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DAILY *manna*

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GENERAL EDITOR

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Daily devotions for reading through the Bible

Dear *Daily Manna* readers,

We have come to the end of the last quarter of 2011, and with it, we would have completed a study of the New Testament. In this quarter, we will cover the Pauline and General Epistles and Revelation. The epistles explain the person and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Book of Revelation brings us to the end—the consummation of the ministry of Christ—where the redemptive plan of God culminates in the glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ and a new heaven and new earth.

This will be the expectant and blessed hope of every Christian. We are thankful that you have persevered with the reading of God’s Word. “Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (Revelation 22:7b).

A note to new Daily Manna readers

In this book, you will find a reading plan that will guide you through reading the Bible in two years. You will also find a simple exposition based on the reading of the day. From the day’s Bible passages, *Daily Manna* highlights biblical principles which may be applied in the Christian’s daily living. We pray that the *Daily Manna* readings will make your reading through the Bible a more meaningful experience. Over the next two years, our focus will be on the New Testament with the aim of giving you a more in-depth study of the NT books.

A step-by-step approach

1. Read the day’s Bible chapters assigned in *Daily Manna*.
2. Review the Bible chapters to get an overview of what you have just read.
3. Read the accompanying devotions in *Daily Manna* and reflect on the lessons learnt.
4. Pray and ask God to help you apply His Word to your life.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Isaac Ong
Calvary B-P Church

BIBLE LESSON *Galatians 1*

LESSON **Let him be accursed**

VERSE 8

*But though we, or an angel
from heaven, preach any
other gospel unto you
than that which we have
preached unto you, let him
be accursed.*

False teachers had invaded the Galatian churches and they were confusing the believers there with a perverted gospel. They were adding human works to the perfect and finished work of Christ for salvation. What do you do with a person like this? Should we “bury the hatchet” and join him in happy fellowship? The answer Paul gave is: Let him be accursed.

When a person is accursed (anathema), he is cut off from Christ and doomed to eternal punishment. This seems like very harsh punishment. As Christians, shouldn't we be gentle, forgiving, forbearing and accepting of one another? Absolutely! But there can be no compromise in the message of the Gospel. There are at least three reasons why. First, the Gospel is the core of Christianity and it will affect everything else if it is changed. Second, if another Gospel is preached, men and women cannot be saved. Finally, and most significantly, to preach another gospel is an affront to the perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Surely we can see that it is a serious matter to preach another gospel, especially one that adds works as a condition for salvation. No wonder Paul said those words. If someone comes to you with another gospel, there is no room for a gentle and forbearing attitude. Paul did not have such an attitude towards these people and neither should we.

There can be no compromise in the Gospel message that we believe and preach.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 1-2
GALATIANS 1

THOUGHT

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. – Matthew 7:15

BIBLE LESSON
Galatians 2

LESSON

**Take heed how you
behave**

VERSE 14

*But when I saw that they
walked not uprightly
according to the truth of
the gospel, I said unto Peter
before them all, If thou,
being a Jew, livest after
the manner of Gentiles,
and not as do the Jews,
why compellest thou the
Gentiles to live as do the
Jews?*

When Peter came to Antioch, he ate with the Gentiles at first. However, after certain men came from James, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those of the circumcision. His actions encouraged other Jews to follow, even Barnabas. So Paul confronted Peter and withstood him to his face, because he has committed a public sin.

Peter's problem was not that he did not know that justification was only by faith. His problem was acting inconsistently with what he knew to be the truth. He did not want to be caught eating Gentile food, which was contrary to the Laws of the Jews. This meant that if the Gentile believers were to remain in contact with Peter, they would have to take up a Jewish lifestyle. People would think that Peter's actions indicated that faith was not really enough for salvation and believers had to keep the Law in order to be saved. In the eyes of Paul, such behaviour was not in harmony with the truth.

We can see that even great people of God behave inconsistently. Peter's problem was though he believed in justification by faith, his action showed otherwise. He was living by public opinion.

For living and teaching errors, teachers have a greater accountability and judgement because of their influence on others. When leaders fall into doctrinal and personal sin, they usually take others with them. So leaders, take heed that your behaviour is consistent with the truth of the Gospel so that others are not stumbled by your inconsistency.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 3-4
GALATIANS 2

THOUGHT

**Open rebuke is better than secret love. –
Proverbs 27:5**

BIBLE LESSON

Galatians 3

LESSON

How was Abraham justified?

VERSE 6

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

In this chapter, the name of Abraham is mentioned eight times. Why is he so important? One reason is that Abraham became the father of the Jewish people when God established an unconditional covenant with him. Another is that the first mention of faith and imputed righteousness is attributed to Abraham. Thus the issue of how Abraham was justified is very relevant.

How was Abraham justified? Paul quotes four facts from Genesis 15:6. First, the object of his faith was God, not a rite or his merits. Second, the content of his faith was the helplessness of self and the ability of God to perform what He had promised. He was childless and coming of age but God promised that his descendants would be as numerous as the sand by the sea. Third, the timing of the faith: a righteous standing was imputed to Abraham at the moment of faith, not after circumcision. Fourth, he was declared righteous: he was not required to do anything to become righteous.

God also promised that all nations would be blessed through Abraham [v. 8], making it plain that the people who are blessed in Abraham are people of all nationalities, not people of the same nation.

Thus, just as Abraham personally expressed belief in order to receive the righteousness of God in his day, so both the Jews and the Gentiles and all subsequent generations must only trust God in the same way to receive the same righteousness.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 5
GALATIANS 3

THOUGHT

But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. – Hebrews 11:6

BIBLE LESSON*Galatians 4***LESSON****Cast out the bondwoman
and her son****VERSE 30**

*Nevertheless what saith
the scripture? Cast out
the bondwoman and her
son: for the son of the
bondwoman shall not be
heir with the son of the
freewoman.*

The Judaizers prided themselves in the fact that they were the sons of Abraham, and the Galatians were influenced by this boast. So Paul reminded them that Abraham had two sons: Ishmael, the son of Hagar, the bondwoman, and Isaac, the son of Sarah, the freewoman. Ishmael was mocking Isaac when the latter was weaned [Genesis 21:9]. This incident was, however, witnessed by Sarah and she demanded that Abraham send the young man and his mother away.

While one may be inclined to feel that Sarah overreacted in the mocking incident, let it be known that God himself supported her demand [Genesis 21:10]. This gave Paul the right to imply that the order for Ishmael's expulsion was based on divine authority. The reason for the expulsion was that Ishmael would not be a joint heir with Isaac to receive the covenant blessings. By analogy, Paul wanted the church to excommunicate the Judaizers and the members who accepted heretical teachings. Sarah did not tolerate Hagar and Ishmael in her midst. Neither should the church permit apostates to remain.

Strict law observance, as if this is the pathway to heaven, makes one similar to Ishmael. On the contrary, the exercise of one's faith in Christ alone makes one a true son of Abraham, similar to the free-born son Isaac.

There is no room for both within the household of Abraham, neither is there room for both in the household of God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 6
GALATIANS 4

THOUGHT

**Was not Abraham our father justified by works,
when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?**
– James 2:21

BIBLE LESSON*Galatians 5***LESSON****If ye be circumcised****VERSE 2**

*Behold, I Paul say unto you,
that if ye be circumcised,
Christ shall profit you
nothing.*

Paul had come to Galatia preaching the good news that Christ died and rose again and that He would save both the Jews and the Greeks, the circumcised and the uncircumcised. The Galatians initially believed this message. But a group of self-appointed law-keeping legalists came to town and insisted that circumcision was necessary for salvation. After all, Jesus was Jewish; all of His disciples were Jewish; and they were all circumcised.

Circumcision is a significant rite in the Jewish tradition. This rite identifies one as a child of Abraham and a keeper of the Law. Paul was not against circumcision per se. He had Timothy circumcised [Acts 16:3] for the sake of a more effective testimony to the Jews, and this event occurred in Galatia. But rather he was against receiving circumcision as an additional means of salvation, be it for the Jews or for the Gentiles [1 Corinthians 7:18–19]. He declared that no merit of the Saviour's death and resurrection would be reckoned to the account of any person who believed that circumcision was essential for justification.

While circumcision is a non-issue for many, the insistence of other rites such as baptism or basic bible knowledge class attendance as an additional means for salvation must not be endorsed.

Christ is the only and sufficient way to salvation. If you try to trust in Christ plus something else, then Christ becomes of no effect.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 7
GALATIANS 5

THOUGHT

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. – Colossians 2:11

BIBLE LESSON*Galatians 6***LESSON****The ministry of restoration****VERSE 1**

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Paul had been exhorting his readers to walk in the Spirit so that they might bear the fruit of the Spirit. And yet, it is a normal fact in life that Christians sin. This passage describes one who had been led unwittingly into moral and doctrinal error. He was one who had in the past manifested the fruit of the Spirit but who had now been overcome in a temptation. To such a person, Paul says, we must restore.

The word “restore” means to mend, to bring something or someone back to its or his former position of wholeness of soundness. The person who is qualified to handle such restoration must do so with a spirit of meekness. This is the spirit that shows a loving attitude, though not condoning sin and not harsh or judgemental, one who cares without compromising. However, you must never come into the restoration process thinking that you are immune to the temptations that cause another to fall. No one is exempted from being tempted by sin. Even Jesus faced temptation.

The law in the life of the believer is love. Jesus bore your burdens. He carried your sins when He was on the Cross. His Crucifixion was an expression of His love for you.

Jesus said, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” [John 13:34]. Therefore, help to bear the burden of the one who has fallen. Love and restore him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 8
GALATIANS 6

THOUGHT

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. – Hebrews 4:15

BIBLE LESSON

Ephesians 1

LESSON

Wisdom and knowledge

VERSE 17

*That the God of our Lord
Jesus Christ, the Father of
glory, may give unto you
the spirit of wisdom and
revelation in the knowledge
of him.*

In this opening chapter of Paul's epistle to the Christians at Ephesus, he reminds us of the wondrous blessings we enjoy. According to His sovereign will, God has chosen us, called us, redeemed us with the precious blood of His Son Jesus Christ, forgiven our sins, and granted us the Holy Spirit as an assurance of our salvation.

As the people of God, the church has received an inheritance so vast and profound that we cannot comprehend it. Hence Paul prays that God will enable us to understand and realise the quality and extent of the blessings that we have in Christ.

Paul also wants us to experience and know the power of God. God's power is unlimited. The greatest demonstration of this power is in the Resurrection. As a result of the Resurrection, Jesus is now enthroned at the right hand of God, and all powers in existence are at His feet. Christ is the head of the Church, and the believers are His Body. By His Spirit and His Word, He supplies all the resources that the church needs to function for His glory. In this way, He guarantees that His purposes will be fulfilled.

May this spiritual enlightenment empower us to do well for Him, knowing that our salvation is secure. Let us love Him and serve Him. Let us present our bodies a living sacrifice for His use. Let us lead godly lives that reflect His glory to the people around us [Matthew 5:16].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 9
EPHESIANS 1

THOUGHT

Spiritual enlightenment doesn't come through self-effort or introspective meditation but through God's Holy Spirit. – John MacArthur

BIBLE LESSON*Ephesians 2***LESSON****God's temple****VERSE 12**

*That at that time ye were
without Christ, being aliens
from the commonwealth of
Israel, and strangers from
the covenants of promise,
having no hope, and
without God in the world.*

In this chapter, Paul gives us a before-and-after picture of what God has done in the lives of believers. The “before” picture he paints of us in verses 1–3, 11 and 12 is not pretty at all. We were godless and unclean, dead in trespasses and sins, obedient to Satan, separated from Christ and without hope, “vessels of wrath fitted to destruction” [Romans 9:22]. But God in His mercy has made us alive in Christ, raised us up and seated us in heavenly places.

This is the “after” picture—a sinner converted, transformed and eventually glorified. God did all these so that we who once so richly deserved His wrath will throughout all eternity display His grace. And He did it by grace through faith, totally apart from human effort but through the blood of Christ.

In Christ, we are new creatures. Old things are passed away and all things are become new. We are the workmanship of God. We Gentiles are united with Israel in Christ and have access to the Father.

While in Chapter 1, the church was likened to the body with Christ as the head, Paul likens the Church to God's temple in Chapter 2—“a building fitly framed together”. However, the important question is, what should this “temple” be used for? Is it to satisfy human desires and ambitions or to fulfil the eternal plan of God? As a member of this church, what role are you playing in God's plan?

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 10
EPHESIANS 2

CHORUS

**Once far from God and dead in sin, No light
my heart could see; But in God's Word the light
I found, Now Christ liveth in me. – Daniel W.
Whittle**

BIBLE LESSON

Ephesians 3

LESSON

A mystery revealed

VERSE 6

That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.

After discussing the union of Jewish and Gentile believers, Paul announces that God has revealed a divine “mystery” to him and that he has been given the task of administering this mystery [v. 1–13]. God has bypassed the original Apostles and given Paul the task of revealing the mystery of God’s grace to the Gentiles.

By the word “mystery”, Paul meant a secret or hidden truth that is revealed. This revealed mystery is that, through the Gospel, the Gentiles have become heirs together with Israel of the promises in Christ Jesus [v. 6].

Paul then bows his knees and offers two great prayers. First, he prays that the eyes of the believers’ will be enlightened and that we may know the tremendous power of God [v. 7–13]. He also prays that Christ may dwell in the hearts of the believers. He wants us to know the tender love of Christ, a love that excels beyond and surpasses what one might gain through an intellectual knowledge of God [v. 14–21].

May this knowledge fill our hearts with joy. And may this joy increase as we walk each day with our Saviour and meditate daily on God’s Word. We live in a dying world that is corrupted by sin and ripe for judgement. As we observe the iniquities growing around us, may God’s Holy Spirit cause us to want to share this wonderful gospel with others so that they too can experience the blessed hope and escape the terrible judgement coming soon.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

I KINGS 11
EPHESIANS 3

THOUGHT

Throw out the lifeline, someone is sinking today.

BIBLE LESSON
Ephesians 4

LESSON
Walk worthy of your calling

VERSE 1

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

There are many people who, after having successfully applied for permanent residency in a new country, go back to their former countries and continue to live there just like before. Occasionally, they may make a trip to their new country just to get their passports stamped.

Sadly, many Christians treat the Church in exactly the same way. They think that to secure a citizenship in heaven, all they need to do is confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, get baptised, attend church service on Sundays and put some money in the offering bag. For the rest of the week, they can go back to the secular world and lead “normal” lives.

This is wrong. In this chapter, Paul repeatedly reminds us that as Christians, we are born again. We are new creatures “which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” [v. 24]. Therefore we are to put away the old lifestyle and adopt a completely new way of living and thinking. He gives us the detail to this “new life in Christ” in the second half of this chapter. Every Christian should study Paul’s instructions carefully and re-examine his life.

