



The G.E.M.

Volume 5 Edition 5

The Grace Electronic Magazine

May 2011

WALK IN FREEDOM

The seasons are changing and winter is fast approaching. The time has come for the winter woollies to be dug out of the closet and blankets to be put on the beds.

But spare a thought for those less fortunate who do not have a home to protect them from the cold. Who do not have blankets and jerseys to keep them warm. Spare a thought for those who cannot provide a hot bowl of soup for their children this winter. The poor may not deserve our help, nor may they be asking for it, but let us extend our arms out with grace to help them.

Therefore this month we look at the gift of grace that has been extended to all mankind. Through the life of Jonah in *Bible Basics* and the monthly crossword, we learn of God's grace toward an evil nation. In *Lesser Known Heroes of the Bible* we see God preparing the way for the Messiah through the lives of two insignificant men in the Old Testament. And in our main article, we look at the whole issue of law versus grace and our response as Christians.

Finally, in the survey that we held a couple of months ago, we received a good response regarding workshops. Therefore, be on the lookout for our first series of workshops that we are currently planning that will be dealing with marriage enrichment. If you are interested in attending, contact us today and we will let you know as soon as plans have been finalised.

So curl up with a steaming mug of hot chocolate and enjoy this month's edition of *The G.E.M.*

Blessings,
Glyn and Linda. †

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2 Peter 3:18)

www.ChristianGames.co.za

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE
FOR AMAZING PRODUCTS!

SUITABLE FOR ALL AGES &
GROUPS!

COMING SOON

Two Become One
Marriage Workshop

Engaged – Newlyweds – Not so Newlyweds

Join us for a 7 Week Course that will give you the tools to improve your marriage

Topics covered:
 Anger ♥ Building Trust ♥ Intimacy
 Communication ♥ Handling Conflict
 ♥ Managing Differences ♥
 Applying the Five Love Languages

If you are interested in attending, e-mail your name, contact details, and the day & time that suits you best, to shop@gracemedia.co.za, and we will contact you with more information when available.

Two Become One

E&OE, Prices valid while stocks last

**ORDER ON-LINE AT
WWW.GRACEMEDIA.CO.ZA**

**OVER 900 PRODUCTS CURRENTLY
LISTED FOR YOU TO CHOOSE FROM**

MORE COMING SOON!

BIBLE BASICS

Jonah

The Book of God's Grace

Though generally classified as a prophetic book, Jonah only contains one prophecy, the destruction of Nineveh. Its short story tells us more about one man's struggle with God as he attempts to resist God and run in the opposite direction he is told to go in.

Author & Date: Traditionally Jonah himself has been accepted as being the author of the book, writing of himself in the third person. From 2 Kings 14:25 we learn that he was the son of Amittai from Gath-hepher, and lived sometime during the early part of Jeroboam II's reign.

Should Jonah himself be the author, it means that the book may have been written somewhere between 793 and 753BC, as this was the time of Jeroboam II's reign.

Structure: As the book is an historical narrative, it follows a simple structure:

	Chapter
Jonah's Disobedience	1
Jonah's Prayer of Submission	2
Jonah's Mission to Nineveh	3
Jonah & God's Motives	4

Interpreting Jonah: Some scholars over the years have taken Jonah to not be an actual story of a person, but rather a picture of Israel itself. As a nation they disobeyed God and ended up being swallowed by the Gentile nations and going into exile before being restored to complete their mission.

Others see the book as a picture of contrast or comparison to Jesus. Contrast in that Jonah disobeyed, whereas Jesus obeyed. Comparison in that they both had a mission and both were "hidden" for three days.

None of these interpretations are clear or even seem to be necessary. The message through the historical interpretation is timeless and plain to understand.

Did you Know? Jesus used Jonah's three days and nights in the fish as a picture of Jesus' own three days and nights in the grave (Matthew 12:38-41).

Value for Today: In the same way that when the people of Nineveh repented and God withdrew His judgement of them, so too will He remove His judgement over any man who repents today.

