



# The G.E.M.

Volume 4 Edition 8

The Grace Electronic Magazine

August 2010

## REMEMBER TO TRUST GOD

August is a very special month for us, as it is our birthday month. This year we are celebrating four years of service to you our valued customers, and therefore are giving you 10% discount on all your purchases of regular priced items. There are also R600 in gift vouchers to be won. So be sure to visit us in-store or on-line from 2 to 28 August

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In this month's edition of *The G.E.M.* our focus shifts to the book of Isaiah and the glory of God. Through this great prophet we can learn so much about the God that we serve. Take a look at both the Bible Basics (p2) and our main article (p3) that deal with this wonderful book of the Old Testament.

Tying in with our birthday on 26 August, *This Day in History* looks at another event in church history that took place on that date. On the back page are the next two *God's Library Cards*, 1 & 2 Samuel, and the ever challenging *Bible Sudoku Challenge*.

So switch off that TV, put on some relaxing Christian music, and enjoy this edition of *The G.E.M.*

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

### Isaiah

#### *The Book of Promised Salvation*

The book of Isaiah is one of the most significant in the Old Testament and is often the favourite Old Testament book of theologians and Biblical scholars.

**Date and authorship:** The book was written by the prophet Isaiah sometime between 739 and 681 BC during the time of the divided kingdom.

Isaiah lived in Judah and spoke to the people of the Southern Kingdom about their pending doom and the coming Messiah.

**Characters:** Isaiah is the main character of the book, of which very little is known. It is believed that he was one of the priests and that he was martyred by the evil king Manasseh as an old man.

Apart from Isaiah, a number of the kings and nations of the time are mentioned in his prophecies, including Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah.

**Isaiah's Servant Theme:** One of the main themes that runs throughout the book is that of the servant Messiah. Israel was originally chosen by God to fulfil a servant role (41:8-9), but failed. Therefore God later sent a servant to pick up the pieces of the uncompleted task, to redeem Israel and all mankind, namely Jesus. Isaiah beautifully portrays His desire to please God, His life of humility, His suffering and death.

**Structure:** Isaiah can be divided into three main sections, with two of them being divided into further subsections as follows:

#### Chapters

<b>Visions of Judgement</b>	<b>1-35</b>
The Holy One of Israel	1-6
The Book of Immanuel	7-12
Oracles of Judgement	13-24
The Sure Purpose of God	25-35
<b>Historical Narrative</b>	<b>36-39</b>
<b>Visions of Splendour</b>	<b>40-66</b>
Beyond the Exile	40-48
The Servant of the Lord	49-55
The Need for Redemption	56-59
The Restoration of Mankind	60-66

**Did you Know?** Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, Jewish scholars recognised the servant to be the Messiah, but were puzzled by the fact that He was to be both a suffering servant, as well as a triumphant ruler. As a result, at the time of Jesus, the Jewish scholars taught that Israel itself was the suffering Messiah and that the next Messiah to come would be the victorious ruler.

**Value for Today:** Throughout the book of Isaiah we see a majestic portrait of God and through it we grow in our relationship with Him. It also gives us confidence in the God that we serve through its many prophecies concerning Christ, penned hundreds of years before His birth, that were all fulfilled in His coming. †

## COMING SOON

### Letters to God DVD

Tyler Doherty is an extraordinary eight-year-old boy who is suffering from brain cancer. To Tyler, God is a friend, a teacher and a pen-pal. His prayers take the form of letters that he sends to God on a daily basis.



Brady McDaniels is a beleaguered postman who ends up being the one who has to "deliver" the letters to God. At first not knowing what to do with the letters, he strikes up a friendship with Tyler, his mom, his grandmother, his older brother, and the rest of the neighbours in the street.

Brady eventually decides what he needs to do with the letters, and as a result, his life and those of the neighbourhood are drastically changed.

Based on a true story *Letters to God* is a tale of inspiration, hope and redemption that is a must see that will challenge you in terms of your own prayer life and faith.