Our Lord warned in Matthew 7 that on Judgement Day, many professing Christians will find out to their utter horror and disappointment that their citizenship in heaven is not recognised by the Master, Who will say to them, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” [Matthew 7:23]. Pray that this will not be the case for you.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 12
EPHESIANS 4

PRAYER

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. – Psalm 139: 23–24

BIBLE LESSON

Ephesians 5

LESSON

Take your marriage vows seriously

VERSE 33

Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Paul tells us that the days are evil [v. 16]. How true this statement is in these modern times! Virtues and godly values are corroding away and families are falling apart. Even Christian couples have “pierced themselves through with many sorrows” [1 Timothy 6:10] because they have not taken God’s Word and their marriage vows seriously.

Verses 22–33 have been preached countless times at weddings and form the basis of the Christian’s marriage vows. There is no need to explain the verses in detail here. What is more needful is that Christian couples ought to re-examine their lives to see how far they have fallen short and to repent of their disobedience. How many husbands reading this devotion have truly loved their wives as Christ has loved the Church?

And how many wives really submit to their husbands? Many of today’s women earn more than their husbands. Some have even become sole breadwinners in the family because their husbands have lost their jobs. Some women even quip, “My husband may be the head, but I am the neck that turns the head”, as they are the ones making the major decisions in the family.

Be careful. The Bible gives clear warnings. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” [Galatians 6:7]. “When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed” [Ecclesiastes 5:4]. So be not unwise but understand the will of the Lord [v. 17].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 13
EPHESIANS 5

PRAYER

**Nevertheless for Thy great mercies' sake Thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for Thou art a gracious and merciful God.
– Nehemiah 9:31**

BIBLE LESSON

Ephesians 6

LESSON

Spiritual warfare

VERSE 12

*For we wrestle not against
flesh and blood, but against
principalities, against
powers, against the rulers of
the darkness of this world,
against spiritual wickedness
in high places.*

In the previous chapter, Paul showed us how evil the days were. Worldly influence and values had infiltrated the families and affected marriages. In this chapter, we read that even children of godly parents had succumbed to the temptations of the evil one. They had become disobedient to parents and authority, and had embraced the sinful ways and values of the world.

This is the same today, if not even more so. Truancy, pornography, teenage pregnancies, alcohol, drugs, Internet addiction, gang activities, the list is endless. How we need God's protection in these perilous times! We need to seriously heed the instructions for families in this last chapter of Paul's epistle to the Ephesian Christians.

Paul concluded his letter by preparing his readers for the spiritual conflicts in the life ahead. He used the Roman soldier's weapons and armour as images to express the virtues necessary to defend the believer against Satan. To ensure victory, the Christian warrior has to put on the full armour of God. This armour includes elements such as truth, righteousness, the Gospel, faith, salvation and the Word of God. Standing strong also requires fervent and watchful prayer, not just for oneself but for all Christians.

Human effort is inadequate in this spiritual warfare—we need God's power. Our Lord says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" [John 15:5]

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 14
EPHESIANS 6

QUOTE

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. – Ephesians 6:10

BIBLE LESSON
Philippians 1

LESSON

**Grow in godliness and
in joy**

VERSE 9

*And this I pray, that your
love may abound yet more
and more in knowledge and
in all judgement;*

Although Paul was writing from prison, joy was a dominant theme in his epistle to the Philippians. The happiness of most people depends on positive circumstances, and they fall quickly into despair when the circumstances are less favourable. Christians are to be joyful in every circumstance. Be joyful always [1 Thessalonians 5:16], as spiritual joy is the result of our deep and abiding confidence in the Lord. It is derived from our true relationship with God.

We are urged to grow in Christ's love, which would result in greater knowledge of Christ. In his epistle to the Colossians, Paul speaks of love as "the perfect bond of unity". In 1 Corinthians, he elevates love above hope and faith. Love is the foremost component in the fruit of the Spirit [Galatians 5:22]. In order for us to grow and abound in love, we must diligently study and obey God's Word, pray continually and put our faith in the Lord.

When a believer is filled by the love of God, there will be a natural desire to live and think biblically, a desire to increase our knowledge of God and spiritual discernment in Him. We need to have the ability to differentiate between right and wrong, be filled with the fruit of righteousness, produce good works and continue to sow the seeds to expand the kingdom of God.

We are reminded that the most important objective and result of the life of godly love, excellence, sincerity and good works is to manifest the glory of God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 15
PHILIPPIANS 1

THOUGHT

Godly love produces spiritual excellence, which produces integrity and good works. Examine your heart today. We should live a sanctified and holy life each day.

BIBLE LESSON
Philippians 2

LESSON
**Serve with joy and
humility**

VERSE 14
*Doing all things without
murmurings and
disputings.*

Through the exhortation of Paul to the Philippians [v. 1–5], we are reminded to be like-minded and lowly-minded. We must let nothing be done for the purpose of self-glory or with a selfish agenda but serve with humility and joy. We must learn to love and accept one another, to encourage one another and also to guard against unedifying prejudice or jealousy. To function as a community of believers, the church needs to be of one mind.

Paul reminds us to be Christ-like, recalling the attitude and actions of Christ, our best model of humility and servanthood [v. 6–11]. To imitate Christ means to be modest and humble, and serving others without grumbling. Do not expect earthly praise but look up for heavenly reward.

To be like Christ, we must discipline ourselves to think like Christ and let Christ live in us. We need the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit to be obedient to God’s Word and to serve the Lord with sacrificial and unconditional love. We must strive for perfection and purity so that we can “shine as lights” in darkness. We must be a good testimony to others and continue to minister to the needy with great joy.

Paul observed that most believers in Philippi were too preoccupied with their own busy schedule and had neglected to serve the Lord commenting that they “all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s” [v. 21] May this be a reminder to us to put Christ first in our lives.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 16
PHILIPPIANS 2

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, help me to be Christ-like and let me be a channel of blessings to others. Remind me to always put Christ first in my life. Give me strength and patience so that I may serve others with joy and humility.

BIBLE LESSON

Philippians 3

LESSON

Pressing on towards the goal

VERSE 14

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

When Jesus met Paul at Damascus, the latter decided to turn away from self-righteousness and follow Christ. In Philippians 3, Paul reaffirmed that he never regretted following Christ despite suffering the loss of all earthly things, including financial stability, physical comfort and recognition of his past achievements.

Paul expressed his conviction to trust Christ for salvation even more firmly, saying that he counted all things as trash compared to knowing Christ. We are reminded by Paul to get our values right. What good is it to gain wealth, power and fame on earth but lose your soul? Everything a man can gain on earth is lost upon death. We need to “lay up our treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt” [Matthew 6:20].

Paul also revealed the reason why he could simply treat all his past achievements as dung [v. 8]. He wanted to be found in Christ, “not having mine own righteousness which is of the law but that which is through the faith of Christ”. No man is justified by law; it is only through faith in Christ.

Paul also encourages us to put things in the past behind us and press on to the mark of perfection [v. 14], to grow spiritually, and to be more Christ-like, as we continue to trust and obey the Lord. We are urged to remain steadfast in our faith and be united, not to follow false teachings but to follow Paul as our role model in focusing our life on Christ.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 17
PHILIPPIANS 3

THOUGHT

Do we run the race for Christ with our eyes fixed on Him , and not let the earthly temptations sidetrack or slow us down? Pray for God’s strength to help each and every one of us to fight a good fight and persevere to the end.

BIBLE LESSON

Philippians 4

LESSON

**God of peace shall be
with you**

VERSE 9

*Those things, which ye have
both learned, and received,
and heard, and seen in me,
do: and the God of peace
shall be with you.*

There are times when Christians experience trials and hardship that put our hearts in great pain. In Philippians 4:7, Paul writes of the peace of God that sustains Christians. Here are a few commands to help us in our Christian walk:

- Rejoice: We are commanded to “rejoice in the Lord always”. This inner joy can only come from the Lord. There is nothing that is beyond our Lord; His grace is more than sufficient.
- Do everything in moderation: We are to be gentle, kind, charitable and considerate. Control your temper, be reasonable and fair-minded to all. Do not indulge in earthly passions and be moderate in our expectation of earthly needs.
- Be careful for nothing: Do not be anxious about anything. Anxiety is a contradiction of the life of faith. Jesus tells us not to worry about those needs that God promises to supply [Matthew 6:25–34].
- Do everything by prayer and supplication: Pray in the Spirit on all occasions. Prayerful people are peaceful people, as prayer cures anxiety.
- Be thankful: Always thank God for His mercy and grace. Be thankful at all times, prosperity and affliction alike [1 Thessalonians 5:18].

When we commit everything to the Lord and trust that He will preserve us from all trials, we will have the inner peace of God that passes all understanding, and guards our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus [Isaiah 26:3]. We must live an upright and pure life in order to obtain blessings from the God of peace.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 18
PHILIPPIANS 4

THOUGHT

In order to be a good testimony for the Lord, examine yourself if you are living an exemplary Christian life. Be truthful, be worthy of respect, be just, be holy and pure, lovable, praiseworthy, morally excellent and worthy of praising God [v. 8].

BIBLE LESSON

Colossians 1

LESSON

More of God

VERSE 10

*That ye might walk
worthy of the Lord unto
all pleasing, being fruitful
in every good work, and
increasing in the knowledge
of God;*

The theme of Colossians centres on the supremacy of Christ, Who is the believer's hope, fullness and sufficiency. The Colossian Christians were warned against false teachings, like carnal wisdom, philosophical traditions and observance of dietary prohibitions. The Apostle Paul emphasises on doctrine in Colossians 1–2 and practice in Chapters 3 and 4. He starts by expressing his thankfulness to God for the believers' faith, love and hope [v. 1–8]. These three growing graces characterised the Colossian believers. Next came his prayer for their fruitful spiritual knowledge in the area of service, stressing on perseverance and joyful thanksgiving [v. 9–14]. Then, he describes the glorious supremacy of Christ [v. 15–23] and ends with a summary of his own ministry [v. 24–29].

To walk worthy of the Lord [v. 10], we must be zealous in evangelism. Fruit bearing in soul winning is an evidence of discipleship [John 15:8].

Another way to please our Saviour is to increase in the knowledge of God. Every earthly father is glad when his child desires to know him better. Likewise, our heavenly Father is delighted with those who seek to understand Who He is, what He does, what He purposes and what He commands.

How can you increase in the knowledge of God? Besides your own private daily quiet time, being regular in attending church worship service, prayer meetings and other church activities will result in knowing God better.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 19
COLOSSIANS 1

PRAYER

Lord, increase my thirst and hunger for righteousness.

BIBLE LESSON*Colossians 2***LESSON****Walking the talk****VERSE 6**

*As ye have therefore
received Christ Jesus the
Lord, so walk ye in him.*

The Apostle Paul identified himself with the Colossian believers, expressing his joy in them [v. 1–7]. He pointed out to them the heretical teachings of heathen philosophy and Jewish rites and traditions [v. 8–17]. Continuing his defence against the Judaising heresies of angel worship and asceticism, Paul stressed on Jesus as the sufficient and sovereign Saviour to meet the needs of all believers [v. 18–23].

In line with Paul’s emphasis on our Christian walk, he encouraged his readers to continue doing so. How believers should walk in the Lord is clearly spelt out in Paul’s farming and building analogy, namely, “rooted and built up in him” [v. 7]. When we are firmly rooted in Christ, we will be established in the faith.

Biblically, the term “walk” refers to manner of life, similar to the word “conversation” in Philippians 1:27. It denotes our conduct and lifestyle, which must be God-pleasing and honouring to Him. By God’s grace, let us be Christ-like so that no one can point an accusing finger at us, bringing reproach to His name.

If you have already acknowledged Christ Jesus as your personal Saviour, your lifestyle must reflect the character of Christ. Conduct yourself as befits the child of the King of kings and Lord of lords. You must “walk the talk”. In other words, your salvation in Christ must be evidenced in sanctified and holy living. However, if you are not saved yet, do not delay. Believe on the Lord Jesus right now.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 20
COLOSSIANS 2

PRAYER**Help me to be Christ-like in all that I do and say.**

BIBLE LESSON*Colossians 3***LESSON****The characteristics of
love****VERSE 12**

*Put on therefore, as the
elect of God, holy and
beloved, bowels of mercies,
kindness, humbleness
of mind, meekness,
longsuffering;*

Due to their new life in Christ, the Colossian believers were exhorted to pursue a higher calling. They were to set their minds and hearts on things above [v. 1–4]. The old nature must be mortified to render sin ineffective in the believer’s life. Paul listed five sins of personal aggression [v. 5–11]. Conversely, believers are encouraged to live in social harmony of mutual love, forbearance and forgiveness [v. 12–17]. Paul also offered practical advice on family relationships between husband and wife, parents and children, master and slave. In the final analysis, every individual believer is judged by his personal response [v. 18–25].

The difference between the old nature and the new is highlighted in this chapter. The sins of personal aggression [v. 5, 8] must be replaced by the character of the new nature [v. 12]. We can apply the saying “like father, like son” by “putting on” the communicable attributes of Christ in our relationships with others.

“Putting off” the old must result in the “putting on” the new. Believers, as God’s elect, must “clothe” themselves with Christian characteristics. In other words, the indispensable quality of love as the identifying mark of a true believer ought to be reflected in outward expressions of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness and longsuffering [v. 12].

Is your conduct reflecting God’s love? As God’s children, we are holy and beloved. This must motivate us to relate lovingly to others. The nine-fold fruit of the Holy Spirit must be evidenced in our lifestyle.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 21
COLOSSIANS 3**

PRAYER

Lord, teach me to love others the way You do.

BIBLE LESSON
Colossians 4

LESSON
**Cultivating gracious
speech**

VERSE 6

*Let your speech be always
with grace, seasoned with
salt, that ye may know how
ye ought to answer every
man.*

Masters were cautioned to treat their servants with justice and equality because of cruelty and abuse of slaves during the reign of the Roman Empire. Masters themselves were answerable to their heavenly Master [v. 1]. Paul then emphasised on perseverance in prayer and the need for Christian prudence. All believers must exercise caution when communicating with others [v. 2–6]. Tychicus and Onesimus were faithful co-workers who could account for Paul's ministry [v. 7–9]. This chapter ends with the usual greetings and blessings from Paul to his readers [v 10–18].

Paul was also concerned with the speech of the Colossian believers [v. 6]. The words used and how they are conveyed in communication are important. All of us have been guilty of careless speech at one time or another. Hence, we need to heed Paul's exhortation about the importance of proper communication.

Our speech must be full of grace and seasoned with salt. Salt is important in the preservation of food. What Paul meant is that a believer's conversation must be acceptable and inoffensive. The purpose is that we may know how to answer every man. This is especially important in our soul-winning endeavour.

