



The G.E.M.

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The Grace Electronic Magazine

February 2011

WALK IN LOVE

February is recognised all over the world as the month of love. There are more engagements, marriages and relationships beginning in February than in any other month.

Therefore, in keeping with our focus on our walk with God, this month we look into the subject of walking in love, as part of God's will, particularly in the area of marriage. With divorce rates increasing each year, this is an area of our lives that certainly needs attention and God's guidance.

Therefore our main article on page 3 looks at cherishing our marriages by comparing certain aspects of our spiritual relationship with God to our earthly marriage relationships. But do not skip over the article if you are not married or are divorced, there are still some pearls of wisdom there for you.

Also in this issue: *Bible Basics* on page 2 continues with the next book in the Old Testament, Joel.

Heroes of the Faith looks at an interesting event in the life of America's first foreign missionary.

Bible Study 101 takes you through the third step of proper Bible study.

While the Back Page will keep you "puzzling."

Finally, In order for us to improve our current service to you our valued customer, we have sent out a survey to find out what you like about our business, and how we can improve. All completed forms received by 28 February will be entered into a draw to win a R100 gift voucher. If you have not yet received a survey form please visit the store or contact us to send you one.

Until next time, we look forward to seeing you in store, and Shekel Card holders, don't forget that Tuesdays are Double Points Days.

Blessings,

Glyn and Linda. †

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Joel

The Book of Judgement

The land of Israel had just suffered a great plague of locusts and Joel believed that this was a judgement of God because of the nation's sin. Joel was the first prophet to prophesy about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (2:28), and appeared on the scene a little before Hosea.

The Minor Prophets: The book of Joel is the second book of the minor prophets of the Old Testament. They are referred to as minor due to the amount of material written by them, and is not an indication of the importance.

Date and Authorship: The author of the book is Joel, son of Pethuel. In fact, this is the only thing that is known about him. Unlike the other prophets, he does not give any clear indication as to when he wrote the book. He does however refer to Jerusalem still standing, so it dates the book before the Babylonian captivity.

The fact that no date can be assigned to the book is quite appropriate in that it is a book that has a timeless message that does not deal with any specific contemporary social, moral or religious issues.

Structure: The book of Joel is divided into two main sections that both discuss judgement. The first looks primarily at the physical judgement of the nation through the locusts, while the second looks forward to the future judgement of the world.

Chapters

The Plague of Locusts	1:1-2:27
The Day of the Lord	2:28-3:21

Did you Know? The name Joel means "Yahweh is God."

The name Pethuel, Joel's father, means "Persuaded of God."

Value for Today: Whether we like to admit it or not, the church of today is in trouble. It has been attacked by many spiritual enemies both from within and without.

The call of the book of Joel goes out to all in the church today, to approach the Lord with true repentance of heart. This repentance needs to begin with the pastors and leaders.

The great outpouring promised in the book for the nation of Judah/Israel, was in the future. Long after the Babylonian captivity. In fact, it was some 850 years later on the Day of Pentecost that we read about in Acts 2. For us however, the Holy Spirit is a present reality. And it is only through the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives that those behind the pulpits and in the pews can truly be changed. †

STEP 3: Compile Background Information Chart

After reading your chosen book a number of times, and having read about the book itself, you should now have a collection of jumbled notes. Now begins the process of gathering all your information in one place.

This is best done by using a series of charts, the first of which is called the Background Information Chart. This can be drawn by hand as a chart or simply just jotted down in the proper order in a notebook or journal. Let us look at the specific titles and the relevant information you need to include:

- **Book Title:** This is quite simply the title of the book as it appears in your Bible (eg. *The Gospel of John*).
- **Author:** Who is the author of the book. If this is not evident from the Bible text itself, you will have to refer to your additional reading from step 2.
- **Purpose:** What was the purpose for which the book was written. This is usually found within the text itself (eg. John 20:31).
- **Date Written:** The date that a book is written is not evident from the Bible texts themselves. No book states, "Written in 550BC" or the like. Refer to your additional reading notes. However, there may be some indication of time periods with the text that should tie in with your additional reading.
- **Where Written:** Sometimes this is evident in the text, however, if not, then take this from your additional reading notes.
- **Audience:** Who was the book written to. This is often found within the text itself, and other times it is evident from the title of the book.
- **Historical Setting:** Spend some time recording the historical background of the time period in which your selected book is written. For example, Daniel was written during the Babylonian Captivity. What was this period like? What events led up to the captivity? If there are multiple settings, record them all with references for each.
- **Geographical Setting:** Further to the historical setting, what was the area like? Was it desert, in a city, or on the beach? If there are multiple settings, record them all. Include the references.
- **Key Verse:** Is there a key verse that sums up the subject of the book?
- **Key Word:** Is there a key word that is repeated throughout the book that is a key to its subject?
- **Other Pertinent Information:** Note any other details you deem to be of importance that you have noted or read about.

