed him the wonders of nature. At age nine Paul was sent to England for formal education, and his parents pressed on alone.

In the spring of 1928 Jesse contracted Blackwater Fever. His condition worsened, but he continued working. In early June, his fever reached 104. On June 9, he preached from Isaiah 60: Stand up! Shine! Your new day is dawning. On June 11, 1928 his temperature reached 106 and he was forced to bed. Evelyn sat by him day after day, watching his skin parch, his colour yellow, and his life drain away. Local Indians wrapped his body in a mat and carried it on their shoulders to a hillside grave.

Word was flashed to 14-year-old Paul. Two days later Paul received a letter from his dad, mailed by boat before his death. It ended: ... and always be looking to God with thankfulness and worship for having placed you in such a delightful corner of the universe as the planet Earth.

Evelyn remained in India, becoming a legend hiking over the mountains with her walking stick, doing the Lord's work. “Granny Brand” lived to see her son, Dr. Paul Brand, become a famed missionary physician excelling in the treatment of leprosy.

Quoted from: *On this Day: 365 Amazing and Inspiring Stories About Saints, Martyrs & Heroes* (electronic edition) by Robert J. Morgan. †

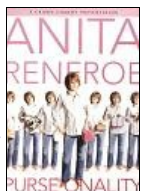
LAUGH AT LIFE

Purse-onality DVD

by Anita Renfroe

We all need to laugh more, especially at the everyday idiosyncrasies of life. This DVD will do just that.

Purse-onality is an outstanding comedy event that is cheeky, high-energy, yet ultimately life-affirming. Anita Renfroe riffs of family and church life, fake tans, caffeine, eBay addiction – even mammograms – in a hilarious, insightful look into everyday life.



R 125

IT IS HERE

There are certain global news events that take place that we can say years later that we remember exactly where we were when the news was reported. For example: the death of Lady Diana in 1997, or the attack on the World Trade Centre on 9/11.

But there is another event that I am sure many of us can remember where we were at the time; the announcement that South Africa would be hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Now it is a matter of hours away. Think back over the last six years and remember all the comments and opinions that have been tossed back and forth about it. Many doubted that we could not pull it off. Others strongly believed that we could. While others looked at things as they are and said it is possible, but only time would tell.

South Africa has come a long way over the past decade. Who would have thought that a predominantly Afrikaans rugby team, the Blue Bulls, would ever play an international rugby match in Soweto? That will certainly go down as a major achievement in a country that only twenty years ago was governed by a racist system called apartheid.

It is one thing to look back on the past and be proud or thankful of how things have changed or turned out, but quite another to look forward with the same attitude. How one views the future, whether for the nation as a whole, or even for ones own life, can basically come down to three perspectives; pessimism, optimism or realism.

Pessimism

Even now, given the success of SA preparing for 2010, pessimists are still doubting that it will be a complete success. They keep going on about the crime, corruption, proposed strikes, the seemingly useless justice system, poor service delivery, a failing economy, etc.

And you know what, they are absolutely right! Every one of these issues is evidence of that. Our country faces many large challenges like these, which the pessimists believe SA will never be able to overcome. In their opinion, the vetkoek is going to hit the fan pretty soon.

This kind of attitude has been around for millennia. Have you read the book of Ecclesiastes lately. Throughout the book the writer tells us that all in life is meaningless. We work and we play, yet all of it is a waste of time. Ecclesiastes is full of this type of philosophy. But it is dangerous to remain entirely focussed on this philosophy. Negativity like that can destroy a person, even a nation.

Optimism

The attitude of the optimist, however, is one that reflects on how things have changed for the better and looks forward with the same kind of expectations. They will probably mention things like the strength of the Rand compared to what it was a decade ago, or the improvements to the intersections around Johannesburg, the stability of our banks due to the National Credit Act, or

even just the fact that we are ready for 2010. Just look at all the SA flags flying from buildings, fences, on street corners, and even those on car mirrors. South Africans certainly seem to be showing some national pride at the moment. There is a sense of optimism and hope.

And guess what, they are also absolutely right. All of these signs give us a reason to feel positive about our nation. Each one of them is a real achievement.

But sometimes optimism can cloud our judgement of things. We can be so filled with hope and expectation of a brighter tomorrow that we miss those things that are around us that can destroy everything that we hope for. It is great to be optimistic, but we also need to make sure that it is not a false optimism. This is where the realists come in.

Realism

The realist on the other hand will look at things from a different angle. They will ask questions about how the nation is really doing? How do we compare to the rest of the world?

And to be honest, if you seriously ask those kinds of questions yourself, you will find that things are actually pretty good for the nation at the moment. We are doing much better than many other countries, and we are certainly better off than we were a decade ago. Yes we have our problems, but what nation doesn't?

The concept of realism allows one to honestly assess life. It allows you to have a both a positive and a negative outlook on the future. It allows you to put plans into place to make changes if things seem to be going amiss. It allows you to celebrate and enjoy the many good things that are around.

But with realism comes responsibility. The responsibility to do what one can to make changes and improve things.

From these three outlooks, it certainly seems to be better for one to have a realistic perspective of life.

Spiritual Perspective

As Christians, it is so easy to point fingers at all the wrong things in the world. To make a song and a dance about all the evil. To have a totally negative outlook on things, believing that things are not going to improve.