Have you ever offended someone or been offended before? This can happen quite easily, even if it does not happen intentionally. As the salt of the earth [Matthew 5:13a], we must preserve our savour. Let us learn to cultivate gracious speech in our Christian living. Then we can be shining witnesses for our Lord Jesus.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 22
COLOSSIANS 4

PRAYER

Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. – Psalm 141:3

BIBLE LESSON

1 Thessalonians 1–2

LESSON

To walk worthy of God

I THESSALONIANS 2:12

That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

This epistle is generally considered to be one of the earliest writings of the Apostle Paul. It is full of affection and confidence—more consolatory and practical compared to some of his other epistles. Paul and his companions planted the first Christian church in the city of Thessalonica but had to flee when their lives were threatened [Acts 17:1–10]. As a young congregation, the Thessalonians had remained faithful to the Lord despite the absence of the apostles. Paul wrote this letter to them to strengthen their faith and to reassure them of Christ’s return.

Our great gospel privilege is that God has called us to His kingdom and glory. For those who are called, it is our duty to walk worthy of God. We should live as a people called with such a high and holy calling. Our great business is to honour, serve and please God, and to seek to be worthy of Him.

Are you walking worthy of Christ today? Is there anything in your daily life that would embarrass God? How would you account for your actions if you were to meet God today? Not many of us can face God without any guilt of unworthiness. We have on many occasions brought shame to the name of God through our actions. The step now is to repent with all sincerity and seek for forgiveness. With the washing of our souls through the blood of Jesus, God will forgive.

Let us therefore not take this for granted. Let our daily walk be worthy of God from henceforth.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

2 KINGS I

I THESSALONIANS 1–2

PRAYER

Dear God, please help us remember Your statutes and guide us so that we can walk worthy as Your children.

BIBLE LESSON**1 Thessalonians 3–4****LESSON****Do not fornicate****I THESSALONIANS 4:3**

*For this is the will of God,
even your sanctification,
that ye should abstain from
fornication.*

Sexual standards were very low in the Roman Empire during Paul's time. Sadly, we can say the same about our society today. The lure of sex before marriage is powerful. Fornication is celebrated and promoted in today's media so much so that it is deemed normal for one to indulge in fornication.

Fornication is strictly forbidden in the Scriptures. It is likened to whoredom. When the men of Israel began to commit fornication with the women of Moab, 24,000 Israelite men were slain by a strange plague sent by God [Numbers 25:1–9]. Such is the severity of fornication. It is a sin that differs from other sins. "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" [1 Corinthians 6:18]. The Bible contains many prophecies about the fate of fornicators. Popular opinions will count for nothing and, unless they repent, fornicators will face severe punishment on the Day of Judgement—and perhaps even before.

The world today deems fornication to be fine. However, no matter how widely-accepted fornication is, do not be foolish enough to try it. If you are involved in this sin, repent immediately and forsake this sin that destroys the soul and the society. Marriage is the best safeguard against fornication [1 Corinthians 7]. Get married if necessary; but do not fornicate.

No one should entertain the idea that he or she can fornicate and get away with it. The Day of Judgement draws near. Keep this sobering fact in mind.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

2 KINGS 2

I THESSALONIANS 3–4

CHALLENGE

Stop committing this sin for fornicators will not enter the Kingdom of God. – 1 Corinthians 6:9

BIBLE LESSON**1 Thessalonians 5****LESSON****Do not render evil for evil****VERSE 15**

See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

Which is the second great commandment of the Law? Jesus told us, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” [Matthew 22:39]. This second great guide to the body of commandments comes after the first, which is to love God with all your heart, your soul and your might. If we are to understand and bear these principles in mind, applying verse 15 in our lives then becomes possible.

The real essence of exemplary Christian living is to love someone the same way Christ loves us. If we have experienced God’s grace, we become the best people to pass this on, bearing in mind that grace is undeserving favour. By giving our enemy a cup of drink, we are not excusing him from his misdeeds. We are actually recognising our enemy, forgiving and loving him despite his sins. This is easier said than done. Our first reaction when faced with injustice is often to strike back. However, God’s Word tells us otherwise—do not render evil for evil.

Have you ever been betrayed by colleagues, long-time friends or even family? The evil heaped by people closest to you cuts the deepest, and revenge comes naturally to the mind. Jesus says that if we truly love God and our neighbour, we can keep His commandments and respond differently from non-Christians in such situations.

God’s command is a blueprint for us to stay out of trouble and sin. Take comfort in knowing that evil will not go unchecked; vengeance is of the Lord [Romans 12:19].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 3
1 THESSALONIANS 5

CHALLENGE

Remember the two greatest commandments. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. – Matthew 22:40

BIBLE LESSON**2 Thessalonians 1****LESSON****Enduring persecutions****VERSE 6**

*Seeing it is a righteous thing
with God to recompense
tribulation to them that
trouble you;*

In this chapter, the Apostle Paul acknowledged the persecutions that Christians were facing in Thessalonica. Thessalonica was the capital and largest city of the Roman province of Macedonia. It was situated on an important highway between Rome and the Orient, and equipped with a thriving seaport. It was also one of the wealthiest and fastest-growing trade centres in the Roman Empire. Thessalonica was self-ruled and this led to an open climate, making the city a fertile ground for pagan religions that challenged the Christian's faith.

Paul's response to the persecution was that Christ's return would bring deliverance and judgement on their persecutors. Christians would inherit the kingdom of God but their persecutors would reap the whirlwind.

Revenge is an offensive idea to misinformed believers. Yet, revenge itself is not wrong [1 Thessalonians 5:15]. In fact, justice requires revenge, or as Paul puts it, justice means "pay back". The Bible does not teach against revenge but insists that revenge is necessary. However, it forbids us to take it upon ourselves to exact revenge on those who have wronged us, for God reserves that right for Himself. It is important to correct this misunderstanding on revenge.

The key to surviving suffering and tribulation is patience and faith. Some say tribulation is a result of sin or lack of faith. Whatever the reason, we can take comfort in knowing that God is using them for our own good and, more importantly, for His glory. God is fair. In His time, He will relieve us of our suffering.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 4
2 THESSALONIANS 1

CHALLENGE

Have faith that all persecution and suffering will come to an end. When that happens, faithful servants of the Lord will be rewarded.

BIBLE LESSON

2 Thessalonians 2

LESSON

The dates of the Lord's second coming

VERSE 3

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Harold Camping, a radio evangelist, had once predicted that the Apocalypse would take place on a Saturday, 21 May 2011. However, it did not. His reaction to the non-event was, "Oh Lord, what happened?" He had previously predicted judgement days on 21 May 1988 and 7 September 1994. He also predicted another judgement day on 21 October 2011.

In Thessalonica, the faith of young Christians on the Lord's second coming had swung from end to end. Previously, they were losing hope that the Lord would come. This time, some thought that Jesus would come immediately. Paul tried to restore balance by letting them know of certain events that would come to pass before our Lord returns. There would be a general falling away first, followed by the rise of antichrist. This man of sin not only practises wickedness but also promotes and commands sin and wickedness in others.

What does the Bible tell us about the time of our Lord's coming? The Lord will come like a thief in the night [1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10]. Do we know when a thief plans to enter a house? Of course not! Harold Camping is not the first person to predict the date and time of our Lord's second coming. Neither will he be the last.

Let us therefore be enlightened. It is more important to know that our Lord will come again, and live a life worthy of our calling, than to try to predict a date that cannot be predicted.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 5
2 THESSALONIANS 2

PRAYER

Thank you, Lord, for Thy Word, promising us Your second coming. We pray that we will not be deceived by anyone who claims to know of the actual date.

BIBLE LESSON*2 Thessalonians 3***LESSON****Do not be a busybody****VERSE 10**

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

Some people in Thessalonica used the eminent return of the Lord as an excuse to stop all productive activities. Paul had to address this problem of idleness and laziness [v. 6–15]. Using himself as an example, he showed that he was never a burden to the church. He earned his own keep. More importantly, Paul addressed the dangers of laziness, an idle mind and, closely related to these, a gossiping mouth.

Industry in our business is a duty required in our calling as Christians. The servant who waits for the coming of his Lord must keep working until He returns, as his Lord has commanded. If we are idle, the devil and our own corrupt heart will soon find us something else to do. The mind of man, if not employed in doing good, will do evil.

It is commendable to be active in our own business, yet quiet as to that of others. For those indulging in sins of idleness and being busybodies, we are to take note of him and separate from his company so that he feels ashamed. However, do not count him as an enemy. Instead, admonish him as a brother. This is the love we should show as Christians.

Are you working hard today and minding your own business? Be engaged in work and hold onto your tongue. Make yourself an example unto people to follow us [v. 9]. Continue to work hard quietly to the end. There is time enough to rest when we are in heaven.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 6
2 THESSALONIANS 3

CHALLENGE

Be careful with the tongue and do not be sucked into idle gossip.

BIBLE LESSON

1 Timothy 1

LESSON

False doctrine at Ephesus

VERSE 4

*Neither give heed to fables
and endless genealogies,
which minister questions,
rather than godly edifying
which is in faith: so do.*

First Timothy was written by Paul to one of his dear sons in the faith, Timothy, who faced the onslaught of false teachers while pastoring the church in Ephesus.

To help Timothy combat the heresies threatening the church, Paul asked God to pour on Timothy the grace, mercy and peace he needed to handle the situation [v. 2]. Grace refers to God's undeserved favour, love and forgiveness towards sinners, freeing them from the consequences of sin. Mercy frees us from the misery that sin brings. Peace is the result of grace and mercy and it refers not only to harmony with God but also tranquillity of soul. As believers, we need grace, mercy and peace throughout our Christian life, not merely at the point of salvation.

Paul encouraged and advised Timothy to make every effort to halt the influence of false teachers and set things right for the church. All believers have a responsibility to be on the alert for false teachers. What do we watch out for? First, ensure that their understanding of the Scripture is biblically sound. Second, make sure that their goals are to love, honour and glorify God and not to pursue self-love, material wealth or personal exaltation. Third, examine their motives. Are they humble and selfless or do they seek pre-eminence. Finally, examine the effect of their teaching. Do their followers understand the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Constant vigilance is our defence against those who seek to enslave us to a false gospel.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 7
1 TIMOTHY 1

THOUGHT

The good news of the Christian gospel is that God has the power to transform lives.

BIBLE LESSON*1 Timothy 2***LESSON****Evangelistic praying****VERSE 1**

*I exhort therefore, that,
first of all, supplications,
prayers, intercessions, and
giving of thanks, be made
for all men;*

You cannot bring souls to God if you don't go to God yourself. The soul-winner must be a master in the art of prayer. You must get your battle-axe and your weapons of war from the armoury of sacred communication with Christ. When you spend time alone with Jesus, you will be in tune with His Spirit and have a passion for souls.

Our prayers are all too often narrowly confined to personal needs and wants. They rarely extend beyond those of our immediate circle of friends and family. However, Paul calls for evangelistic prayer to be made for all men, kings and all who are in authority. There is no place for selfishness or exclusivity, for God desires all to be saved [v. 4]. God has commanded all men to repent [Acts 17:30]. We must pray that they will do so and embrace the salvation offered to all [Titus 2:11].

Paul instructs us on our attitude when we are praying: "lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" [v. 8b]. Here, Paul's emphasis is not on a particular posture for prayer; his point is that those who pray must be holy in heart and in deed.

The greatest example of evangelistic praying is our Lord Himself. He "made intercession for the transgressors" [Isaiah 53:12]. On the Cross, He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" [Luke 23:34]. God answered those prayers with 3,000 converts on the Day of Pentecost and countless thousands more through the centuries.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 8
1 TIMOTHY 2

THOUGHT

Evangelism begins with evangelistic prayer. A passion for souls finds its root in prayer.

BIBLE LESSON*1 Timothy 3***LESSON****Qualities of a godly leader****VERSE 15**

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

There is an inseparable link between the character of a church and the quality of its leadership. The ministry, testimony and effectiveness of any church are largely a reflection of its leaders. Leaders must set a godly example for the church to follow.

Paul, who founded the church at Ephesus, had trained a core of godly leaders to lead the church. But after he had left, false leaders arose and the leadership degenerated. Some leaders were even teaching false doctrines [1 Timothy 1:3; 4:1–3, 7; 6:3–5], turning aside to “fruitless discussion” [1 Timothy 1:6], misusing the law and misunderstanding the Gospel [1 Timothy 1:7–11]. Some were guilty of sin and needed public rebuke [1 Timothy 5:20].

In this chapter, Paul directed Timothy to re-establishing a godly leadership. He outlined the spiritual virtues, character traits and morality that marked godly teachers and leaders. A life without blame is the overarching requirement for leadership in the Church [v. 2; 10]. This is exhibited not only in one’s exemplary personal life but also in one’s commendable family life.

Church leadership is not for everyone. Those who seek office must have a Spirit-given, compelling desire to serve. Ambition for office corrupts, desire for service purifies. The Church must be led by men with a passion for the ministry. When God chooses people to serve in His church, He always looks for those whose hearts are right with Him. His concern is not about talents or abilities but spiritual virtues.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 9–10
1 TIMOTHY 3

PRAYER

Dear Lord, may Thou grant our church leaders special grace and the Spirit’s anointing so that they would be faithful and diligent in service, ever mindful of the spiritual welfare of the flock.

BIBLE LESSON*1 Timothy 4***LESSON****Falling away from the faith****VERSE 1**

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

The key to unlocking this passage is “some shall depart from the faith” [v. 1] This refers to a person, known as an apostate, who wilfully abandons the biblical faith he had once professed. While apostasy saddens and outrages believers, it is predictable and inevitable. From the first coming of the Lord to His return, through all the ages of the church, apostasies will occur and escalate towards the end when “the love of many shall wax cold” [Matthew 24:12].

Apostasies are generated by demonic beings, “doctrines of devils” from “seducing spirits” [v. 1]. Satan and his agents concoct all manner of lying theologies to confuse and deceive. The false teachers in Ephesus were teaching that spirituality demanded avoiding marriage and abstaining from food. Paul rejected such teaching as false and dangerous [Colossians 2:16–23]. Mandatory celibacy and abstinence from food in general are the teaching of demons. It denies the goodness of God’s creation and robs Him of the glory and praise due to Him for that goodness.

Apostasy is an ever-present danger to the church. The way to combat false teaching is not only by denouncing and refuting it but also by positively teaching and living the truth. So Paul exhorted Timothy to be a good servant of Jesus Christ by setting a standard of virtue in faith, devotion and conduct so that others may follow [v. 6–16].

