



The G.E.M.

Volume 6 Edition 1

The Grace Electronic Magazine

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THE KEY TO MARRIAGE

Can you believe how quickly the last two months have gone by? It feels just like the other day when we were planning for Christmas. Time certainly seems to fly. Especially the older you are.

In this first edition of *The G.E.M.* for 2012 we look at the topic of marriage. Our main article on page 3 looks at marriage from a perspective that you may not have thought of before. It paints a wonderful picture and is quite inspirational.

Keeping with the topic of marriage, *Bible Basics* continues with the next book of the Bible that paints another picture of marriage reminding us just how much God loved His nation Israel, and indeed His Church too. In *Hymn Stories* we look at a famous hymn, that too reminds us of God's love for His children.

In *Lesser Known Heroes of the Bible* we look at a few characters in the Bible that share the same name. Do not forget to cut out the usual *Bible Library Card* and check out the fun new puzzles on the *Back Page*. And when you have finished reading *The G.E.M.* pass it on to your children to colour in the picture on the back page.

Finally, we would like to remind you of the annual Children's Ministry Conference happening this week. This is a great opportunity for you and all your children's ministry leaders to gather together and be equipped for effective ministry with the little ones. There are also a number of suppliers displaying product that will equip you in your ministry. Be sure to visit the Grace Media table at both the Bryanston and Pretoria conferences.

Until next time, continue to thank God for the rain and the amazing summer weather that South Africa is famous for, and enjoy this 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)

Exciting Upcoming Events in 2012

Children's Ministry Conference

Saturday 10 March – Bryanston Methodist Church, Johannesburg

Tuesday 13 & Wednesday 14 March – Cape Town

Saturday 17 March – Hatfield Christian Church, Pretoria

Visit www.cmcsa.org.za for more information.

Shepherd's Conference 2012

Speakers: Tom Pennington, Tedd Tripp and Joel James

21-23 May – Pretoria

24-26 May – Polokwane

28-30 May – Cape Town

Visit www.gracefellowship.co.za/shepherds for more information.

Justin Peters South African Tour

1-3 June – Pretoria

5-7 June – Kwasizabantu Mission, KZN

8-10 June – East London

10-11 June – Port Elizabeth

12-14 June – George

15-17 June – Cape Town

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BIBLE BASICS

Haggai

The Book of Rebuilding the Temple

After spending time in captivity in Babylon, the people have returned to the Promised Land, only to struggle fields that have become overgrown. However, despite the years of neglect, Haggai insists that the temple first needs to be rebuilt as a necessary affirmation of faith.

Author and Date: It is not known who actually recorded the words of Haggai, and little is actually known of the prophet himself. Jewish tradition suggests that he was a priest and was an old man at the time.

Haggai worked with Zechariah during the days that followed the exile. He prophesied for four months about two months before Zechariah. The events occurred during the second year of Darius, 520BC.

The Temple: Neither Haggai, nor the other prophets of the Old Testament, truly understood God's time line, nor how all the parts of the plan actually fitted together (see 1 Peter 1:10-12). However, they all understood that building the temple and following the Words of God were necessary acts of faith for the nation.

Structure: The book of Haggai is structured around the three main messages that Haggai preached to the returning exiles.

	Chapters
A Message of Rebuke	1
A Message of Courage	2:1-9
A Message of Assurance	2:10-23

Did you Know? The name Haggai means "my feast".

Confucius, the Chinese philosopher, was flourishing in China at the time of Haggai.

Value for Today: It is so easy today to think that the book of Haggai does not hold any value for the twenty-first century. After all, there is no longer a temple in Jerusalem, and after Jesus came two thousand years ago, there is no need for the temple.

However, the book contains lessons for each of us. In chapter 2, Haggai uses eschatological language, "For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations'" (vv6-7). This is a reminder of all the prophecies in the Old Testament, and indeed in the New, that a time is coming when God will judge the world.

Haggai's words are a reaffirmation not only to Israel, but to all future generations, Jewish and Gentile, that the time is coming when God will fulfil all of His promises. The future that we read about in all the books of the prophets will come to pass.