Also, Jonah had fought hard against God and tried to go his own way. God could easily have judged him and decided not to use him for His mission. Instead God had grace on Jonah and brought him back to Himself. Us to, as followers of Christ, though at times we may turn our backs and try to do things our own way, God will turn us back to Him and put our lives back on track to fulfil His mission, His way. †

BIBLE STUDY 101

STEP 6: Recording Your Answers

Now that you have worked through the 6 key questions covered last time (Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?) you need to organise all your information in a manner that makes sense. This is done by drawing up an Observations Chart.

At the top of your table you indicate what the passage is that you are studying. This is based on the sections that you have already noted in the preceding steps.

The Observations Chart itself has three columns: Verse, Questions and Observations.

- Verse:** The first column is where you insert your actual scripture. This can be done either by just listing the reference of the verse (eg. 2 Timothy 3:16), or by inserting the whole verse quoted directly from the Bible that you are using. It is up to you what you do, however, I recommend that inserting the entire text helps when referring back to your notes at a later stage.

- Questions:** The Questions column is probably where you will spend a good deal of your time. Based on the questions discussed previously, here you would record each of them one-by-one as they relate to the verse in question. Each verse will have its own unique set of questions, so do not worry if the where for example is not included here as it would probably be dealt with in another verse.

One good thing about this approach is that by recording each of your questions, you do not have to do it all at once. By simply recording a couple of questions here, and then moving on to the observations column before asking more questions, you can easily leave and come back at a later stage to pick up from where you left off.

- Observations:** This is the end result of your questioning of the text. In this column you enter not only the answers to your question from the middle column, but also any other information you have come across that relates directly to the verse in question.

By working with an Observation Chart, it is much easier to group your information on a particular passage together. Though this can be done with a simple pen and paper, it is often much easier to prepare this chart on a computer, that way you can line up your verse in portions, with your questions, and finally with your observations.

Over the next month, why not choose a passage of Scripture that you are familiar with and work through the process of asking the right questions and noting your observations by using an Observations Chart.

A sample chart using 2 Timothy 3:16-17, as well as a blank chart for your own use, is available for download from our website at:

www.gracemedia.co.za/downloads/bs101c.pdf. †

LESSER KNOWN HEROES OF THE BIBLE

BOAZ

Boaz [BOH-az; "strength"] lived during the era of the judges, possibly around 1100 b.c. Conditions in his time were grim. The Hebrews had lost their spiritual moorings. Religion was corrupted by the infusion of pagan concepts, and many people had abandoned basic moral principles. When the Moabitess Ruth came to glean in Boaz's fields, he had to warn his workmen not to molest (rape) her!

But Boaz himself was a man of quality and character. The Book of Ruth tells us that Boaz was attracted to Ruth, not because she may have been beautiful, but because "all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman" (Ruth 3:11). Boaz did wed Ruth, and the two had a child who became the great-grandfather of David the king.

HUSHAI

Hushai [HOO-shi] was a friend of David on whom the king frequently relied for advice. When Absalom led a rebellion of the ten northern tribes against his father David, Hushai made a courageous offer. He would stay in Jerusalem and pretend to be on Absalom's side. He would then try to sabotage the rebellion by giving advice that might give David an edge.

Absalom accepted Hushai as an advisor. When Ahithophel urged Absalom to pursue David immediately and kill him, Hushai counseled against that course. Absalom followed the advice of Hushai, giving David time to raise an army in the south. The northerners were defeated, Absalom was killed, and David's kingdom was saved.

Hushai was willing to risk his life in the camp of the enemy to gain a possible advantage for David. His bold gamble paid off and proved to be the key to David's final victory.

Next Month: Caleb

Quoted from Richards, L. (1999). *Every man in the Bible* (Page 145). Nashville: T. Nelson. †

CUT OUT & COLLECT

ISAIAH

23

Key Idea: Israel's Suffering & Glory

Summary: Suffering of Israel predicted, but great Glory through the Saviour to come.