Believers can avoid false teachings by giving heed to God’s Word.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 11–12
1 TIMOTHY 4**

THOUGHT

Mere externalism neither pleases God nor promotes genuine spirituality.

BIBLE LESSON

1 Timothy 5

LESSON

Dealings in the spiritual family

VERSE 8

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

The church is a family of believers. The word “family” speaks of intimacy, care, openness and love. We are commanded to love one another [John 13:34–35]. Love in Christ is the foundation of the family and of the church.

However, sometimes we tend to overlook the need to confront sin in the name of love. The church in Ephesus called for correction as some sinning members had abandoned truth and godliness, others had shipwrecked their faith, some women were trying to usurp the function of men, while older and younger widows were living impure lives. Here, Paul instructs that confronting sin in the church is necessary but is not to be done by violently attacking fallen brothers and sisters. Rather, sinning saints must be lovingly confronted, edified and encouraged towards holy living with an attitude of gentleness. Older men should be treated with respect like fathers, older women like mothers and younger women as sisters.

Next, Paul moved on to instruct the church and its members to take care of widows who were alone with no one to support them; and were believers who fixed their hope in God [v. 3–16].

Finally, we are told to honour elders and even to accord double honour to those who serve with greater commitment, effort and excellence. We are also to protect elders from false accusations. However, when their sins are confirmed before two or three witnesses, they are to be rebuked publicly as a warning to everyone.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 13
1 TIMOTHY 5

PRAYER

O Holy Spirit, instil in each heart a deep love for Thy Word and love one for another, so that others may see Christ in us.

BIBLE LESSON*1 Timothy 6***LESSON****False teaching and the love of money****VERSE 11**

*But thou, O man of God,
flee these things; and
follow after righteousness,
godliness, faith, love,
patience, meekness.*

Throughout history, deadly epidemics have ravaged mankind. While illness may kill the body, false teaching damns the soul. Scientists study the pathology of a disease to better equip themselves to recognise and combat the disease. Here, Paul taught Timothy (and every leader in the church) how to diagnose the spiritual disease of false teaching.

False teachers advocate a doctrine that contradicts God's revelation in Scripture. They deny truth and their teachings do not produce godly living. They are arrogant and ignorant of spiritual truth. They spend their time in foolish speculations that lead only to chaos and divisions. They serve money, not God [v. 3–5]. To spot spiritual disease, believers must be well-grounded in the Scripture. The Christian's offensive weapon against false teaching is the "sword of the Spirit". Are you spiritually armed?

Paul exhorts leaders and Christians alike to flee the love of money. They should instead pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and meekness [v. 11]. A godly person is motivated not by the love of money but by the love of God. He seeks the true riches of spiritual contentment that comes from complete trust in the all-sufficient God.

Paul charges the rich not to be conceited but to be thankful to God. They are to use their material wealth to perform good works on behalf of others and be generous to share with those in need. By sharing their earthly treasure, they are investing in the eternal treasure of heaven.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

2 KINGS 14
1 TIMOTHY 6

THOUGHT

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also [Matthew 6:21]. Where is your treasure?

BIBLE LESSON

2 Timothy 1

LESSON

Succession of believers

VERSE 5

When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

This is a three-generational faith, passed down from grandmother Lois to mother Eunice and then to Timothy. The Christian women in this family played an influential role in passing on the Christian faith. Timothy's father was a Greek who did not share the faith of his Jewish wife [Acts 16:1], yet his mother was able to communicate the faith to her son and nurtured him to be an eminent church leader. It is most desirable and blessed to see this succession of believers in a family, and to see faith transmitted as a result of those who walked faithfully in the truth.

Timothy received the advantage of a godly education from two pious women, Lois and Eunice. To be brought up in the fear of God is a great blessing and a sound religious education is an advantage of infinite worth. The faith of one parent sanctified the child [2 Timothy 3:15].

Be encouraged to claim the promise of household salvation, as when you "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" [Acts 16:31]. God often blesses the labours and examples of faithful women, raising up excellent leaders for His church.

This is a timely reminder to all parents and Sunday school teachers to "train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" [Proverbs 22:6]. Examples in the Old Testament are Moses and Samuel, who were well instructed in the Word of God and faithful in serving God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 15
2 TIMOTHY 1

REMINDER

Be a reproductive Christian, pass on the faith.

BIBLE LESSON*2 Timothy 2***LESSON****Belonging to God****VERSE 19**

*Nevertheless the foundation
of God standeth sure,
having this seal, The Lord
knoweth them that are his.
And, Let every one that
nameth the name of Christ
depart from iniquity.*

The Lord knoweth them that are his.” This motto guarantees the eternal security of true believers. It is the seal of divine ownership on the Church. Our Creator God knows His children individually and keeps them to the very end. “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” [Philippians 1:6].

In the Old Testament, Moses declared to Korah when he rebelled against his God-appointed leadership that “the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy” [Numbers 16:5]. He warned the godly to separate themselves from the rebels, lest they be judged by God [Numbers 16:26, 32]. In his contrast on the two ways of life, the psalmist echoed, “For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish” [Psalm 1:6]. Similarly, Job confidently stated, “But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold” [Job 23:10].

The Apostle Paul warned Timothy of two apostates, Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have turned aside from the path of truth and righteousness [v. 17]. Followers of Christ who bear His name must depart from iniquity to live a sanctified and holy life. Our Lord Jesus assures us that we are safe and secure in His hands [John 10:27–28] and that nothing can separate us from the love of God [Romans 8:38–39].

We belong to God, so glorify Him in your body and spirit [1 Corinthians 6:19–20].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

2 KINGS 16
2 TIMOTHY 2

THOUGHT

God knows you. Do you know Him?

BIBLE LESSON

2 Timothy 3

LESSON

The mark of a Christian

VERSE 12

*Yea, and all that will live
godly in Christ Jesus shall
suffer persecution.*

The Apostle Paul had a personal experience of sufferings and persecutions for the sake of the Gospel. Ironically, he also persecuted Christians before his conversion. After he had believed in Christ, the Holy Spirit transformed him greatly. He became a champion of the Christian faith.

Those who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will certainly face trials and sufferings. Self-centred Christians who serve the Lord half-heartedly seldom have to pay a price for their faith, as they are of little threat to Satan's work.

The Bible is full of good examples of faithful servants who had boldly stood up for their Christian faith and suffered as a result. Our Lord Jesus told the disciples, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" [John 16:33]. Persecution is inevitable for those who live righteously as this lifestyle is in contrast to the evil practices of the world.

Where then lies the strength for Christians to endure through these trials? Paul offers us good advice. He exhorts us to continue in the things that we have learnt and have been assured of [v. 14] through the study of God's Word, which is able to make us "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" [v. 15]. The wisdom of God is living wisdom, enabling us to brave through fiery trials, to be perfected and even thoroughly furnished unto all good works [v. 17].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

2 KINGS 17
2 TIMOTHY 3

REMINDER

**The Word is our sword, be it through good times
or bad.**

BIBLE LESSON

2 Timothy 4

LESSON

Finishing the course

VERSE 7

*I have fought a good fight, I
have finished my course, I
have kept the faith.*

As the epistle comes to a close, Paul looked back at all that he had done in his life. He had travelled to many places and met many people. He had been beaten, stoned and imprisoned because of the faith. He had faced sarcasm and mockery for the sake of the Gospel.

But God had, in His grace, preserved him until then. And like a veteran considering a great battle after him, he had said with much assurance, in three short clauses much familiar to us: he had fought the good fight, he had finished his course, and he had kept the faith.

What would you tell yourself when you reach the dust of your life? What have you done or are doing to the gifts and talents our Lord has given you? Paul lays forth to his readers the charge to preach [v. 2], to spread the Gospel, and to always be ready to share God's Word and the reason for your faith. Use the Word to edify one another, exhorting one another with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Paul also warns that it would not be easy because there will come a time when people will not endure sound doctrine, preferring fables to truth, in order to satisfy their lusts and the urges of their itching ears [v. 3–4]. Yet, in all good conscience, what we can do is to keep watch, endure the hardships ahead of us, do the work and make full proof of the burden which our Lord has placed in our hearts.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 18
2 TIMOTHY 4

THOUGHT

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. – Luke 17:10

BIBLE LESSON*Titus 1–3***LESSON****He saved us****TITUS 3:5**

*Not by works of
righteousness which we
have done, but according
to his mercy he saved us, by
the washing of regeneration,
and renewing of the Holy
Ghost;*

What must we do to be saved? Paul's answer was simple yet profound. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" [Acts 16:31]. In Titus 3:5, we come across three wonderful words: "He saved us." In these words, we have the core of the Christian truth. God desires all men to be saved [1 Timothy 2:4]. Salvation is totally the work of God. Man is hopeless and dead in trespasses and sins. It is God's loving grace that causes Him to prepare a plan to save His people.

He saved us not on the basis of deeds that we have done in righteousness but according to His mercy. Deliverance and transformation come from God and God alone. We are regenerated through the work of the Holy Spirit.

God sent forth His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to accomplish the work of redemption. He died on the Cross for the sins of the world. He has satisfied the justice of God—the price was paid. Death has been conquered. We are made right with God through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

All three Persons of the Trinity are involved in the work of grace, each having His special function in the salvation of our soul. God the Father begins, God the Son manages and God the Holy Spirit works and perfects all. We are justified in God's sight and can face the future confidently because we are His heirs.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 19
TITUS 1-3

THOUGHT

How do we know that we are saved? We have the testimonies of God's promise, Christ's death and the power of the Holy Spirit.

BIBLE LESSON*Philemon***LESSON****Christian forgiveness****VERSE 16**

*Not now as a servant, but
above a servant, a brother
beloved, specially to me,
but how much more unto
thee, both in the flesh, and
in the Lord?*

The epistle to Philemon is the shortest of Paul's inspired writings. The underlying theme is that Christians are to forgive one another, as God has forgiven them. Through a real-life situation involving two people dear to him, Paul teaches the importance of forgiving others. Although imprisoned by the Romans, Paul viewed himself as a prisoner of Jesus. Timothy was with Paul, who described him as "our brother" because Philemon knew him.

Paul wrote a letter to Philemon addressing him as his beloved brother and fellow worker. He thanked God for Philemon's love and faith. He also praised God likewise for Philemon's love for all the saints. Paul appealed to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus, a runaway slave belonging to Philemon. Onesimus came in contact with Paul and was converted in prison. Christ had brought about a change in Onesimus. Though Paul desired to keep Onesimus with him, he persuaded the runaway slave to return to his master to make amends.

Paul appealed to Philemon to receive the runaway slave "not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved ... both in the flesh, and in the Lord" [v. 16]. Paul made this appeal based on the gospel of forgiveness, rather than upon his apostolic authority. If Onesimus owed anything, the Apostle would pay the debt. Paul prayed that God's grace would be with Philemon.

May we follow Paul's example. If you have already accepted Christ as your personal Saviour and Lord, go and witness to someone. Do not be ashamed to confess Christ.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 20
PHILEMON

THOUGHT

Forgiven sinners know love and show love.

BIBLE LESSON

Hebrews 1

LESSON

God has spoken to us

VERSE 2

*Hath in these last days
spoken unto us by his Son,
whom he hath appointed
heir of all things, by whom
also he made the worlds;*

In the days of old, God sent prophets and messengers to communicate His will to His people. Noah preached righteousness, Moses gave the laws and Hosea warned of the dire consequences of turning away from God.

In these last days, God speaks to us through His Son. Jesus is not only the Messenger but He is the Message Himself. He is not just the truth-bearer; He is the Truth. He is the sole and sufficient Spokesman of God. His message exceeds and excels all that was spoken of old. God has spoken in Christ and revealed Himself so completely that there is nothing more to add. Believers now have the complete message of God.

We see an important basis of our belief that Christ has fully revealed to us what God is like [v. 1–2]. As Christ has fully revealed God, believers get to know God through Christ. In other words, there is no authentic knowledge of God beyond what is revealed in Christ. Our identity as Christians stands with Jesus, the full and final revelation of God.

The New Testament, which records for us what “God has spoken to us by his Son”, tells us how we can be reconciled to Him. The Lord Jesus came to this world to give His life a ransom for many. Christ has given us the way to salvation. We have the eternal Son of God Who has spoken. Yes, the message of old is good but how much more wonderful it is to know Christ and heed His words.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 21
HEBREWS 1

THOUGHT

**God has spoken. Do you know what He has said?
Do you listen?**

BIBLE LESSON*Hebrews 2***LESSON****We ought to listen****VERSE 1**

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

God has spoken to us through His son Jesus. What then must we do? “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip” [v. 2]. This passage reminds us to wake up, pay attention and not let the truths (the Gospel of Christ) slip from our minds.

The word “slip” describes a carelessness of mind. A person who is preoccupied with other things is not aware that he is losing ground. The danger is that the loss may be occurring unnoticed. A person who neglects the Gospel is not deliberately turning his mind away from God. Neglect is often not deliberate or wilful. It is something that happens because of familiarity or distraction, usually caused by having too many things going on in one’s life, such as work, family, hobbies and leisure. One allows oneself to neglect the truth one has heard.

We can become “desensitised” to the glory of Jesus’ message, thinking that we know it all. “Give the more earnest heed” has not only the meaning of listening carefully but also doing what we have heard. If we become superficial in our prayer and Bible study, our once-keen vision of God will begin to blur. Our spiritual regress is often a slow drifting away.

Therefore, be diligent, because the truth can easily slip away from us when we are caught up in the flurry of activities.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 22
HEBREWS 2

THOUGHT

The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead. – Proverbs 21:16

BIBLE LESSON*Hebrews 3***LESSON****Harden not your hearts****VERSE 8**

*Harden not your hearts, as
in the provocation, in the
day of temptation in the
wilderness.*

The phrase “harden not your hearts” is repeated three times in this chapter. To the Hebrews, the heart is the centre of a person’s personality, including his intellect and his will. Therefore, “to harden one’s heart” is to refuse to listen, understand and obey what someone is saying. In this context, it is refusing to heed God’s commands.

The largely Hebrew readers of this epistle were already hardening their hearts, just like their forefathers. As such, they had to be reminded of what had happened to their ancestors, who died in the wilderness and failed to enter the Promised Land.

How does a person harden his heart? It is a process that occurs gradually as he complains about God’s work and ignores His Word. The Israelites complained about the way God led them and the manner in which He fed them. What should we do to prevent a hardened heart? Listen to God’s Word and respond to it faithfully. Appreciate God’s blessings and respond to it thankfully. Worship the Lord and keep a tender heart before Him. If we take God and His provisions for granted, we will inevitably become less thankful and less responsive to Him.