The book of Haggai is certainly a book of hope in God's sovereignty. †

HYMN STORIES

The Old Rugged Cross

1 Peter 2:24

This gospel hymn, a sentimental favourite of Christians and unsaved alike, was written by George Bennard in 1913. It is generally conceded to be one of the most popular of all twentieth century hymns.

George Bennard was born in Youngstown, Ohio, but his parents soon moved to Albia, Iowa, and later to the town of Lucas in the same state. It was here that young George made his personal acceptance of Christ as his Saviour. Following the death of his father before George was sixteen years of age, he entered the ranks of the Salvation Army. Bennard and his first wife served for a period of time as officers in this organisation.

Consequently, Bennard was ordained by the Methodist Episcopal Church, where his devoted ministry was highly esteemed. For some time he was busy busily involved in conducting revival services, especially throughout the states of Michigan and New York. One time, after returning to Michigan, he passed through a trying experience which caused him to reflect seriously about the significance of the cross and what the Apostle Paul meant when he spoke of entering into the fellowship of Christ's suffering. As Bennard contemplated these truths, he became convinced that the cross was more than just a religious symbol but rather the very heart of the Gospel. George Bennard left the following account regarding the writing of this hymn:

The inspiration came to me one day in 1913, when I was staying in Albion, Michigan. I began to write "The Old Rugged Cross." I composed the melody first. The words that I first wrote were imperfect. The words of the finished hymn were put into my heart in answer to my own need. Shortly thereafter it was introduced at special meetings in Pokagon, Michigan on June 7, 1913. The first occasion where it was heard outside of the church at Pokagon was at the Chicago Evangelistic Institute. There it was introduced before a large convention and soon it became extremely popular throughout the country.

Bennard continued his evangelistic ministries for forty additional years following the writing of this hymn. He wrote other favourite Gospel hymns, but none ever achieved the response of "The Old Rugged Cross." On October 9, 1958, at the age of eighty-five, Bennard exchanged his "cross for a crown"

Quoted from Osbeck, Kenneth W. (1982). *101 Hymn Stories*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications. †

LESSER KNOWN HEROES OF THE BIBLE

JOHANAN

A shortened form of the name Jehohanan, which means "Yahweh is merciful." There are nine characters named Johanan mentioned in the Bible and in other extra-Biblical historical writings.

1. A Military leader among the Jews who remained in Judah immediately after the exile began in 586BC (2 Kings 25:23). He led the effort against Ishmael, and led the people into Egypt to escape Babylonian retaliation, forcing Jeremiah to go with them (Jeremiah 40-43).
2. High Priest about 411BC during the time of Nehemiah (see Nehemiah 12:22-23 and Ezra 10:6).
3. A high priest whom Josephus, the early Jewish historian, says murdered his brother named Jesus, perhaps under Artaxerxes II Ochus (358-338BC).
4. The eldest son of Josiah who for some unknown reason did not become king (1 Chronicles 3:15).
5. A descendant of David in the postexilic period about 445BC (1 Chronicles 3:24)
6. High priest in the early period of Israel's monarchy (1 Chronicles 6:9-10). His son Azariah was high priest under Solomon.
7. Member of Saul's tribe of Benjamin who joined David at Ziklag when he fled from Saul (1 Chronicles 12:4).
8. Member of the tribe of Gad who joined David at Ziklag, demonstrating that the people east of the Jordan supported him (1 Chronicles 12:12).
9. Man who led a group going with Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem about 458BC (Ezra 8:12).

Quoted from Butler, Trent C (Editor) (1991), *Holman Bible Dictionary*, Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers. †

CUT OUT & COLLECT

HOSEA

28

Key Idea: Heart of Holiness

Summary: God is love, but He is also a God of justice.

Key People: Hosea, Gomer.

Key Places: Israel.

Strange but True: A man told by God to marry a prostitute (1:2).

A prophet's children given depressing names (1:4-9).

A man who bought back his wife with silver and barley (3:1-2).

A nation described as a half-baked cake (7:8).

Israel described to be like grapes in the wilderness (9:10).

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MARRIAGE IS LIKE A GARDEN

Thirty-three years ago a young couple that lived about 1,000 kilometres from each other were courting.