That belief is totally correct. Jesus Himself asked the question: "However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). Things do not look great spiritually for the world right now. There are many inhumanities, atrocities and evil acts that contradict the laws of God being done on a daily basis.

If we only had a pessimistic outlook on life, we would come to believe that it is a total waste of time to even try to improve the world. We would not go out and tell people about God and what He has done. We would ignore the Great Commission (Matthew 28) and let everyone go to hell, even ourselves.

What is your outlook on life?

On the other hand, to have a totally optimistic attitude is also not right. Things are not going to improve. The evil on this planet is going to grow worse. One only has to read the prophecies in the New Testament concerning the end times to see what it is going to be like (Matthew 24, the whole of Revelation and others). Pretty scary stuff.

Therefore, to have a realistic perspective seems to be the only option left, and is indeed, the best option. To be realistic we see the state of the world at the moment. We see what it is going to become, not only from the prophecies of Scripture, but also by looking at how history has allowed things to develop.

Having a realistic perspective allows us to look honestly at the situation of the world. There is much sin and it will be worse, but there are still some good and faithful people in it too.

When one puts God and His promises in the Word into the picture, one is filled with a sense of hope that there is a better life to come after this one. One with no more tears or pain (Revelation 21:1-4). A life living for eternity with the God of love, peace, grace and awe.

Putting it all together, one cannot help but be filled with a sense of responsibility to want to change the world. To want to go out there and tell people about the hope we have (cf. 1 Peter 3:15). To want to share the faith with the lost.

All that remains is for us to go out there and do it. To both talk the walk and walk the talk. To show compassion, love, mercy, kindness and faith to a world that needs God.

If we go out with this attitude, our lives will be filled with more meaning and joy. We will have a reason to believe. A belief that is based on the life of Christ and His Word.

It is up to us to change our attitude, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, go out there and do some good for the Kingdom.

What is your outlook on life? †

There is a sense of optimism and hope

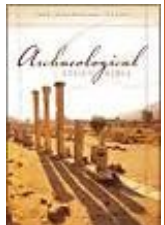
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THE BACK PAGE

BIBLE SUDOKU CHALLENGE

How well do you know the Good Book?

Bible-Sudoku Challenge combines the logic skills to solve a normal Sudoku with Bible trivia.

Begin by answering the Bible trivia questions. Using the answers and placing them in the relevant coordinates, solve the grid on the right. The coordinates with each question indicates where in the grid that starter number is to be placed (e.g. A1, E9).

All answers are from Ecclesiastes.

- Which verse in chapter 11 says, "Light is sweet, and it pleases the eyes to see the sun"?
(D7, B5)
- Complete the verse: "Give portions to seven, yes to __ __, for you do not know what disaster may come upon the land."
(H4, A9, C5)
- In what chapter does the write say, "The fool folds his hands and ruins himself"?
(E1, I4, B6, C3, F9)
- In which chapter does the writer say, "the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep"?
(A1, I2)
- Complete the verse: "When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the __ __ as well as the other."
(D8, H7, C4, E2, A3, G6)
- A cord of how many strands is not quickly broken?
(G3, E9, F4, B2)
- In what verse in chapter 3 does the writer say that there is a time to keep and a time to throw away?
(D6, F3, E7, B4, C2)
- Complete the verse: "if __ __ lie down together, they will keep warm"
(G1, E6, D9, C8, A4)
- In what chapter does the writer say the "dead know nothing"?
(H2, B8, E3, C1, I5)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									

Answers in the Next Edition

Last Month's Solution

Trivia: 2 (30:7), 8 (8:22-31),
6 (6-16), 3 (30:18), 7 (9:1),
9 (12:9), 5 (28:5), 4 (4:18),
1 (27:17)

Sudoku Grid

6	7	3	8	4	5	2	1	9
1	8	9	3	6	2	4	7	5
2	4	5	7	1	9	3	6	8
4	2	6	1	3	8	9	5	7
3	1	8	9	5	7	6	2	4
5	9	7	4	2	3	8	3	1
8	3	1	2	7	4	5	9	6
7	6	4	5	9	3	1	8	2
9	5	2	6	8	1	7	4	3

GOD'S LIBRARY CARDS

COLLECT THEM ALL - Every month a new Library Card will be released, with facts on many amazing themes of the Bible, e.g. Books, people, places, food and events. Just cut them out and laminate them for easy reference. For additional cards and other related products, contact us.

DEUTERONOMY 5

Key Idea: Repetition of Law

Summary: The Nation of Israel learns about God and His ways while in the Wilderness.

Key People: Moses.

Key Places: Mt Pisgah, Northern Moab

Strange but True: A bed 4m long (3:11).

Stone tablets that contained the very handwriting of God (10:4).

Shoes that never wore out after walking in them for 40 years (29:5)

A man that died at 120 years old while still in perfectly good health, and then buried by God (34:7).

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JOSHUA 4

Key Idea: Conquest of Canaan.

Summary: Joshua conquers the Promised Land and divides it among the tribes of Israel.

Key People: Joshua, Caleb.

Key Places: Canaan.

Strange but True: A river that dries up when the priests stepped into it (4:15-16)

City walls collapsing after people shout and trumpets are blown (6:20).

Two kings fleeing from hornets (24:12).

The sun standing still for a day so that a battle could be finished (10:13).

Thirty one kings defeated by one man, his army and God (12:1-24).

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Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgement, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

Ecclesiastes 12:13b-14