Charles Spurgeon said that we could not soften our hearts, but we could harden them. The consequences would be fatal. The people of Israel saw the miracles and heard the messages. But none entered the Promised Land. Let us heed this warning and keep our hearts open to God’s Word and obey Him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

2 KINGS 23
HEBREWS 3

THOUGHT

If we harden our hearts, we miss God’s best plans for our lives.

BIBLE LESSON
Hebrews 4

LESSON
Let us hold fast our profession

VERSE 14

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

Today's key verse tells us three crucial things. First, Jesus is a great High Priest Who serves as the Mediator between God and men. Second, He is now in heaven making intercessions for us. Third, He is the Son of God Who will come to receive us unto Him. The writer of Hebrews exhorts us to hold fast to our profession.

A profession or confession of faith simply means we agree with God about our sinfulness and His righteousness. It is not enough to just believe in God, as even the demons believe in Him [James 2:19]. We must believe and confess our sins. This action leads to true repentance and salvation. We must be for God, and against our own sins.

Therefore, we should look towards the High Priest Who has paved a sure way for us to enter the Promised Land and guaranteed our rest. Seeing the example of the Exodus generation of Israelites who lost their inheritance due to disobedience and unbelief, it is important and necessary for us to "hold fast our profession" in Christ the Saviour.

In addition, "let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" [v. 16]. No matter what confronts us—trouble, trials, temptation—help is available. Our Lord had once lived in this world and He too had experienced tribulations. However, He overcame them victoriously. Now, all we have to do is go to Him in faith and pour our hearts out to Him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 24
HEBREWS 4

THOUGHT

Let us hold fast to the Lord Who also holds us fast in His loving hand.

BIBLE LESSON
Hebrews 5

LESSON
Exercise our spiritual senses

VERSE 14

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 25
HEBREWS 5

The Hebrew Christians mentioned in this chapter displayed their immaturity when they were unable to discern between good and evil; they were even thinking of giving up Jesus. The writer said in order to go from babies who feed on milk to mature Christians who feed on “strong meat”, believers need to exercise their spiritual senses.

A mature Christian has to train and exercise his spiritual faculties. He cannot be slothful and complacent. He has to be alert and discipline himself. He has to study the Word of God diligently. He needs to pray regularly. He keeps his mind on Christ and obeys Him. He lives a godly life.

Thomas Hewitt comments on how Christians can gain their discernment: “By the regular exercise of the spiritual faculties in the Word of God and in the doctrines of the Christian faith, for there is no easy way to spiritual maturity ... [We need to] have an exact, or right, judgement in all things. When different viewpoints are placed before them they can at once distinguish the good from the evil, the right from the wrong.”

Babies are weak in discernment and will put anything into their mouths. A mature Christian is discerning. He knows what to eat and drink, where to go, what to see and listen, and when to speak. He knows with whom he should have fellowship. He knows who teaches the truth and who does not. In order to feast at God’s banquet table, we must grow in the Lord and put into practice what we have learnt.

THOUGHT

Practice is hard work but it is necessary for spiritual discernment.

BIBLE LESSON

Hebrews 6

LESSON

Service for the Lord

VERSE 10

*For God is not unrighteous
to forget your work and
labour of love, which ye
have shewed toward his
name, in that ye have
ministered to the saints,
and do minister.*

In this chapter, the writer turns his attention from the foundations of the Christian faith—the perfecting work of God towards His children. As the epistle is addressed to the Jewish believers, he emphasises that they should dwell no longer on basic doctrines, having confirmed their faith at the point of conversion and been adopted into God’s family, because it was no longer possible, hyperbolically speaking, to fall away, and then to receive Christ’s redemptive work a second time. Our faith is in God’s hand and no one can pluck us out of His hand [John 10:28–29].

The believers were further encouraged to continue to minister for God in their local congregation. They were told to continue in their ministry until they were called home to the Lord. The writer gave the example of Abraham, who had diligently endured the work, as well as the trials and tribulations of life, and obtained the promise that God made with him.

Why should the Hebrews do this? Because of the hope in the promise of blessing that God has given to them. God is immutable; the promises that He has made will stand forever, and He will remember them.

Are you actively serving God in church today? The encouragement in this chapter applies also to us, as children of God. Has God given you talents? Use them for the furtherance of God’s work starting from the local assembly of believers that you belong to.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 1–2
HEBREWS 6**

PRAYER

O Lord, help us to be steadfast and unmoveable in our faith, and help us to be always abounding in the work that You have given us to do. Thank You for the assurance that our labour for You is not in vain.

BIBLE LESSON*Hebrews 7***LESSON****The eternal priesthood of Christ****VERSE 24**

But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

The author of Hebrews argues for the superiority of the priesthood of Christ in this chapter. To a Jew, only someone from the tribe of Levi can be a priest. However, there was a different priest mentioned in the Scriptures—Melchizedek, who was a priest of the most high God [Genesis 14:18]. Even Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek.

Furthermore, David described the Lord as the eternal Priest after the order of Melchizedek [Psalm 110] and, unlike the Levitical priests, who were human, Christ's priesthood has no ending, as He has now ascended to heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father, ever making intercessions for us.

Since there is now a new order of priesthood, the author argued that the Jewish believers should also change their mindset on the Levitical laws because they merely pointed to the futility of trying to atone for our sins by our own works. Under the priesthood of Christ, believers have a hope of forgiven sins, and an everlasting life hereafter. This is only possible because Christ made a better sacrifice when He offered His own blood for the atonement of the sins of the world.

Let us consider today the significance of the blood of Christ that He has shed on the Cross for us. All the Old Testament sacrifices are but a shadow of Christ's final sacrifice. If you have not believed yet, come to Christ now for the forgiveness of sins that He had obtained for you.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

I CHRONICLES 3-4
HEBREWS 7

THOUGHT

But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. – Romans 5:8-9

BIBLE LESSON*Hebrews 8***LESSON****A new covenant from
God****VERSE 10**

*For this is the covenant that
I will make with the house
of Israel after those days,
saith the Lord; I will put my
laws into their mind, and
write them in their hearts:
and I will be to them a
God, and they shall be to
me a people.*

The Jewish priesthood is but a foreshadow of the office of Christ as eternal High Priest. In Old Testament times, it was the duty of every high priest to enter into the Holy of Holies once a year to offer the sacrificial blood of animals to atone, firstly, for his sins and then for the sins of the Jewish worshippers. In this manner, the high priest acted as the mediator between the people and God.

The writer then argues that Christ is the perfect Mediator because He offered not animal blood but His own blood as an atonement for the sins of the world. After He was raised from death, Christ ascended into heaven, the true holiest of holies, and is now making intercession for us as our High Priest. What a great assurance!

With Christ as High Priest, believers no longer need to offer animal sacrifices. Instead, the blood of Christ, which He offered up once on the Cross, is effective for the remission of all sins for all times. With this, God makes a new covenant with the house of Israel. He will put His laws into their minds and write them in their hearts.

This new covenant that God has made with the house of Israel was also extended to the Gentiles [Acts 10]. God not only made it possible for sinners to come to Him (by believing in Christ) but He also gives us the Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts, keeping us from being slaves to sin.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 5-6
HEBREWS 8**

THOUGHT

**Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might
not sin against Thee. – Psalm 119:11**

BIBLE LESSON*Hebrews 9***LESSON****The perfect Lamb of God****VERSE 28**

*So Christ was once offered
to bear the sins of many;
and unto them that look
for him shall he appear the
second time without sin
unto salvation.*

The writer of Hebrews continues to elaborate on the first covenant, in which the Levitical priesthood had a prescribed rite for every service in the Tabernacle. They had an earthly sanctuary where the rituals were to be performed. Of special significance is a special place in the Tabernacle called the Holy of Holies, where the high priest enters once a year to offer up sacrifices both for his sins and those of the people.

However, these were not perfect sacrifices because God had not revealed to them the true way to the Holy One. It was only revealed by Christ, when He came to the world to offer up His own blood for the atonement of the sins of this world. It was the intention of God all along to show through all these ordinances that the true way to approach Him is through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is the mediator between God and man. This office is uniquely His because no other person has been able to offer up the perfect sacrifice because we are all sinners. Christ came into this world, taking up the form of sinful flesh, and lived a perfect, sinless life. Therefore, only Christ can be the perfect Lamb of God, without any blemish.

Seeing that Christ has offered up Himself to atone for your sins, what is your response to this? Let us consider this seriously and come to the simple conclusion that there is a perfect way to reach heaven—by trusting our lives with Him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 7-8
HEBREWS 9

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we acknowledge that we are but wretched sinners, unable to save ourselves. Thank You for Your blood, which was shed on the Cross so that we who believe in You have eternal life.

BIBLE LESSON*Hebrews 10***LESSON****Encouraging and helping
one another****VERSE 24**

*And let us consider one
another to provoke unto
love and to good works.*

The first part of this chapter explains the permanence of Christ's sacrifice. As His once-for-all death has forever taken away all sins, there is no need for further sacrifices. The Law and the sacrifices are but shadows of the true redemption achieved through Christ's crucifixion. His perfect obedience to death accomplished the removal of sin and the perfection of sinners.

The second half explains that Christians now have complete access to God and they can draw nigh to Him. As a body of believers, Christians need to consider how to stir up one another to good works by congregating and through fellowship. Drawing nigh to God is important, as the believer's concern is faith [v. 22], hope [v. 23] and love [v. 24].

We may actually see a fourth concern in good deeds but it is important for us to note that the good deeds mentioned here are treated in the context of love. Christian love and good works are inseparable. Also, this should not be taken out of context to contradict Ephesians 2:8–9. Good works are actually the fruits of Christian love.

In times of peace, we often forget about God and lose our dependency on Him. This may even cause us to backslide, depriving ourselves of God's means of grace. Even though we are in the world, let us be different. Let us be grateful for what God has given us and grasp every opportunity to encourage one another in the Christian brotherhood while we await our Lord's return.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 9–10
HEBREWS 10

PRAYER

Lord, I pray that You will grant even me the courage to perform an act of love to my fellow brethren.

BIBLE LESSON

Hebrews 11

LESSON

What faith is

VERSE 6

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

This well-known chapter in the Book of Hebrews is about faith in action. The strong faith that Christians have in God can empower them to face the fiercest battles, confrontations and persecutions. The nature of faith is beautifully encapsulated [v. 1]. Faith is the evidence or conviction that enables us to perceive unseen things just as though they were there. We also see that faith receives God's approval.

However, faith is not the gift to see invisible and impossible things. Instead, it is the gift of seeing through all the haze of doubt and the pollution of sin. Faith is not about believing in something in spite of the lack of evidence. It is living a life for God in spite of trials and tribulations.

This chapter includes a list of men and women who had put their faith into action. Having faith would naturally lead to doing faith, as so great a cloud of witnesses has testified to us in the Bible. Throughout the examples quoted, we see people of God worshipping in faith (Abel), walking in faith (Enoch), obeying through faith (Noah), living a life of faith (Abraham) and trusting in the power of faith (Sarah). What manner of faith do you exhibit? Are you just having the faith (believing) but not acting it out (serving)?

Fret not if you discover that your faith does not lead to enough actions. There is room and time for change. Take up your cross today [Matthew 10:38; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23] and lead a faithful life.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 11-12
HEBREWS 11

PRAYER

Dear Lord, may my faith in You grow stronger each day.

BIBLE LESSON*Hebrews 12***LESSON****Receiving the faith with
gratefulness****VERSE 28**

*Wherefore we receiving a
kingdom which cannot be
moved, let us have grace,
whereby we may serve God
acceptably with reverence
and godly fear.*

This chapter exhorts believers to endure hardships, in the example of Jesus Christ and the benevolence of God. Jesus is also presented here as a Mediator of a new and better covenant. God not only calls but also admonishes us to put our faith to work, compassing us with a great cloud of witnesses [v. 1].

We are instructed to put aside every distraction and focus wholeheartedly on doing the work of God. Through our subjection in obedience despite suffering and trials, we build up courage and faith to face more trials [v. 12–13]. It is God’s intention that Christians should march into battle in full spiritual health and with great faith.

However, before we are able to do this, there is first the call to holiness [v. 14]. Holiness is available to Christians who come to Christ in faith and then strive for it wholeheartedly. In this quest for holiness, we are reminded to guard ourselves against the “root of bitterness”, which seeks to defile believers and keep them away from God.

The last part of this chapter talks about God shaking not only the earth but heaven as well. Only those things that are unshakeable will remain. All others will fall. Christians are called to be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, thus it is apt to constantly remind ourselves that we are members of this eternal kingdom. Our God is a consuming fire [v. 29] and we are to go to Him in reverence and awe.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

I CHRONICLES 13–14
HEBREWS 12

PRAYER

Lord, keep me unshakeable in my faith.

BIBLE LESSON

Hebrews 13

LESSON

A love-filled Christian

VERSE 1

Let brotherly love continue.

This chapter contains many exhortations. There is a call for Christians to love one another as brothers, to provide hospitality to strangers and to remember the imprisoned and the destitute [v. 1–3]. With faith, we must also aspire to do good works in love. Furthermore, we must honour marriage [v. 4], watch our conversation and be contented with what we have [v. 5].

We must remember our leaders who have authority over us in the same faith [v. 7]. This is sound advice to church members to obey the teachings of the leaders in Christ and to submit to their spiritual leadership. Spiritual leaders have a special responsibility and members have a duty to obey them so that their work will be a joy and not a burden [v. 17].

In summary, this chapter records for us the way we should behave towards others, towards ourselves, and towards God and our leaders. We know we must persevere to keep the faith, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, as this goes hand in hand with faith. Love one another in faith and wait for our coming Lord.

Are you living the Christian life? Do you love your brethren? Are you filled with a serving attitude or do you expect to be served? Only you yourself can work out the answers to these questions. Have a good conscience, live honestly and lead a life that is pleasing in the sight of the God of peace [v. 18–21].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 15–16
HEBREWS 13

PRAYER

Lord, help me to be a useful Christian and fill me with Your love.

BIBLE LESSON*James 1***LESSON****Count it all joy****VERSE 2**

*My brethren, count it all
joy when ye fall into divers
temptations.*

After his opening salutation, James instructs his recipients on how to conduct themselves under affliction and in every state of life. He teaches them not to impute their sins to God, but to themselves. He directs them in the hearing of the Word, and cautions them against self-deception in their professed faith.

These scattered Jewish Christians were placed in difficult circumstances and called to bear various persecutions on account of their faith in Christ. Their troubles were unique to their religion. Their trials were distinctly wayward influences upon them as temptations to heed apostasies from Christ's teachings. James exhorted them to count it all joy in adverse circumstances.

Can there be joy in trials? There can be if we give due weight to these considerations. It proves the genuineness of our faith. No trial ever comes to us by chance. Our Saviour calls us blessed when men shall revile and persecute us, and shall say all manner of evil against us falsely, for His sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven [Matthew 5:11–12a]. Trials assure us of God's interest in our higher, spiritual welfare. Trials produce the finer elements of Christian character, and the Christian may, and should, rejoice.