One day, after about a year of courtship, mostly by mail, the young lady was feeling very insecure. She looked at the problems in the home where she was born and in many of the homes of the students that she was teaching. As she looked, she realised that the wife and mother of the home held a very important key to making the home happy. She knew that it also depended on the man, but she was looking at her own role. She began to wonder if she could do her part to make a happy home. She knew this was God's plan, but she had never had a good role model to watch closely. Could she do it? Was it better for her to stay single and teach school and be happy in the calling she was finding so fulfilling?

One night she wrote these things to the young man. She asked to be relieved from the relationship and she shared her fears with him. She wrote what she believed that marriage was to be, and how few people she knew that really lived that way. It was a rather long letter, and it ended with these words: "You have not done anything that makes me want to dissolve the relationship. It is rather that I am not sure that I can be who I need to be, and so I would like to end this relationship, though I have enjoyed it very much."

The young man was very surprised when he received this letter. He was happy and secure and had good role models in his home. He understood a tiny bit about where the young lady was coming from, but he did not want to lose her. He was a patient, quiet, thinking young man, and he did not panic. They were not accustomed to spending much time on the phone because it was expensive, so he did not call her. Rather he went about his normal work, thinking and praying. It was the last of March, and they were planting an early garden. He was in charge of much of the work in the garden since his mother had heart problems, and as he was planting, he began to see the likeness between a marriage and a garden. By the time the soil was tilled and the peas, lettuce, spinach, and radishes were in the ground, his allegory was ready to be written. This is what he wrote:

Tonight my books and students' report cards must wait, for I am going to have a good talk with you.

This evening we were planting garden and I made some comparisons that I want to share. I was thinking about your letter and decided that in some ways marriage is like a garden. We certainly would not plant seeds if we did not expect them to grow. Nor do we look for the whole crop the day after we plant. Neither can we do all the hoeing and watering that will be needed, ahead of time. I am planning to do some hoeing this summer, and we will

I encourage you today, do not give up

probably pull some thistles. If it gets dry, we may need to water the garden. We will train the bean vines up the poles as they grow, and certainly not before they have trailers. When the fruit is ripe we will enjoy it, since that is why we planted the garden.

I think you would consider me a very unusual gardener if I told you I was not expecting any weeds to come up, or if I thought the peas would pick themselves and the strawberries would jump into the dishpan on their own. But you also think I am a little "funny" if I told you that I didn't think my strawberry plants would ever bear strawberries, or my lettuce, lettuce leaves. It will take some of my time to have a garden, and there might be times when I will need to stay home to care for it, when I could have gone away if I did not have a garden.

Have you been following my line of thinking? Did you read between the lines? I think you did, but in case it is not clear I am going to make it clear. I certainly would not be courting you (planting) if I did not expect to reap a happy future. Even though the blessings of your friendship are many, I am expecting more (and Dad tells me, better ones! Sometimes I wonder how—but I believe it since he said so).

I certainly cannot solve the problems that will "grow" before they get here, nor can I add the needed "moisture" before it is dry. However, I am expecting that there will be some little problems to "hoe" out as time progresses. Maybe I will need to do some unpleasant things because they are needed (pulling thistles).

But you see, I want a "garden" in spite of that. I am ready to get a little "dirty" to enjoy the results. You and I will both need the "waters" of encouragement when things get a little "dry." We will need to build the home as we get there; we cannot do it ahead of time. (But we do have a blueprint.) And of course we expect to enjoy the fully-ripe fruit of love. Isn't that why we are planting?

Now don't you think that I would be deceived if I told you that I thought you were perfect and we would never have a bit of problems? (I want to remind you that I am not perfect either.) To be sure, if we let the weeds of misunderstanding grow until they are as tall as we are, we would certainly have trouble pulling them out! But we can "hoe" them out before they are even very noticeable. This will stimulate the "good" plants to faster growth.

I would be deluded to think that fruits of love would hop into my lap without any effort, or to think that there will likely not be any fruit of love. To be sure, it will take some of my time. I will need to spend time with "the family." But when it is done, will

I not say that it was worth it all? And if I had another chance (year), would I not do the same? Would I not be thankful?