**Due November 2010**



### Angel Song

by Sheila Walsh & Kathryn Cushman

Annie's return to Charleston was supposed to be a happy occasion. Instead she is mourning the death of her sister, Sarah. As she and carpenter Ethan McKinney get the family homestead ready for sale, Keith, her 12-year-old neighbour with Down Syndrome, claims he can see angels. Could he be right – or does he have an overactive imagination?



**Due October 2010**

**R140**



### A Christmas Snow

by Jim Stovall

For Kathleen, Christmas has always reminded her of her father's abandonment 30 years ago. In the days leading up to this December 25, an unforgiving blizzard traps her at home with two unlikely roommates; Sam, a gentle older man, and the daughter of her soon-to-be fiancé. But will she finally discover a life-changing forgiveness?



**Due November 2010**

**Book R110  
DVD R150**

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

**26 August 1708**

### **The Ravings of a Wife**

Blessed is the man whose wife speaks with wisdom even when she's out of her mind.

Ebenezer Erskine was a minister, but not a good one. His Scottish congregation wearied of his preaching, but he seemed unable to do better. "I began my ministry without much zeal, callously and mechanically," he later wrote, "being swallowed up in unbelief and in rebellion against God." He had no enthusiasm for the Lord or his Word. No devotional life. No fresh insights from Scripture. His sermons were long, formal, and memorized; he preached them word for word in a monotone, never looking up or glancing into the jaded faces of his audience.

His wife, barely able to endure it, dreaded each approaching Sunday. For years she wept secretly over her husband's unregenerate heart and unspiritual ministry. She prayed earnestly for God, yet she said little to Ebenezer until ... until she contracted a raging fever. Ebenezer, 28, anxiously hovered over her as she twisted and tossed, body shrouded in sweat. In her delirium, she babbled her opinions of his ministry—it was lifeless and long-winded. And his heart? It was lost and languishing. Her words pierced him.

"At last," Ebenezer wrote in his diary, "the Lord was pleased to calm her spirit and give her a sweet serenity of mind. This, I think, was the first time ever I felt the Lord touching my heart in a sensible manner. Some few weeks after, she and I were sitting together in my study, and while we were conversing about the things of God, the Lord was pleased to rend the veil and to give me a glimmering view of salvation which made my soul acquiesce in Christ."

His "acquiescence" came on August 26, 1708. He wrote, "I offer myself up, soul and body, unto God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I flee for shelter to the blood of Jesus. I will live to him; I will die to him. I take heaven and earth to witness that all I am and all I have are his."

Ebenezer Erskine became a popular preacher in eighteenth-century Scotland and the founder of the Scottish Secession Church.

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

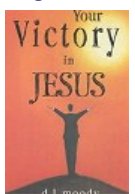
## RECOMMENDED

### Your Victory in Jesus

by D.L. Moody

We all understand that Jesus has forgiven us our sin and has overcome sin's controlling force in our lives, yet we do not seem to be living it.

Join D.L. Moody in this classic work as he explores the meaning of true victory. From it you will learn how to begin experiencing a life that is ruled by Christ instead of fear.



**R 90**

## I SEE THE LORD...

Isaiah 6:1-7 is an amazing picture of God in His throne room with the angels surrounding Him and worshipping Him. We see too that Isaiah is there, who recognises his sinfulness, and is being commissioned by God to fulfil His purpose among the people of Judah.

### Historical Context

*"In the Year that king Uzziah died"* (v1)

Uzziah became king of Judah when he was only sixteen, and reigned for 52 years. During his rule, the nation prospered and Uzziah became almost as rich as king Solomon. In 2 Chronicles 26:5 we read that *"As long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success."* And this he did for most of his life.

However, as the riches and power mounted up, so did his pride. Later in 2 Chronicles 26 we read that his pride was so great that he went to the temple to perform a task that only the priests were allowed to perform – burning incense. This he did despite the warning of the chief priest, Azariah, and eighty others.

As a result of his pride, God struck Uzziah with leprosy, and he suffered with this disease until the day he died in about 740BC.

For the nation of Judah, Uzziah's death had a major impact. An impact similar to the nation of England hearing of the death of Queen Elizabeth II. The people would have been asking questions like "How can we go on?" or "What is the point?"