Mark this well. Every trial is a message from God—to prove and improve us. Trials are intended to make us think, to wean us from the world, to send us to the Bible, to drive us to our knees. (J. C. Ryle)

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 17
JAMES 1

THOUGHT

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. – 1 Peter 1:7

BIBLE LESSON*James 2***LESSON****Faith that saves and
works that serve****VERSE 14**

*What doth it profit, my
brethren, though a man say
he hath faith, and have not
works? can faith save him?*

In this chapter, James condemns a sinful regarding of the rich, and of despising the poor—an act he imputes to partiality and injustice, and one that is contrary to God's will. He exposes the error and folly of those who boast of faith without works, telling them that this is but a dead faith—one that devils have, not the faith of Abraham or Rahab.

In the early Church, there were the deceived and the self-deceived. Some were carried into the Christian profession on passing waves of emotion, and when that fervour died down, so did their professed faith. Others were convinced of Christ's claim but did not come to a personal saving faith in Him. Intellectual belief is not bound to bear fruit of godly living but saving faith does. The faith that binds to Christ binds to the service of Christ.

The faith that saves and the works that serve are linked indissolubly together. A man who shows his faith by his works need not make profession, for the works will make all the profession that is needed. But the man who shows his faith only by his profession will find his profession is altogether a worthless thing to himself, to others and to God.

Let us be warned against the delusive notion that it is enough for men to have religious emotions, to use religious language, to have religious knowledge and to profess religious belief without the habitual practice of religious duties and the daily devotion of a religious life.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 18
JAMES 2

THOUGHT

He that is without faith is without works; and he that is without works is without faith. – C. H. Spurgeon

BIBLE LESSON*James 3***LESSON****Heavenly wisdom****VERSE 17**

*But the wisdom that is
from above is first pure,
then peaceable, gentle, and
easy to be intreated, full
of mercy and good fruits,
without partiality, and
without hypocrisy.*

In this chapter, James warns against unwise ambition, cautions against censoriousness, and reproves those with an arrogant, magisterial tongue. He advises his readers to bridle the tongue and guard against its vices. He shows the excellence of heavenly wisdom in opposition to that which is worldly.

It was customary for persons held in good esteem or claiming to be rabbis to take upon themselves the liberty to give public exhortations or expositions in the religious Jewish assembly. While this custom was helpful and valuable, it also opened a way for evil. It proved difficult to keep unsuitable people from giving public exhortations or instructions.

James recognised these would-be teachers who set themselves up in the Jewish Christian church, claiming a superiority of wisdom and knowledge, and teaching based on such claims. He presented to them the characteristics of a true Christian teacher, showing them that the excellence of wisdom was from above, imparted by communion with God, and putting it in contrast with everything that was earthly, sensual or devilish [v. 15]. It is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality or hypocrisy.

It is our wisdom to be clothed by wisdom that is from above. Note that wisdom is always living wisdom. It will no doubt find its sphere in the management of our own body, mind, temper and passions, and in the relationships and associations of life. It will make a peculiarly gracious character in the likeness of Christ.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 19
JAMES 3**

THOUGHT

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. – Proverbs 4:7

BIBLE LESSON*James 4***LESSON****The sin of omission****VERSE 17**

*Therefore to him that
knoweth to do good, and
doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

From contrasting the wisdom from above with that which is from beneath, James then goes directly to show the effect of the “wisdom which descendeth not from above”, as evinced in the spirit of this world. Accordingly, he illustrates the effects of the wisdom of this world by showing what it produces, or what they who are under its influence can do. He closes with an affirmation that to him that knows how to do good and does it not, to him it is sin.

James counselled his readers on the responsibility of their acquired knowledge and the guilt of it if they do not act upon what they know to be good. It is a greater sin and an aggravated one. It is criminal to him who is ignorant of what is good and does that which is evil. He will not escape judgement. But it is much more wicked for a man who knows what is right and good, and ought to be done, and does it not. His condemnation will be greater. This is the sin of omission.

The highest privilege conferred on a mortal, besides that of securing the salvation of his own soul, is that of doing good to others. It is universally true that if a man knows what is right, and does not do it, he is guilty of sin. If a man does not do this when he has the means, he sins against his own soul, against humanity and against his Maker.

Let us so take heed.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 20
JAMES 4

THOUGHT

We learn to do evil by failing to do good.

BIBLE LESSON*James 5***LESSON****The poverty of riches****VERSE 1**

*Go to now, ye rich men,
weep and howl for your
miseries that shall come
upon you.*

In this chapter, James reproved the vices of rich men and pronounced the judgements of God upon them. He exhorted those who were suffering under these wrongs to exercise patience and encouraged them with the hope that the Lord would come. He referred to the case of those who were sick and afflicted among them, and directed them in what to do. In closing the epistle, he adverted to the possibility that some among them might err from the truth, and urged the duty of endeavouring to convert such ones.

In his address to rich men, James sent a severe message of condemnation to those who were persecuting the members of the Church, rebuking them on their pride. These men were proud of their riches, centred in their riches and nothing else.

It is not wrong to be rich. Wealth is a trust from God, to be used in His ministries, as with any talent. But riches may be misused. We may trust in riches instead of God. They may take the soul's confidence from God and spoil a man's relation with his fellow men. Riches may also seriously deteriorate a man's personal character because of his compromise.

Because riches can easily entice, persuade and tempt, it is necessary to point out a side of poverty that is associated even with great riches. Note that riches can drown men in destruction and perdition [1 Timothy 6:9].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 21
JAMES 5

THOUGHT

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. – Revelation 3:17

BIBLE LESSON*1 Peter 1***LESSON****Gird up the loins of your mind****VERSE 13**

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Though the first epistle of Peter was written to the persecuted saints, it serves as good encouragement to Christians today. He starts by identifying the recipients, reminding them of their predestined election and sanctification [v. 2], before encouraging them to be strong and hopeful for the glory of God [v. 3–12] and exhorting them to stay devoted to Christ [v. 13–25]

Like saints of old, we, too, have a lively hope [v. 3] and an incorruptible inheritance [v. 4] in Christ. Though we face manifold temptations [v. 6], the trial of our faith cannot be compared to the glory at the second coming of our Saviour [v. 7].

Though we have not seen Christ, we believe in Him and rejoice in unspeakable joy [v. 8]. What elation it will be if we see Him face to face one day! From now until His glorious return, let us therefore “gird up the loins of our mind” (which means to “prepare our mind for action”), be sober and obedient, separating ourselves from our former lusts [v. 13–14], and be holy for God is holy [v. 16].

Are you growing in Christ? Do you sojourn in this transient world with a reverential fear for God [v. 17]? Are you constantly aware that you are redeemed with a great price [v. 18–19]? Are you thus obeying the truth and loving your brethren with a pure heart [v. 22]? Everything in this world will soon pass away. Only the Word of God will live, abide and endure forever [v. 24–25].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

I CHRONICLES 22–23
I PETER I

THOUGHT

Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. – Philippians 1:6

BIBLE LESSON*1 Peter 2***LESSON****A peculiar people****VERSE 12**

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Peter continues with his exhortation to the suffering Christians. He begins by telling them to lay aside all malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy and evil speech [v. 1], and desire for godly teachings [v. 2–3]. He uses the analogy of a precious “living stone”, which was rejected by men but chosen by God, to portray Christ and encourage the saints to be “lively stones” [v. 4–8], a holy nation and a peculiar people delivered out of darkness into God’s marvellous light [v. 9–10]. He further beseeches them to live as servants of God [v. 11–17] and follow the example of the suffering Christ [v. 18–25].

What stands out in this chapter is Peter’s call for the persecuted saints to endure suffering, with the hope that by this very act, the evildoers will marvel at the wonderful testimonies of the Christians, even in the day of the Lord’s second coming [v. 12]. As free agents, we are given choices. But as God’s children, we should check our liberty against our Christian conscience [v. 16].

Are you under persecution? Are you facing pressure—especially from people who have power over you—to do things that are against your Christian convictions?

Learn from Christ, Who withstood wrongful suffering and endured grief because His conscience was towards God [v. 19]. He neither sinned nor used guile in defiance [v. 22]. He did not revile or threaten in return but committed Himself to the righteous judgement of the Lord [v. 23].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

I CHRONICLES 24–25
I PETER 2

THOUGHT

Read Deuteronomy 26:18–19.

BIBLE LESSON*1 Peter 3***LESSON****Not rendering evil for evil****VERSE 16**

Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

After explaining how a Christian should live as servants of God, especially towards authorities, Peter next talks about the relationship between wives and husbands [v. 1–7] before addressing the Christian ethical principle in general [v. 8–12]. He then covers the importance of maintaining a good conscience when we are suffering [v. 13–17] and explains how the profession of our faith is the answer to our conscience towards God [v. 18–22].

The theme of not seeking vengeance keeps surfacing in this epistle because Peter was then writing to Christians under persecution. Man's sinful nature is such that whenever we suffer injustice, there is almost an immediate tendency for us to retaliate and make people suffer for the pain they have caused us. But Peter sees the dangers involved in this. He beseeches his people not to render evil for evil but to respond with blessings, for this is what we are called to do [v. 9].

This precious principle is very much associated with the virtue of meekness. Wives should submit to their husbands with a meek and quiet spirit [v. 4] and husbands should cherish and protect their wives as weaker vessels [v. 7]. Towards others, we should maintain good testimonies instead of allowing them the excuse to falsely accuse us of evildoing [v. 16–17].

Even when defending our faith, we should also remember God in our hearts and do so with much meekness and fear [v. 15], lest we, in our eagerness to apologise, cause others to stumble.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

I CHRONICLES 26
I PETER 3

THOUGHT

But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. – Psalm 37:11

BIBLE LESSON

1 Peter 4

LESSON

**Good stewards of God's
grace**

VERSE 10

*As every man hath received
the gift, even so minister
the same one to another,
as good stewards of the
manifold grace of God.*

Towards the end of his epistle, Peter reminds Christians to stay away from the lust of men and stay attuned to the will of God [v. 2], be sober and watchful unto prayer [v. 7] and, above all things, esteem charity and hospitality [v. 8–9], speaking and ministering as of the measure of ability God has graciously given to us [v. 10–11]. He also repeats his call for Christians to rejoice in suffering and commit everything to our faithful Creator [v. 12–19].

These teachings are apparently foreign to worldly people [v. 4] and strange to Christians new to the faith [v. 12] but the truth is, when a saint suffers for Christ, he is actually glorifying God and should thus be happy [v. 14, 16]. “For the time is come that judgement must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” [v. 17]

Indeed, as Christians, we should thank God for His grace towards us. No doubt we should expect “fiery trial” [v. 12] to come our way but with every temptation, God will surely provide sufficient grace for us to overcome it.

It is interesting to note that the word “manifold” occurs twice in this epistle [1 Peter 1:6; 4:10], referring to temptations and the other to grace.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 27
I PETER 4

THOUGHT

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. – 1 Corinthians 10:13

BIBLE LESSON

1 Peter 5

LESSON

Look up!

VERSE 7

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Peter closes the epistle by addressing another set of social relations: the one between a church elder and a younger member. An exemplary spiritual leader of the church should feed his flock willingly and not for material gain, overseeing God's work but not lording over His sheep [v. 2–3]. Conversely, a younger member of the church should submit humbly to an elder [v. 5].

We are to humble ourselves before God [v. 6], casting our worries upon Him [v. 7] and, at the same time, watching out for the devil [v. 8]. Peter then reiterates his core message to the people. After they have suffered a while, God would surely strengthen and complete them [v. 10].

There are many things we can learn from this precious epistle. The most important doctrine is the need for us to fear and trust the Lord. No matter what position we find ourselves in life, employers or employees, wives or husbands, elders or youths, facing friends or enemies, we are to measure our behaviour against our Christian conscience. Humility is the key; fear of God is the commandment. Bearing these in mind, we commit everything to the Lord.

Like the early Christians, there are bound to be times when we are down and out. You may face discouragement in your walk and even persecution for your faith. In moments like this, check yourself against what Peter has taught us over these few days. Look up and cast all your cares upon the Lord, for He cares for you.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

I CHRONICLES 28–29
I PETER 5

THOUGHT

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. – Romans 8:18

BIBLE LESSON

2 Peter 1

LESSON

**Pursuit of Christian
character**

VERSE 5

*And beside this, giving
all diligence, add to your
faith virtue; and to virtue
knowledge;*

Ignorance is the opposite of knowledge. Scripture instructs us that the cure for ignorance is the knowledge of God and knowledge from God. It is scriptural knowledge—or true knowledge. This is the knowledge that protects the believer from false teachings. This knowledge is also the means by which grace and peace are multiplied to us. Everything pertaining to life and godliness is granted to us through the knowledge of Him Who called us. Knowledge is one of the virtues the Christian should diligently pursue.

The knowledge of which Peter writes is the knowledge of God, as taught by the revealed Word of God. It is doctrinal knowledge. The maturing Christian is marked by his increase in such knowledge.

However, it is not the most knowledgeable Christian but the wisest Christian who sees and avoids Satan's snares. What would it profit you if you don't have the love of God even if you know the whole Scripture by heart? Knowledge informs love, promoting godly living. Godly instruction leads to love. Knowledge of God leads to intimate fellowship with God.

Are you growing in your knowledge of Christ? Do you know more of Him today than when you first believed? Is your walk with Him more intimate now? Is there evidence of continued growth in your life? Our God is infinite and our knowledge of Him in this life can never be complete. We should be constantly growing as we feast on His Word and fellowship with other believers.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 1
2 PETER 1

THOUGHT

Are you growing colder in your Christian life as you get older?

BIBLE LESSON

2 Peter 2

LESSON

Certainty of deliverance and destruction

VERSE 9

*The Lord knoweth how
to deliver the godly out of
temptations, and to reserve
the unjust unto the day of
judgement to be punished.*

If God doomed the disobedient angels, destroyed the ancient world of Noah, and turned the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes, does He not know how to deliver the wicked to judgement? And if God spared Noah and Lot and their families, does this not show us that God knows how to deliver the righteous from temptation and how to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the Day of Judgement?

God is able to save the righteous even when they are living in a most unrighteous environment. God's character and His dealings with men do not change. The way God dealt with sinners and saints in ancient times is a pattern for the way in which He deals with men throughout time and eternity. Old Testament history is therefore directly relevant to us and to our times. How different is our society from those that were doomed? The difference, if any, is not great. Does this mean that divine judgement is imminent for us? Yes. The only ones who disagree with this are false teachers.

We live in a society that is ripe for judgement. We can see and hear the evidence of corruption and violence of our time but we need not succumb to it. God's grace is such that we will not only be able to escape from temptation but we will actually loathe it.