Key People: Isaiah, Uzziah, Hezekiah.

Key Places: Jerusalem.

Strange but True: People calling evil good, and good evil (4:20).

Isaiah's mouth cleaned with a hot coal (6:6).

A country that sounds like a car part: Tyre (23).

A bed that is too narrow with a quilt that is too short (28:20).

The moon shining as brightly as the sun (30:26).

© 2010 - Keir-Williams Christian Media cc

LAW AND GRACE

"you are not under law but under grace"
(Romans 6:14b)

The one thing that differentiates Christianity from any other religion is that we are not under law. In all other religions in the world, salvation, or their equivalent, is based on following the law with some form of works. However, in Christianity, we are free from that due to Christ's death on the cross. God's grace has freed us from living a life bound by the law.

However, this is also the one aspect of Christianity that has been abused by the church for hundreds of years. Romans 6:14 has been misquoted and misinterpreted too often by Christians. As a result, if a person applies a principle in their lives that is based on a teaching in the Bible, such as not going shopping on a Sunday, that person has been labelled as being legalistic. In some cases this may be an accurate assessment, but not always.

Let us look a little closer at the issue of Law and the Christian.

More Than a List of Do's and Don'ts

Basically stated, law is a list of do's and don'ts in terms of our moral behaviour, as well as the internal heart thoughts and attitudes. God gave us the Law through Moses and the Bible as a guide for us to live by, but also so that we recognise our sinfulness in comparison to God's perfection.

In the Old Testament, 613 commandments were given to the nation of Israel to follow. These commandments dealt with issues of morality, religious behaviour, and the justice.

But more than them being just a list of things we should or should not say or do, they are a reflection of the heart of God. In Matthew 12:34 we learn that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. This is not only true of man, but also of God. Therefore, the Words of God to man through the Bible and His laws, were words spoken out of the abundance of His heart. He was not merely speaking things to prevent us from having fun, but He was speaking His very nature.

God is also the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8), and since He does not change, neither does His law.

Therefore, since the Law came from the heart of God, it was, and still is, good, pure, right, and holy. It is wrong to lie because it is against God's nature to lie. So too is it wrong to steal because it is against God's nature to steal. The same can be said of all the "Thou shalt not" commands in the Bible.

Therefore, the standard that is presented to us in the Word as God's Law is not to be seen merely as something restrictive, but something that represents God's holy character. It is the standard we are to follow if we are to truly follow the Word.

God's Law is perfect, but because we are not

perfect, it is impossible for us to obey the law perfectly. This is why the Bible tells us that the Law became a stumbling block to us. We are unable to keep the law and therefore unable to earn our position with God – so what are we to do?

Quite simply, nothing. God did it all when He sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins. This divine act of Grace has paved the way for us to be able to approach God (Hebrews

The purpose of the law therefore is to be *"our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith"* (Galatians 3:24). In other words, the Law shows us that we can not achieve salvation by what we do. We need the grace of God displayed to us through Jesus Christ' sacrifice.

But what role then does the Law have once we are saved?

The Role of the Law for the Believer

Even though we may be saved, we are not yet perfect. That is not going to happen in this lifetime. Therefore we need something to show us what is right and wrong, and the law still served this purpose in our lives.

You may argue that the Holy Spirit does the same work in our hearts, but how do we determine if what we are hearing in our hearts is truly from the Holy Spirit? It could be our memories telling us something that our parents use to tell us that is not necessarily wrong. We need something to test it against, and since the Law of God is in our hands in the Bible, we have the measuring rod against which to test it. Then, if the Bible confirms it, we can take it as being from the Holy Spirit, but if not, then it may be just a good thing to do or avoid, but is not necessarily wrong.

Dangers with the Law

There are two dangers with the law that are at odds with each other: legalism and liberalism.