### Seeing the LORD

*"I saw the LORD..."* (v1ff)

Here we see Isaiah in the very presence of the Lord as the ultimate ruler of the universe. Uzziah may have been in charge of Judah from a human perspective, but the Lord was overall in charge. (NOTE: Whenever you see the word Lord in the Old Testament, it is either all capitals – LORD – or as Lord. When it is all capitals it is referring to His revealed name, Yahweh. But when it is as Lord, as it is here, it is referring to God's position.)

If you compare the attitude of Uzziah to that of Isaiah, and even of the angels, you see a stark contrast. Uzziah had entered the temple in Jerusalem, God's presence with man on earth, in a presumptuous and prideful manner. Isaiah on the other hand, recognised his lower status before the Lord and groaned in despair, *"Woe is me...I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips"* (v5). Even the angels had to hide their faces from God.

Note that Isaiah did not question God as to why Uzziah died, or how Judah was going to survive. He did not take any advantage of the situation that was based on pride. Instead he recognised and acknowledged his sin and unworthiness before the Lord.

Unlike Uzziah, Isaiah was not struck with a disease or had his life taken from him.

Instead an angel took a hot coal from the fire and touched Isaiah's lips and declared him guilt free and atoned for (vv6-8).

Then from the throne, the Lord asks for a volunteer to be a witness to His people. Isaiah jumps at the opportunity and is then commissioned by God to do His work in the land. But this commission came with a warning that the people would not listen to him. Inspired by the vision, Isaiah went on to fulfil that commission in his life, never failing at any time to do the will of the One who sent him.

### Obedience vs Disobedience

At the same time that Isaiah was commissioned by the Lord, Jotham, Uzziah's son who had acted as regent during his father's illness, took over the throne as king when Uzziah died.

Although his reign was only sixteen years long, it is possible that Jotham was influenced by Isaiah *"because he walked steadfastly before the LORD his God"* (2 Chronicles 27:6).

Later, Ahaz, Jotham's son, became co-regent with his father for four years before taking over the throne for twenty years after Jotham's death. When the kings of Damascus and Israel joined forces to attack Judah, God sent Isaiah with a message to Ahaz (Isaiah 7:1-9), but Ahaz refused to listen and do what God commanded. As a result, things went from bad to worse in Judah.

Ahaz also looked for help in the wrong place, offering items from the temple to the king of Assyria, and even consulted the gods of Damascus (2 Kings 16:3-4 & 2 Chronicles 28:20-23). In fact, when he died he was not buried in honour with the other kings of Judah (2 Chronicles 28:27).

### Lessons for Today

Here in the twenty-first century, things are not looking too good either. With continual economic pressures, the AIDS pandemic, crime, unemployment, and poor education systems threatening our quality of life, people are bleak about their future. Many, like Ahaz, seek answers in the wrong places, and even go so far as to commit suicide to escape. People are giving up on a daily basis.

Though life is not exactly the same as in the time of Isaiah, the times are similar enough in terms of a negative attitude and outlook on life, that we can draw strength and wisdom from his life.

**God is still on His throne:** The first message we can draw from Isaiah's life is that no matter who you are, where you are, what has happened, how you are feeling; God is still seated on His throne. If we could just only take our eyes away from our own problems and look to Him, the things that we are experiencing will seem trite in His presence.

**God is still holy:** God punished Uzziah and Ahaz for their wickedness and pride. Their sins carried consequences. How do you come before God? Do you see Him as being

absolutely holy? Remember we are forgiven through Christ's death on the cross, He has called us to be holy as He is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16).

**God's Word still stands:** If only Ahaz had heeded God's Word through Isaiah, his nation would have improved. Though we do not hear the audible voice of God ourselves, nor have prophets like Israel and Judah did, we still have God's Word to guide us and it still stands true today. As Isaiah tells us later, *"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever"* (40:8).

**God still calls us:** As believers we are still called by God to fulfil His plan here on earth. Matthew 28 tells us that we are to make disciples of all nations as we go about our daily lives. And numerous verses tell us to give glory to God through our lives.

That is our calling and purpose here on earth.