Over the next month, start compiling your notes into the subjects detailed above. Next month we will look at the next chart we need to compile.

NOTE: If you would like to download a sample chart, then visit www.gracemedia.co.za/downloads/bs101a.pdf. †

Adoniram Judson

Adoniram Judson, who wanted to become America's first foreign missionary, fell in love with the most beautiful girl in Bradford, Massachusetts. Ann Hasseltine was the daughter of a Congregational deacon, and Judson's letter asking for her hand is among the most emboldened in church history:

I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter, whether you can consent to her departure to a heathen land, and her subjection to the hardships and suffering of a missionary life? Whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean, to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India, to every kind of want and distress, to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death.

John Hasseltine did consent, and the couple was married in the Hasseltine home on February 5, 1812. The next day they were commissioned as missionaries and soon left American shores. Their new home, Rangoon, Burma, was a filthy, crowded city. The atmosphere was oppressive, the work discouraging. By 1820, there were ten Burmese converts, but at a cost. One Judson child had been stillborn; another died of tropical fever.

When war broke out between Burma and England, Adoniram was accused of being a spy and placed in a death prison. His dark, dank cell was filled with vermin, and Adoniram was shackled at the ankles. Every evening he was hanged upside down with only his head and shoulders resting on the ground.

Ann, pregnant again, visited one government official after another, urging her husband's release. On February 15, 1825, eight months after Adoniram's arrest, she showed up at his prison carrying a small bundle, their newborn daughter Maria. No artist can capture the poignancy of that brief union with its intense emotions of sorrow and joy, fear and faith.

Torturous months followed. Adoniram was finally released, but both Ann and Maria soon died of fever. Adoniram suffered a mental breakdown that nearly took both his ministry and his life.

But God wasn't finished with him. America's first foreign missionary still had a world to change.

Quoted from Morgan, R. J. *On This Day* (2000). †

CUT OUT & COLLECT

PROVERBS

20

Key Idea: Wisdom for life

Summary: Simple instructions to live life as God intended

Key People: Solomon, Rehoboam

Key Places: Jerusalem

Strange but True: Wisdom from ants (6:6-8)

It is wise not to despise a hungry man who steals (6:30)

Sacrifices that God detests (15:8)

Meeting an angry bear is better than meeting a fool (17:12)

A quarrelsome wife is compared to a constant dripping (19:13 & 27:15)

Four tiny creatures that are extremely wise (30:24-28)

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CHERISH MARRIAGE

"For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."
(Genesis 2:24)

Every relationship here on earth that has been established by God is a picture of a higher, spiritual one. Marriage, the first such human relationship introduced in the Garden of Eden before sin entered the world, is one such example. When you study the topic of marriage throughout the whole Bible, you will soon discover that it is the relationship that is most dear to God. Therefore, in order to have a proper understanding the earthly relationship, an investigation into the spiritual relationship is necessary.

If you look at the parallel verse to the verse quoted above in Ephesians 5:31, you will see Paul switches almost immediately to the relationship between Christ and His church.

In verse 25 of Ephesians 3, Paul goes on to say that husbands are to love their wives in the same way that Christ loved the church in that He gave up His life for it. This is the most fundamental principle of a Christians marriage; true, pure, unselfish love that gives everything and demands nothing in return.

If you investigate this topic fully, there are many lessons that can be learned and applied to our lives, not only to marriage, but also to our relationship with God.

For the purpose of brevity, we will look at only a handful of them here.

God's Grace

God saw in the Garden of Eden that it was not right for a man to be alone (Genesis 2:18), so He made Eve, a woman that would perfectly suit Adam. This was entirely the work of God. As they were the only two people on earth at the time, neither was in a position to be able to choose a spouse for themselves. All they could do was trust God and thank Him for each other. It was an act of grace on God's part.

In Genesis 24 we have another example of God's grace in the finding of a perfect wife for Isaac. Abraham sent his servant out to find a wife for Isaac, who waited at home. Guided by God, the servant found Rebecca. She was simply asked if she would go, and she said "yes." Also, if you follow the story, you see that Isaac was never disappointed in the choice, nor did he take more than one wife like other Old Testament men did. He trusted God's choice, and was satisfied. The reverse is also true in that Isaac was the perfect husband for Rebecca.

This is a beautiful illustration of how God the Father has sent the Holy Spirit into the word to find the bride for Jesus. Ministering into the hearts of man, the Holy Spirit calls us and asks us if we will follow Him to Christ. All we need do is say yes. Jesus is the perfect husband for us as His bride, and even though we may not be perfect, through the work of the Holy Spirit, we will be made

perfect and be the perfect bride that God has called us to be.