In legalism we are tempted to follow the rules in order to earn our salvation or favour from God. As I have already covered, it is impossible to achieve this and the work has already been done for us. We may end up following a set of rules simply because we think we should. Tradition, though good in some instances, often falls into the area of legalism. We perform the tasks simply because it is something that has always been done.

The other extreme is liberalism. This is the idea that since we are no longer under law, things that were previously binding, are no longer so. The idea that because a particular law from the Old Testament is not mentioned in the New it is therefore no longer applicable. For example, because the fourth commandment regarding the sabbath is not mentioned in the New Testament, we are free to do what we want on a Sunday. But this argument falls short because the third commandment about not taking the Lord's name in vain is,

is also not repeated in the New Testament. Is it then permissible to do so? Obviously not. The end result of liberalism is the presence of too much sin present in the church.

What then is the answer?

The Right Attitude

Why do we obey these laws? Since we cannot achieve salvation by following them, and we are already looking to Christ for our salvation, what reason is there to obey them?

Quite simply, because we should want to. Let me explain this by means of an illustration:

If you are married, what would be your reason to not commit adultery? Because you are trying to earn their love? No! Because they have told you not to? No! For fear of the consequences if you did? Maybe, but should not be?

Because it is tradition in your family not to? I doubt it! Because you have signed a contract? No. Or is it because you love your partner? I surely hope so!

The same is true of our Christian walk. In John 14:15 Jesus said, *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."* This is not a commandment, but rather is showing the natural result of loving Christ.

Therefore, as you go through your Christian life and are confronted with something in the Word that seems to be restricting your thoughts or behaviour, do not overlook it like the liberals would. Nor obey it simply because the Bible says it, like the legalists would. Rather seek the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit to work in your life to motivate and empower you to want to obey it.

And when you see other people following a rule in the Bible that you may think is not applicable, do not write them off as being legalistic, but rather seek to understand the rule and their motives for doing so. You may learn something from them. If they are wrong, challenge their motives or their application, but do not judge them.

Find the balance in your life, adopt the right attitude, and seek to imitate Christ by following His perfect law. †

God's Law is perfect because God is perfect!

God's Law represents God's nature!

LEARN MORE

Grace by Lewis Sperry Chafer

Grace: An Exposition of God's Marvelous Gifts emphasises the distinctions between law and grace through systematic and thorough investigation of the relevant doctrinal issues on the topic of grace.

This classic work is a the perfect reference work on this great topic for pastors, Bible students and Bible teachers alike.



R 150

THE BACK PAGE

BIBLE TRIVIA CHALLENGE

How well do you know the story of Jonah?