Practise righteousness and proclaim the good news of the Gospel to a condemned people who will face God's eternal wrath. This is our calling.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 2
2 PETER 2

THOUGHT

Is holiness measured in terms of the distance we put between the world and ourselves?

BIBLE LESSON

2 Peter 3

LESSON

Keep on growing

VERSE 18

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Every Christian desires to grow and mature in this or her walk with Christ. But our desire does not always match our practice. Some people have been Christians for a long time but have grown little spiritually, while others have been Christians for a short time and have grown much spiritually.

Your commitment to growth is what matters, not the amount of time you have been a Christian. Spiritual maturity is measured by the calendar. Some think that they have grown spiritually if they are serving in church. They assume that if they are busy, they must be growing spiritually. Others believe that because they have prospered materially, they have earned God's favour. If they possess much, they think that God has blessed them because they have been wonderful Christians. God may have blessed them but that is not necessarily an indication that they are spiritually matured.

Spiritual growth is not something mystical, sentimental or psychological. It is not the result of some secret formula. Spiritual growth is simply matching your practice with your position in Christ.

Your position in Christ is perfect. You have righteousness from God [Romans 1:17]. You are complete in Christ [Colossians 2:10]. You have all things that pertain to life and godliness [2 Peter 1:3]. You have all spiritual blessings in Christ [Ephesians 1:3]. But now you need to make progress so that your practice moves towards your position in Christ. And it is a lifelong journey.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 3-4
2 PETER 3

THOUGHT

Spiritual growth progresses from knowing you are a Christian to knowing the Word of God and, eventually, to knowing God Himself deeply.

BIBLE LESSON

1 John 1–2

LESSON

God in real flesh and blood

1 JOHN 1:3

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Jesus is as real as any person whom you meet today. He came in the flesh as the second Person in the Trinity (God the Son). He was a physical being, Who had been seen by the eyes and touched with the hands of those who were with Him. He had normal human emotions and feelings. He was subjected to temptation but He did not sin. In fact, He cannot sin, as He is also God.

John and the other disciples have seen Jesus and they could not keep quiet. They wanted to share their encounters with all of us. The same should apply to us. We should invite others to experience eternal life through the One Who was with the Father but came down to earth to be with us.

God is pure Light and those who have Jesus in their hearts live in this light. We have an intimate relationship with God and thus we should not grope in the dark. If we are struggling in the dark, then we are lying about our faith and not living according to the truth.

We are to walk in step with this Light. Though we have sinned, the blood of Jesus purifies us and makes us sinless before God if we confess our sins before Him. Don't fool yourself by thinking that you have no sin. Do not love this corrupt world and what it offers. All the glitter and shine of this world will pass away. Only God is eternal.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 5–6
1 JOHN 1–2

THOUGHT

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.
– 1 John 2:17

BIBLE LESSON

1 John 3–4

LESSON

Loving one another

I JOHN 4:11

*Beloved, if God so loved us,
we ought also to love one
another.*

God calls us His children. But the world does not acknowledge God, so they don't recognise us. Though we live in this sinful world and are subjected to sin, we will be like Jesus when He appears. As His children, we focus our hope in Jesus and His coming again.

We have heard and read many times that it is God Who first loved us. We are only reciprocating this wondrous love. It is easy to love God or a person who first loves us. However we are told to love our brethren, of whom some do not love us.

One who hates one's brethren is considered a murderer [1 John 3:15]. If we are unwilling to share our blessings with our brethren who are in need, is it possible for us to love God? If we are unable to love our brethren whom we see every day, how do we love God, Whom we cannot see with our eyes? Love is not just a theory for discussion. It must be put into practice. Make it part of your life and live in the pattern of gracious love.

We are also warned not to be over zealous in believing anyone who proclaims the likeness of God. We are to examine their teachings carefully to determine if they come from God because this corrupt world is filled with many false prophets. Test them to see if they teach and confess the truth that Jesus is God and come to us in human flesh.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 7
I JOHN 3-4

THOUGHT

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. – 1 John 4:7

BIBLE LESSON*1 John 5***LESSON****Loving and trusting God****VERSE 2**

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

Anyone who trusts in Jesus as his Saviour is His child and anyone who loves the Father cannot help but love the children fathered by Him. To love God is to keep His commandments. The theme throughout the Bible is one of obedience and love. We are to obey God's Word, which commands us to love Him and our brethren.

To love God is to keep His commandments. As God's children, He gives us strength to overcome this corrupt world. This is the victory that has conquered the world—our faith in Him.

Jesus is the One Who has conquered the world. He came by water and blood. The Spirit of God testifies to this truth because the Spirit is truth. The testimony of God is greater than any person. He certifies the truth about His own Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. God has given us the gift of eternal life and this life is Jesus. If you have the Son of God, you have eternal life. If you do not acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God and your Saviour, you make God a liar. It is logical then that those who don't have Jesus don't have eternal life.

When we have Jesus, we live in confidence that God hears us when we pray. He listens to our prayers. There is no need to put your confidence in anyone else. Anyone or anything that we turn to in replacement of God is an idol. Stay away from idols.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 8
1 JOHN 5

THOUGHT

Be watchful, trust God above all else. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen." – 1 John 5:21

BIBLE LESSON*2 John***LESSON****Fulfilling the law****VERSE 6**

And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” [John 13:34–35].

This commandment to love one another was new to the disciples of Jesus then. However, it was only new by way of emphasis. It has existed from everlasting to everlasting as love is always one of God’s eternal attributes. “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” [1 John 4:16b]. The command to love your neighbour as yourself is also found early in the Word [Leviticus 19:18].

The religious leaders of the day, the Pharisees, misrepresented the teaching of Scripture and the intent of God. Jesus brought home the point when He explained that the foundational commandment of Scripture is love—loving God with all of our faculties and loving our neighbours as ourselves [Matthew 22:37–40]. The Apostle John reminds us not to just pay lip service to the truth and being obedient to God’s commandment, but to walk in the truth and practise what the Word of God teaches—avoiding prejudice, not being judgemental, accepting people, being helpful and giving, listening and serving.

True religion according to Christ is to be concerned with the important aspects of the law—justice, mercy and faith—and to love your neighbour.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 9
2 JOHN

THOUGHT

Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. – Romans 13:8

BIBLE LESSON*3 John***LESSON****The true prosperity
gospel****VERSE 2**

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

Gaius was a convert from the ministry of the Apostle John. He was commended by John for his attachment to the truth and for the kindness he had shown to the members of his own church as well as to strangers who had gone forth to do works of charity [v. 3–8].

In the days of the early church, travelling preachers and missionaries were shown hospitality on their way by people like Gaius, who housed them and provided food for them. Gaius might well have been a well-to-do merchant and had used his money wisely for the furtherance of God’s kingdom.

God blesses a cheerful giver. Whenever we have the opportunity to show kindness or generosity to God’s servants, count it a blessing from the Lord. He has given us a chance to give. Indeed, it is more blessed to give than to receive. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” [Isaiah 52:7]. Furthermore, any good deed done in the name of Christ never goes unnoticed. “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again” [Proverbs 19:17].

Surely it is the most wise who say that those who are generous in giving away what God has blessed them will in return be abundantly blessed by God both spiritually and materially.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 10
3 JOHN

THOUGHT

I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. – Psalm 37:25

BIBLE LESSON

Jude

LESSON

On guard against false teaching

VERSE 4

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The aim of Jude's letter is to establish believers in the Christian faith, both in doctrine and in practice. Jude implied that there was a defined body of doctrines in the ancient church to which all true Christians followed—a system of teaching that made it possible for one to distinguish an evangelical Christian from a liberal Christian.

We must treat with careful discernment any teachings against the Christian faith that we believe and propagate, profess in, and contend for. We must always check if it is not anything of a later date than the inspired writings of the prophets, evangelists and apostles.

In almost every church and in every age, there had been ungodly people who were great enemies of the faith of Christ and the peace of the church. They exerted a corrupting influence and upset the peace and harmony of the church. They would subtly or blatantly question doctrines that were passed down, and frequently raise moral arguments merely to advance and promote their own agenda. For example, they would abuse the doctrines of grace so as to give indulgence to their corrupt and sexual lusts. Paul foresaw such abuse and earnestly sought to guard the Christians of his time [Romans 6:1–18].

Ungodly people are like those whom God rescued from Egypt but were rejected by Him because of their unfaithfulness [v. 5]. Their purpose in life is to follow their ungodly desires because they do not have God's Spirit in them.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 11
JUDE

PRAYER

Father in heaven, grant me the wisdom to discern between right and wrong, and to be careful of false teachings that can lead Your sheep away from their fold.

BIBLE LESSON*Revelation 1***LESSON****Knowing Christ through
His own revelation****VERSE 8**

*I am Alpha and Omega, the
beginning and the ending,
saith the Lord, which is,
and which was, and which
is to come, the Almighty.*

Many Christians regard the Book of Revelation as a mystical book with symbols and imageries. They find the significance of it hard to understand and therefore it is often avoided. In so doing, they actually forfeit the blessings that the author pronounces on those who not only read but also hear and keep it [v. 3].

As the “Revelation of Jesus Christ” [v. 1], it concerns the Person and works of Jesus Christ, Who is ascribed many titles about Who He is and what He will do throughout the book. He is called the “Alpha and Omega” [v. 8, 11], which are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. It denotes Christ’s eternality and implies His divinity. He is considered “the ruler of the kings of the earth”, making Him sovereign over all affairs of the world.

When Christ first came to earth, He was shamefully treated. Now He is highly exalted. He unveils, in part, His glorious and majestic personality [v. 13–16]. He is no longer the meek Lamb to be despised but the Lion of Judah to be feared. People must now stand in awe and wonder of Him.

What do you think of Christ? You must determine in your own heart what you will do in response to Him Who is none other than the King of kings and Lord of lords. May we worship and serve only Christ our Lord [Matthew 4:10]!

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 12-13
REVELATION 1**

PRAYER

O Lord, we praise Thee for Who You are and all that You will do for Your people for Your own sake.

BIBLE LESSON

Revelation 2

LESSON

Naked before Christ

VERSE 19

*I know thy works, and
charity, and service, and
faith, and thy patience, and
thy works; and the last to
be more than the first.*

This chapter opens with an honest look into the spiritual life of the seven churches in Asia Minor that existed in the time of John. The majority of these churches were rebuked for their sins; only two were commended by the omniscient Lord. Note these features in the letters: Christ Himself, His commendation, His censure, His commandment and His counsel.

Clearly, these letters are designed to impress upon us how deeply the Head of the Church is intimately acquainted with all that we do, whether they are good or bad [v. 2, 9, 13, 19]. He has perfect knowledge of His church. No amount of good works can camouflage the fatal faults within. Therefore, He is eminently qualified to dispense reward or administer punishment according to truth and justice.

Like any good doctor, the Great Physician prescribes cures for any diseases that need immediate attention [v. 5, 16, 25]. The Saviour desires for each and every Christian to do well and be an overcomer, instead of being a victim to the onslaught of the devil and the world's system [v. 7, 11, 17, 26]. At the end of our earthly sojourn, we will be welcomed by Him and will enjoy the fruits of our labour.

How well do you fare in the record book of God? Will you be commended or censured when you see the Lord face to face? Remember, there is no hiding from Him, for everything is known to Him from the beginning to the end. It is best to come clean before Him [Psalm 66:18].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 14-15
REVELATION 2

PRAYER

O Lord, search and know me and see if there is any wicked thing in me. Purge it from me and make me pure for Your Name's sake.

BIBLE LESSON*Revelation 3***LESSON****The need to examine
yourself daily****VERSE 4**

*Thou hast a few names
even in Sardis which have
not defiled their garments;
and they shall walk with
me in white: for they are
worthy.*

Everything seemed normal and yet, death was in the air [v. 1]. It is obvious that the Sardis church was dead, with spiritual decay having set in. Most of the worshippers were just playing church, which had become more like a monument and a museum than a living testimony for the Lord.

What went wrong with this church, which some even believed to be founded by the Apostle Paul? Even though it was not clearly described what actually happened, here are some suggestions. A church is likely to be spiritually dead (no matter how active it looks outwardly) when: (a) it is more concerned with liturgical forms of worship than spiritual reality; (b) it is more interested to heal the social ills of the world than to preach the Gospel; (c) it is more concerned for material than spiritual things; and (d) it seeks the praise of men more than the approval of God.

But even here in this worldly church, God had His remnant [v. 4]. He noted a few sincere believers among the masses of hypocrites, a few humble servants among the proud professors and a few separated saints among a worldly throng. They were a few stalks of wheat among the tares.

We need to constantly check our walk with God in the light of His Word to see if we are spiritually well. Heed the exhortation: “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die” [v. 2a]!

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 16
REVELATION 3**

PRAYER

**O Lord, have mercy upon me and grant that I
may have the grace to confess my sins before You
and return to You wholeheartedly.**

BIBLE LESSON*Revelation 4***LESSON****The purpose of our
existence****VERSE 11**

*Thou art worthy, O Lord,
to receive glory and honour
and power: for thou hast
created all things, and for
thy pleasure they are and
were created.*

The chapter opens with a new vision of a dramatic scene—a scene of heaven. By now, believers would have been raptured and reunited with Christ and their loved ones before the reign of the Antichrist and the subsequent judgement of God on the world. These are momentous events during the Tribulation period, which will occur before the Second Coming of our Lord.

The focus now shifts to the throne—mentioned 11 times here—which captures our attention most of all. All eyes are affixed on it, especially on the One Who sits on the throne [v. 2–4]. No one can ignore such a wonderful sight, which no word can fully describe the wonder of it all. The writer John, who had the privilege to be admitted into this throne room, could only use precious stones and colours to shed some lights on this most glorious and worthy Person.

The immediate response of the residents there is one of highest praise and loudest hallelujahs. Amidst the sight and sound of the lightning and thunder, they do not seem to be terrified, but are only filled with awe, reverence and adoration [v. 5–11].

We are created and now redeemed for higher and better things and for the most worthy Person of all. He is well deserving of our all, and may we be so ready to render to Him that which is due unto Him now.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 17
REVELATION 4**

PRAYER

**O Lord God, who is like unto Thee so glorious
and majestic! Thou art worthy to be praised and
served forevermore!**

BIBLE LESSON

Revelation 5

LESSON

**Universal worship of the
Lamb of God**

VERSE 12

*Saying with a loud voice,
Worthy is the Lamb that
was slain to receive power,
and riches, and wisdom,
and strength, and honour,
and glory, and blessing.*

The Lord Jesus Christ is the central theme of the Book of Revelation. He is described as the Lamb that was slain. It is to be noted that this imagery of Christ was mentioned only once in the Old Testament [Isaiah 53:7] and four times in other parts of the New Testament. In Revelation, He appears as the Lamb 31 times!