Imagine with me for a moment how you would feel if this letter was only one

paragraph long, telling you that if that is the way things are, I am not interested anymore. What if it was telling you that we will just forget it all? Would the color drain from your face and something go tight in your stomach? Do you think you would care? Have the "seeds" sprouted? Are they healthy, tender plants? I think we have just "hoed" our "garden" again. This is the kind of thing that I am talking about. When there are problems or misunderstandings, we need to work with them and communicate our hearts to each other.

Let's look at another side of it. Do you think that God would have instituted marriage if it cannot be worked out? Do you think He would have used marriage as a type of the relationship between Christ and the church if it could not be worked out correctly? What is God's attitude toward marriage anyway? Should we stagger at the promises of God? Has He not promised that He will never give us more than we can handle with Him? Why then should you think that you are not able to face marriage? Is not marriage God's all-wise plan? Did God lead you this way? If your answer is "yes," are there any grounds for doubt? "Never doubt in the dark what God told you in the light." Please understand me. I am not scolding you. I am only asking these questions to stimulate your mind. I only want to encourage you ...

The fruit is worth the labour!

A few months after this letter was written, the young couple were married.

I encourage you today, do not give up—even if your ground is hard and dry. Till your ground with prayer and water it with kind words. Patiently do the day-to-day work in it, weeding and planting and tending it with care. You will not fail to be rewarded by God for your labour of love. The fruit is worth the labour!

*Go, labor on; spend and be spent,
Thy joy to do the Father's will.
It is the way the Master went;
Should not the servant tread it still?*

-Horatius Bonar †

Original article by Rachel Weaver in *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* magazine, September/October 2011.

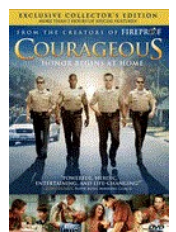
Coming in May

COURAGEOUS

The latest movie from the creators of *Fireproof!* Police officers Adam Mitchell, Nathan Hayes, and their partners are brave men well-equipped to deal with hardened criminals. But when they remove their badges, they face a more daunting challenge - fatherhood.

As their children drift away from them, can these stalwarts find a way to defend and protect those nearest and dearest to them, and draw closer to God?

Order yours today!



THE BACK PAGE

BIBLE TRIVIA CHALLENGE

Test your knowledge of the Bible with the following challenging questions. All Quotations from the KJV.

- Who said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built"?
- Who promised his people, "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace"?
- In what book is the saying about the Lamb's book of life?
- Who advised the Sanhedrin to let the Christians alone, saying that if their work was of God, it could not be overthrown?
- Who said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife"?
- What did James say no man could tame?
- Who wrote, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"?
- In what book is the saying, "Many waters cannot quench love"?
- Who said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"? On what occasion?
- Who speaks about "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil"?
- What proverb ends with "How good it is"?
- Finish the sentence, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man ___."
- Who said that in the judgement day a man shall give account of every idle word he has spoken?
- Complete Paul's saying, "This is the will of God, even ___."

Cues: 1. Daniel 4 2. Exodus 14 3. Follows Jude 4. Acts 5 5. Matthew 19 6. James 3 7. Titus 2 8. Written by Solomon 9. Matthew 3 10. Ephesians 5 11. Proverbs 12 1. Corinthians 2 13. Matthew 12 14. 1 Thessalonians 4

COLOUR US IN Jesus turns water into wine



CRYPTOGRAM

Directions: At the top is the key that lists all the letters from A to Z with a box below. Each of the letters has a corresponding number. The bottom part contains a secret phrase. Each of the blanks has a number underneath it. Fill in the letters that correspond to the numbers below the blanks to solve the phrase.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
16																									

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 12 5 19 10 5 16 9 17 25 14 1 16 19

Cue: 1 John 4:7

Last Month's Answers
 Across: 1. Stretch 3. Sodom 8. Lamps 9. Face 11. Awesome 12. Jestah 16. animals 18. Mighty 19. Survivors 20. Wall
 Vineyards Down: 1. Sing 2. Humble 4. Streets
 5. Judah 6. Nations 7. Remnant 10. Cush 13. Morning 14. Wait 15. Right 16. Ashkelon 17. Silent 21. Fish 23. Sword
 22. Insults 25. Care 26. Princes 27. Canaan 28. Home 29. Woe 30. Silver 31.

CONTACT US

Tel.: 011-454-6045 shop@gracemedia.co.za
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