In light of our own human marriages, our relationships are based on the work of Grace done by God. In His sovereign wisdom and guidance, at His own time, and in His own way, God brings two people who are right for each other, together. Let us therefore strive to have the same attitude as Isaac and be satisfied with who God has joined us with and be thankful for them.

Share the Joy

Scripture is silent with regards to any form of prescribed marriage ceremony. There are no formal vows written or any indication of documents to be signed. These were later introduced by man in an effort to make couples take their marriages seriously. However, in John 2 we read of a marriage feast in Cana that was attended by Jesus and His disciples, and there are pictures of marriage celebrations in the marriage supper of Matthew 22 and the coming "marriage supper of the Lamb" in Revelation 19.

The point of these illustrations is not to imply that a marriage ceremony is essential, but rather that they are times of celebration. We see a spiritual picture here in the parables of the lost sheep, coin and son (Luke 15). Together they are a parable of joy that serves to illustrate the celebration that goes on in Heaven over a sinner that is saved. Jesus is telling us here that this is also something we are to be doing when a sinner is saved.

In the same way, our human marriages are to be celebrated. It is not a totally private act which is for the benefit of the couple only, but is something that is to be celebrated by the community. It does not matter whether one is married in a church, on the beach, or even in a government office, the point is that it is a joyous time and is to be shared with others.

Tying this together with God's act of grace, a marriage is also not just a time of social enjoyment, but a time to be thankful to God for His bringing the couple together. It also serves as a time of witness to others who may not have a relationship with Jesus.

The point here is simply that our marriages should be celebrated and be for the benefit

of other people we know and not only for ourselves. Let us celebrate our anniversaries and share our joys of marriage with other people.

Let us all come to God together and thank Him for His acts of grace in all of our marriages. Let our lives be a testimony to others whose marriages may not be as sturdy as ours. As we celebrate our marriages, others will see that we have something special that they are lacking and they too will want what we have.

A Unique Relationship

Throughout the Bible, we see that God's desire is that man will be fully united with Him and that we will have a unique and special relationship with Him that all other creatures in creation can never have.

Through the work of the Holy Spirit and Christ's death on the cross, this is possible. In a spiritual sense, those acts consummate our relationship with Him.

As believers who are now united with Christ, we can experience certain privileges and joys that are unique to the relationship. We are now able to approach the Father with boldness and confidence (Ephesians 3:12),

and can therefore now worship Him and pray to Him freely without any religious baggage. That said, however, there are still certain responsibilities that are part of the relationship, telling others, avoiding sin, etc.

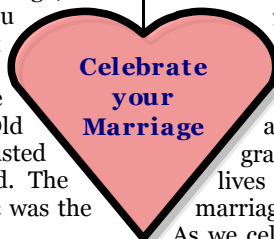
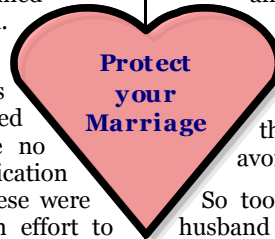
So too in our earthly marriages. As a husband and wife you are in a unique relationship with each other that no other person on this planet can ever experience. And, like our spiritual relationship with God, there are certain responsibilities. We need to protect the sanctity of our marriages by not allowing anything or anyone to come into the relationship that could negatively impact or destroy it.

Hope for Tomorrow

Unfortunately the divorce rate is very high in society today, even within the church. There are many broken lives and hearts. If you are one of them, rest assured that if you are in a relationship with Christ, you are in an everlasting relationship with Him and He will never let you down. Celebrate that relationship, avoid sin so as to protect it, and give thanks to God every day for His presence and work within your life.

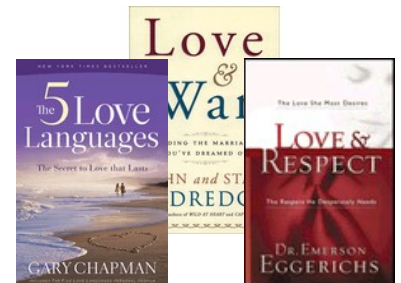
If you are still in a marriage relationship, then take heed from the examples found within the spiritual relationship we have with Christ. Be like Christ to your partner, loving them in the same way He loved the church.

Though you or your partner may not be perfect, you are perfect for each other because God has put you together. Be thankful that He graciously gave you a partner to share your life with. Celebrate your relationship, not only with each other, but also with your loved ones so that it may serve as an example and inspiration to others. And finally, cherish your marriage, by enjoying the unique privileges it brings and by taking the necessary precautions to protect it. †



MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT

Enrich your marriage today by using one of the many marriage titles available in-store!