**God still cleanses and blesses:** Isaiah was cleansed as a result of his humility, and was blessed throughout his life. We too, through Christ's death on the cross, have been cleansed from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9) and have received every spiritual blessing in the heaven (Ephesians 1:3).

**God can still be trusted:** Despite how gloomy things looked for Isaiah, he still trusted the Lord to see him and the nation through. That same God can still be trusted today, and not just because we may have experienced it in the past, but because of all the reasons given above.

In Isaiah, and particularly here in chapter 6, we are presented with the infinitely holy, immeasurable, unchanging, unfathomable, and indescribable God, who desires that we trust Him wholeheartedly through every situation in life, no matter how good or bad.

Are you fully trusting Him today? Are your eyes fixed on Him on His throne? If not, turn your eyes upon Him today and trust Him to see you through. Don't ask Him questions or find reasons for what life throws at you, just trust Him. That is all that He asks of any of us. For when you do, the things of the earth will seem to disappear as His glory and grace begin to fill your life. †

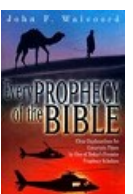
## PROPHECY EXPLAINED

### Every Prophecy of the Bible

by John Walvoord

Prophecy is much more than the events predicted in the book of Revelation, nor is it just for Bible scholars, pastors, and seminary students. Nearly one fourth of Scripture was prophetic when it was written.

Explaining every key prophecy from Genesis to Revelation - both already fulfilled and yet to be fulfilled. It also discusses the importance of prophecy and guidelines for interpreting it.



R 140

God is still on His throne

God can still be trusted

# 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 Isaiah.

- How many seraphs flew to Isaiah with a live coal in his hand? (ch. 6) (D9, I3, A7, H6, B4)
- From how many quarters of the earth will the Lord assemble the scattered people of Judah? (ch. 11) (F4, C2, B9)
- For how many years did Isaiah go stripped and barefoot as a sign and portent against Egypt and Cush? (ch. 20) (B8, G1, F7)
- Fill in the blank: You built a reservoir between the \_\_\_ walls for the water of the Old Pool, but you did not look to the One who made it... (ch. 22) (A3, F1, C5)
- In the Day of the Lord, how many women will take hold of one man? (ch. 4) (H7, D4, G2)
- How many wings did each of the seraphs have in Isaiah's vision of the heavenly temple? (ch. 6) (E1, A9)
- In which chapter is Assyria described as the Lord's instrument? (E3, I2, A4, F6, C8)
- In which chapter in Isaiah is the song *Unto Us a Child is Born* based? (F2, B3, H5, E4)
- In the day of the Lord, how many cities in Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the LORD Almighty? (ch. 19) (A8, D2, G7, B5)

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

**Last Month's Solution**

Trivia: 3 (2:3), 2 (8:12), 6 (3:7),  
7 (5:7), 8 (6:8), 1 (1:9),  
5 (3:5), 9 (6:9), 4 (4:1)

Sudoku Grid

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

Answers in the Next Edition

## 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.

### 1 SAMUEL

9

**Key Idea:** Samuel and Saul

**Summary:** The history of the last judge and the first king of Israel

**Key People:** Eli, Hannah, Samuel, Saul, David

**Key Places:** Canaan/Israel, Ramah, Mizpah, Cibeah, Philistia

**Strange but True:** A priest who fell off his chair and broke his neck (4:15-18).

A boy who killed a lion and a bear with only a club and his bare hands (17:34-36).

A king who hunted for a flea (26:20).

A man who ate veal cooked by a witch (28:11-25).

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### 2 SAMUEL

10

**Key Idea:** David of Israel

**Summary:** The history of the rise and fall of David, king of Israel.

**Key People:** David, Nathan, Joab, Abner, Bathsheba, Amnon, Absalom

**Key Places:** Israel, Hebron, Jerusalem

**Strange but True:** A king who danced naked in the streets (6:14-22)

An annual haircut (14:26).

A rider whose hair caused his death (18:9).

A giant with twelve fingers and twelve toes (21:20-21).

A brave warrior who chased a lion in the snow and killed it (23:20).

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Holy, holy, holy  
is the LORD Almighty,  
the whole earth is full  
of His glory.

Isaiah 6:3

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