

The numerical value of 'grace'

The footnote on page 444 of the December issue, referring to *The Companion Bible* for authority, says that the numerical value (gematria) of *charis*, the Greek word for grace, is a multiple of five. I am not sure how that conclusion is arrived at. The letters are:

chi (χ)	600
alpha (α)	1
rho (ρ)	100
iota (ι)	10
sigma (σ or ς)	200

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As it happens, quite a number of Hebrew and Greek words and names are divisible by 5, such as 'Judah', both in Hebrew (30) and in Greek (685), 'Christ' and 'Daystar', but so also are 'dog', 'whoremonger' and 'murderer'.

Great care must be taken with gematria, though it is no doubt an inspired part of Scripture as surprising results do arise, such as the fact that in Revelation 22:15 the list of five kinds of evil beings who are "without" and who make a lie have a combined gematria of 5555. I have found that Bullinger (author of *The Companion Bible* notes) is not particularly accurate in his calculations of gematria, so all examples should be checked.

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Bullinger's justification for this is contained in his book Number in Scripture, where he states: "the gematria of η χαρις (grace) is 725, a multiple of the square of 5 (5² × 29)". That is, 8 + 600 + 1 + 100 + 10 + 6 = 725.—J.W.