THE BACK PAGE

BIBLE TRIVIA CHALLENGE

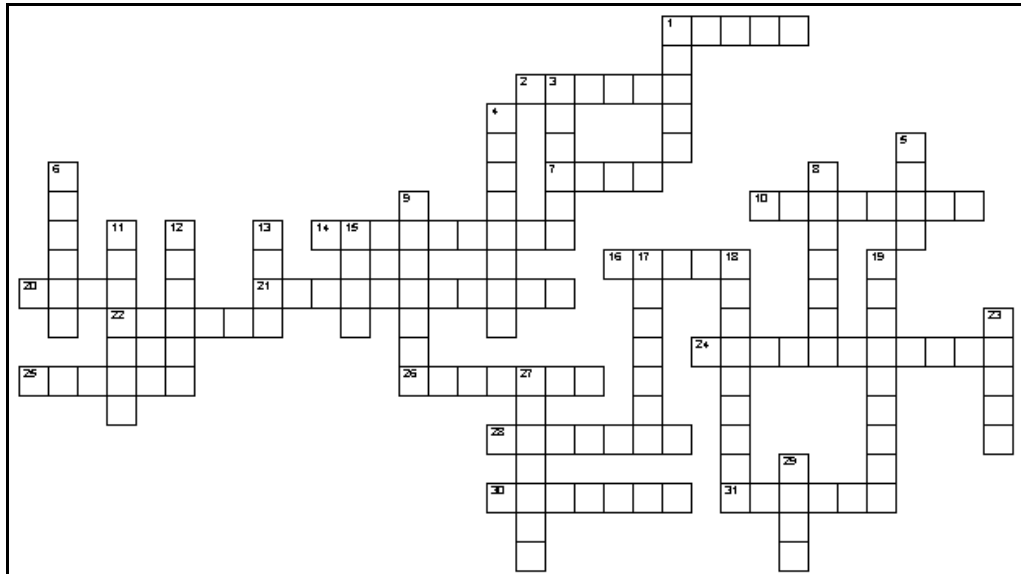
All answers found in the book of Joel.
Refer to the verses in brackets for help.

ACROSS

- 1 God will sit and do what to the nations? (3:12)
- 2 What is the nation told not to be? (2:21)
- 7 What will the nations cast for God's people? (3:3)
- 10 The noise of what is compared to the noise of the invaders? (2:5)
- 14 What were cut off from the house of the Lord? (1:9)
- 16 What will the trees bear again? (2:22)
- 20 Where will God dwell? (3:17)
- 21 What buildings were in ruins? (1:17)
- 22 After the nation has invaded, what is the land like behind them? (2:3)
- 24 In which valley will God gather all the nations? (3:2)
- 25 They were told to beat their plowshares into what? (3:10)
- 26 What insect had invaded and destroyed the land? (1:4)
- 28 What was to be blown in Zion? (2:1)
- 30 The cattle moan and the herds mill about because they have no what? (1:18)
- 31 The people of Judah were sold to who? (3:6)

DOWN

- 1 Jerusalem's and whose fortunes will God restore? (3:1)
- 3 What were ruined? (1:10)
- 4 A day of what and gloom had fallen on the land? (2:2)
- 5 The teeth of the invading nation were described as being from which animal? (1:6)
- 6 The nation was told to lament like a what? (1:8)
- 8 To who would the people of Judah sell the invading nation's children? (3:8)
- 9 What was Joel's father's name? (1:1)
- 11 What will God display in the heavens and on the earth? (2:30)
- 12 The invading nation is compared to what animals? (2:4)
- 13 The nation was told to call a holy what? (1:14)
- 15 What had devoured the pastures? (1:19)
- 17 The people are told to do what in the Lord? (2:23)
- 18 What floors will again be full of grain? (2:24)
- 19 Tyre and Sidon carried off God's precious what? (3:4-5)
- 23 What will no longer shine at God's judgement? (3:15)
- 27 What had dried up? (1:20)
- 29 What do the priest do between the temple porch and the altar? (2:17)



Last Month's Answers:
 Across: 3. Gomer; 6. Knowledge; 10. Didiham; 13. Right; 15. Forgiveness; 16. Beals; 17. Law; 19. Dove; 20. Prophet; 22. Raisin; 25. Scales; 28. Egypt; 30. Fifteen; 31. Offerings; 32. Sins; Down: 1. Love; 2. Beer; 4. Moth; 5. Mercy; 7. Gibeah; 8. Visions; 9. Parables; 10. Dew; 11. Lo-Ammi; 12. Jezreel; 14. Thornbushes; 18. Corrupt; 21. Anger; 23. Stubborn; 24. Children; 26. Alters; 27. Rejoice; 29. Sand

Answers in next edition

COLOUR ME IN

*"Love your neighbour
as yourself"*

Galatians 5:14



CONTACT US

Tel.: 011-454-6045
 Fax: 086-654-2996
 shop@gracemedia.co.za

2 Bishopstone Ave,
 Essexwold, Johannesburg
 www.gracemedia.co.za

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