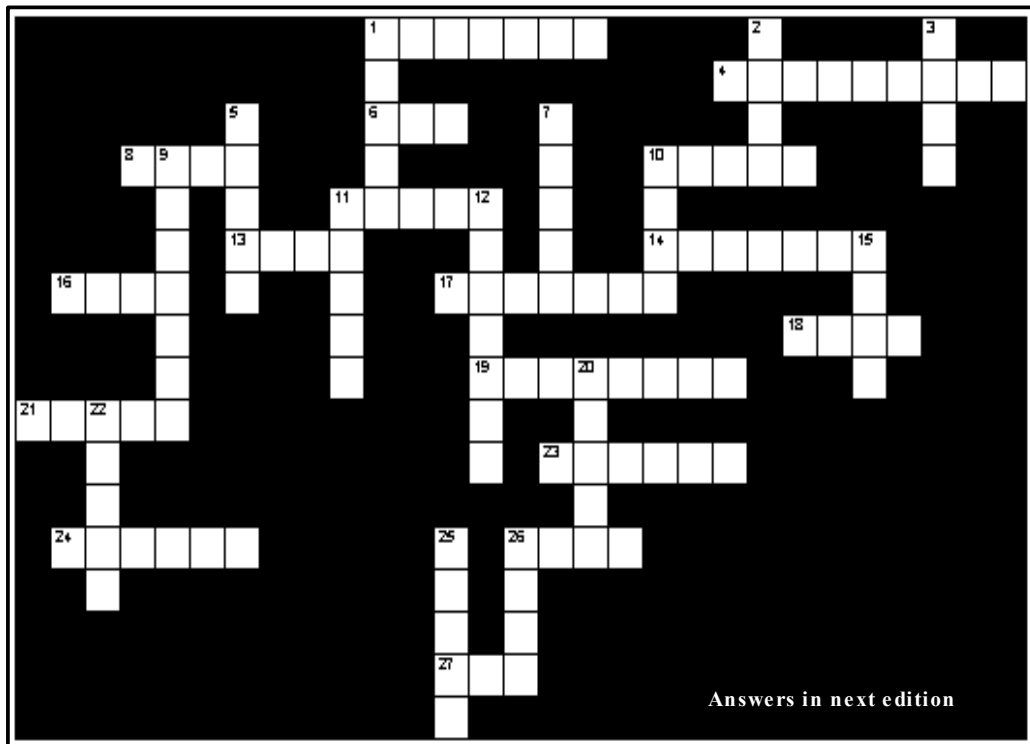
ACROSS

- 1 What rank did the man who woke Jonah have? (1:6)
- 4 The king ordered that man and beast be covered in what? (3:8)
- 6 What did the men do to try and return to land? (1:13)
- 8 How many chapters are in the book of Jonah?
- 10 After how many days was Nineveh going to be destroyed? (3:4)
- 11 At which port did Jonah board the ship? (1:3)
- 13 What did God provide for Jonah for shade? (4:6)
- 14 What was wrapped around Jonah's head? (2:5)
- 16 God hurled a great what on the sea to cause a storm? (1:4)
- 17 What was the name of the city God sent Jonah to? (1:2)
- 18 On which side of the city did Jonah sit? (4:5)
- 19 Jonah tried to flee to which city? (1:3)
- 21 What did Jonah say was better than life? (4:3)
- 23 To what holy building did Jonah say he would look again to? (2:4)
- 24 What did Jonah do while in the belly of the sea monster? (2:1)
- 26 What did the men cast to find out who was responsible for the storm? (1:7)
- 27 Who were the people of Nineveh to call on? (3:8)

DOWN

- 1 What did the sailors toss into the sea? (1:5)
- 2 What did the people of Nineveh call for after they heard the prophecy? (3:5)
- 3 What attacked the plant in the morning? (4:7)
- 5 From the depths of where did Jonah cry for help? (2:2)
- 7 How many days did it take to walk the city of Nineveh? (3:3)
- 9 What book comes before the book of Jonah?
- 10 A large what swallowed Jonah? (1:17)
- 11 Who refers to Jonah in Matthew? (Matthew 12:38-41)
- 12 Jonah was the son of who? (1:1)
- 15 What did the king of Nineveh sit on after hearing the prophecy? (3:6)
- 20 What did Jonah do during the storm? (1:5)
- 22 How did Jonah feel after God relented? (4:1)
- 25 What Old Testament book mentions Jonah?
- 26 Complete: "Salvation is from the _____." (2:9)

COLOUR ME IN



Answers in next edition

19. Gehshemane 22. Thirty 23. Carphas 26. Peter 28. Ninth 29. Seal 31. Nard 33. Thorns
 Evening 2. Ear 3. First 4. Zebede 6. Sleeping 9. Sixth 11. Spices 12. Angel 14. Galilee 15. Water 16. Scarlet 18. Magdalene
 25. Israel 26. Passover 27. Three 30. Hymn 32. Strangers 34. Rooster 35. Two 36. Lots 37. Rabbi 38. Joseph **Down:** 1.
Across: 5. Kiss 7. Covenant 8. Barabbas 10. Elijah 13. King 16. Simon 17. Praetorium 20. Golgotha 21. Bethany 24. Pilate
Last Month's Answers

CONTACT US

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

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

SHOP TRADING HOURS:

Monday – Friday: 9am – 5pm
 Saturday: 9am – 2pm
 Closed Sundays and some Public Holidays