This is significant because He is no longer a meek Lamb that was subjected to the harsh treatment of wicked men and demons. Slain and bearing the wounds that were inflicted on Him, He has triumphed over His enemies once and for all. There is none on earth and in heaven who has fully satisfied the demands of the Holy God. He alone can take what is rightfully His as the Lion of Judea and rule the world with absolute power [v. 5–6].

Upon receiving the scroll, all angelic hosts and the redeemed of the Lord break forth with a song of exaltation and joy [v. 7–12]. The whole creation joins in, too. Satan, sin and death are soon defeated at His return as the King of kings and Lord of lords. And this must certainly be the long anticipated outcome of the saints of every age and nation. His kingdom where righteousness will reign will be established.

We are assured that the day will come when our Lord and Saviour will receive His own into His presence and we will forever live and reign with Him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 18
REVELATION 5

PRAYER

Even so Lord Jesus, come quickly!

BIBLE LESSON*Revelation 6***LESSON****The wrath of God on the world****VERSE 17**

For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

This is the beginning of the terrifying manifestation of the wrath of the Lamb of God on those who remained on earth—the tribulation period (which our Lord spoke about) that will come upon this unbelieving world [Matthew 24:21]. But before this final showdown, there will be a brief period of world peace, as signified by the first seal [v. 2]. However, it is a false peace brokered by the Antichrist to deceive people.

The second seal brings an abrupt end to the world's celebration of peace and harmony [v. 3–4]. Peace will be forcefully taken away to make way for God's judgement of worldwide conflict. Nation will rise against nation and there will be widespread animosity. Everything will crumble under the leadership of the Antichrist. However, the true Ruler, Jesus Christ, will thwart his every attempt to usurp power.

What comes next is a logical consequence of the outbreak of any war and famine [v. 5–6]. When natural resources are destroyed, food supplies will run short. People will die of starvation. There will not be enough food to feed the entire world. These events mark the beginning of sorrows. Many more will be coming upon those who hate God [v. 12]. Many unbelievers will rather have rocks and mountains come crushing on them than face this angry God.

It is a fearful thing to be an unbeliever without the protection of God in your life. The Saviour, Jesus Christ, can be your refuge today!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 19
REVELATION 6

PRAYER

O God, thank You for delivering me out of the horrible pit of Your judgement.

BIBLE LESSON

Revelation 7

LESSON

**Complete rest at the end
of our journey on earth**

VERSE 17

*For the Lamb which is in
the midst of the throne shall
feed them, and shall lead
them unto living fountains
of waters: and God shall
wipe away all tears from
their eyes.*

God has given power to angelic beings to create havoc on this wicked world but with a clear command not to harm the environment as yet. The reason was also given: “till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads” [v. 3]. Obviously, God cares more for His chosen people than saving the earth. These are far more precious than the grass of the fields and the birds in the air.

These 144,000 Jewish missionaries will be sent out to preach the gospel of Christ one last time [Revelation 14:6–7], with the resultant prize of a redeemed Israel, plus innumerable Gentile converts [v. 9]. This is in line with God’s promise that He will bless the nations through Abraham’s descendants.

Even as the great Tribulation and the impending judgement of God loom ahead, John was pleasantly surprised when he was presented with an innumerable company of people in heaven. This mass of humanity comes from every culture, race, language and nation. Evidently, they have turned to God during this period and have now passed into His immediate presence through death. They are identified as those who have come out of tribulation [v. 14].

Their heavenly state will be one of complete peace and rest from all the chaos in the world. They shall be comforted and be forever satisfied by the Lamb, Who is now in their midst. What a relief for those who labour and suffer now for the cause of Christ in this transient world!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 20
REVELATION 7

PRAYER

**O God, grant me the courage and boldness to do
Your work now on earth and when it is done, take
me home to be with You.**

BIBLE LESSON*Revelation 8***LESSON****Responding to our cry for help****VERSE 4**

And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

It is truly striking to observe in this new scene, in view of what have been happening in heaven with all the praising and singing of the innumerable hosts, that there is now a complete silence for a space of half an hour. There is often a lull period before a great storm, or a few moments of calm before the most devastating tsunami.

The first four trumpets may well signify natural calamities that God will use in His judgement against those who oppress His people. However, only a third of everything seems to be affected. This suggests that the purpose of these judgements is to warn people, giving them time to repent before God's full wrath is unleashed. While the first four trumpets appear to be bad enough, the worst is yet to come.

The sounding of the seven trumpets and the things that follow appear to be God's response to the prayers of His saints [v. 2–6; 6:9–11]. These are undoubtedly the cries of believers against their persecutors and all God-haters. It is reminiscent of what Jesus taught in His parable of the persistent widow: “And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?” [Luke 18:7] As expected, their prayers will be heard and answered by God accordingly.

We should be confident whenever we call upon the Lord. He will act on our behalf to vindicate us before our enemies. Let His will be done.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 21–22
REVELATION 8

PRAYER

Gracious heavenly Father, I thank You, for Your ears are ever open to my prayers and Thy hands ready to help.

BIBLE LESSON*Revelation 9***LESSON****The results of hardening
our hearts against God****VERSE 20**

*And the rest of the men
which were not killed by
these plagues yet repented
not of the works of their
hands, that they should not
worship devils, and idols of
gold, and silver, and brass,
and stone, and of wood:
which neither can see, nor
hear, nor walk.*

While the destruction caused by the previous judgements is devastating, the remaining will have far worse effects. The pronouncement of woes spells terrifying disasters for the earth. Man has to make a conscious choice as to whom he will follow. God has graciously given man opportunities to repent and call upon Him for salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan, on the other hand, lures man to his own destruction by placing before them the pleasures of sin, which are for a season.

As such, there is no place for neutrality in the spiritual spheres. One is either sealed by God to indicate he belongs to God or bears the mark of the devil. God will commission fiery creatures to inflict severe pain on those who do not have God's mark of ownership and protection on their foreheads [Revelation 7:3–8]. Normally, locusts consume vegetation but these creatures will afflict humans.

These suffering people will seek death but they will not be able to escape their painful experiences. They will long for death rather than repent. Apparently, they have rejected all offers of grace and mercy, and now they will only see more judgement as God will have them come upon all sinful mankind. Tragically, they will still want to worship the devil instead of the true living God.

This behaviour of man only shows how blind and evil they are when they are in the grips of Satan and sin.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 23
REVELATION 9

PRAYER

**O Lord, how I praise You for allowing me to taste
Your mercies and not Your wrath!**

BIBLE LESSON*Revelation 10***LESSON****The message for lost souls****VERSE 10**

And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

Before the final trumpet sounds, there is an interlude [Revelation 6 & 16], moments of respite for the people of God in the midst of His fury. God is still in control of every situation and event unfolding before their very eyes. He has not forgotten them even though they are enduring the assaults of Satan, the Antichrist and the hostile world.

The appearance of a strong angel with outstanding descriptions of his outward glory and power could well signal something spectacular in the economy of God. Even his loud proclamation reflects the authority that he has from God. What follows caught the attention of John. As he was about to record this incident, he was forbidden to do so. This matter must remain a mystery as God has chosen not to reveal it [Daniel 12:9; 2 Corinthians 12:4].

Instead of having John write down the utterances of the seven thunders, he was commissioned to preach what had already been revealed. These truths would be even more relevant and profitable to everyone. What is more important to us than to understand the great need to share the Word of God for the salvation of precious souls? This is exactly what God desires to see in us.

We are grateful for the record of John in Revelation. At the same time, we are reminded of our evangelistic obligations to warn the present world of that dreadful day to come.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 24
REVELATION 10**

PRAYER

O Lord, let me know Your will and Your Word so that I may be Your faithful witness.

BIBLE LESSON

Revelation 11

LESSON

**The high price for
preaching the truth**

VERSE 10

*And they that dwell upon
the earth shall rejoice over
them, and make merry,
and shall send gifts one to
another; because these two
prophets tormented them
that dwelt on the earth.*

In the history of the world, God had always raised His faithful servants to proclaim the truth to the people in the world. During the dark days in the last period of three-and-a-half of the seven years of the Great Tribulation, there is no exception. Even when the world is at its worst state and evil reigns supreme, God will not be silent without a witness.

Here, not one but two powerful messengers come to bear witness to the works of God, especially the ongoing and impending judgement [v. 3–4]. They will testify to the world that these sufferings are sent by God and that man has to repent of his evil ways. Because of their fearless preaching, they will be hated by the majority of the people [v. 10]. As a result, many will desire to harm them but God will protect them until their work on earth is done [v. 7]. They will be invulnerable and unstoppable for the duration of their ministry.

Truly, our lives are in the hands of God, Who does not fail to preserve us from our innumerable enemies—seen or unseen. We are involved in the mission of rescuing sinners from the pit of hell, snatching them as firebrands out of the fire.

He has promised us His divine presence until the end of the world [Matthew 28:20]. And like these faithful servants who remain true to their calling until the day the Lord comes, we should also endeavour to finish our tasks on earth.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 25
REVELATION 11

PRAYER

O Almighty God, I thank You for the privilege and honour to testify for You in this sin-worn world.

BIBLE LESSON
Revelation 12

LESSON
War in heaven

VERSE 7

*And there was war in
heaven: Michael and his
angels fought against the
dragon; and the dragon
fought and his angels,*

Chapters 12–14 constitute a distinct unit in the Book of Revelation. From Revelation 12, the scene shifts from God’s judgement on earth to heaven. John begins by mentioning two wonders in heaven [v. 1, 3]. The first sign was that of a woman “travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered”. The second sign was that of a great red dragon [v. 4]. The woman is Israel, from whom would come the Messiah [v. 5]. The dragon is none other than Satan. Here, the enmity between the seed of the woman and the serpent [Genesis 3:15] will come to an end.

The war in heaven [v. 7] is not a new war. It started in heaven, where Lucifer, moved by pride, led one third of the angels to rebel against God [v. 4]. Satan, aspiring to be like God and supplanting His authority, became the very opposite of God.

Since that first rebellion in heaven, there has been a war between Satan and his demons against God. Paul warns: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” [Ephesians 6:12].

The final battle will culminate in heaven and Christ will defeat Satan [1 Corinthians 15:57; Romans 8:37; Hebrews 2:14]. God’s people are overcomers “by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony” [v. 11]. There is a twin sword—the Living Word and the Written Word—that assures us of our victory in and through Christ. Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 26
REVELATION 12

THOUGHT

The victory is ours through our Lord Jesus Christ. Christian, do not live like a loser.

BIBLE LESSON*Revelation 13***LESSON****Patience and faith of the saints****VERSE 10**

He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

John now introduces two more figures to this celestial battle. Together with the dragon, they form the unholy alliance. The beast that comes “out of the sea” [v. 1] is believed to be the Antichrist [1 John 4; Daniel 7–8]. John also mentions a second beast [v. 11], the word “another” implying that the two beasts will be similar in nature. Although this second beast is not as grotesque as the first, they are equally deceptive. One spoke great things [v. 5] and the other did great wonders [v. 13]. Great will be their deception and their deviousness against God’s people [v. 6–8; 13–17].

The target of this trio will be God’s people. Hence, there is a great need for spiritual understanding in face of persecution. The phrase “if any man have an ear, let him hear” [v. 9] is always used to emphasise an important truth. Here, it is used to state the expectation and reality of persecution—even death—of some believers under the Antichrist’s tyranny.

However, this is all part of God’s sovereign plan and believers are told not to resist the Antichrist. Christians are to be like Christ, Who “when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not” [1 Peter 2:23a]. Like Christ, Christians will be victorious in Him because “in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us” [Romans 8:37].

This promise is the hope of Christians and the reality of this blessed hope sweetens the trials of life.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 27
REVELATION 13

THOUGHT

Your faith in Christ erases the fear of hell.
“Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator” [1 Peter 4:19].

BIBLE LESSON*Revelation 14***LESSON****The everlasting Gospel****VERSE 6**

*And I saw another angel
fly in the midst of heaven,
having the everlasting
gospel to preach unto them
that dwell on the earth,
and to every nation, and
kindred, and tongue, and
people,*

We find here God's answer to the wickedness of those who are bent on destroying His people. As in Chapters 12 and 13, John directs our attention to heaven, where he saw the Lamb and the 144,000 faithful witnesses [Revelation 7:4]. They are exemplary in their faith [v. 1]. They kept themselves undefiled and in communion with Christ [v. 4]. They were pure in word and deed [v. 5]. Besides the testimony of the 144,000, John "saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth" [v. 6].

The Gospel has been described in various ways. It is the gospel of the kingdom [Matthew 4:23], of Jesus Christ [Mark 1:1], of God [Romans 1:1], of the grace of God [Acts 20:24] and of peace [Ephesians 6:15]. It is also the glorious Gospel [1 Timothy 1:11].

The Gospel message is unique because the Christ of the Gospel is unique. Paul defines it by the death and resurrection of the Christ, who "died for our sins ... was buried, and ... rose again the third day according to the scriptures" [1 Corinthians 15:3–4].

The gospel is relevant because it is the good news of salvation. For this reason, Paul declares, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" [Romans 1:16a]. In the last days—just before God's final judgement—the Gospel will be preached.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 28
REVELATION 14**

THOUGHT

Preach the Gospel! Say "with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgement is come" [v. 7a]. There is an undeniable urgency in our day.

BIBLE LESSON*Revelation 15***LESSON****The wrath of God****VERSE 1**

*And I saw another sign
in heaven, great and
marvellous, seven angels
having the seven last
plagues; for in them is filled
up the wrath of God.*

The contents of this shortest chapter in the Book of Revelation are terrifying. John was given another sign from heaven: seven angels having the seven last plagues—the wrath of God [v. 1].

The wrath of God is not new to mankind. Since the fall of Adam, because of the wickedness of the people, God has visited His people from time to time with His wrath. He destroyed the world by a cataclysmic flood [Genesis 6]. He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah [Genesis 19]. He destroyed the enemies of Israel. He used the enemies as instruments of judgement for Israel’s sinfulness. The prophets had continually warned the people of the Day of the LORD—the day of God’s judgement [Isaiah 13:6–9; Joel 1:15; Zephaniah 1:14–18].

The wrath of God here refers to the final judgement. John refers to them as the “seven last plagues” [v. 1b]. These will be the last because they were preceded by the trumpet and seal judgements. These will also be the last in severity because in them “is filled up the wrath of God” [v. 1c]—in them the extent of the wrath of God will be finished.

The irony here is that the presentation of God’s wrath is accompanied by a song of victory—the song of Moses [v. 3–4; Exodus 15]. This song celebrates God’s victory over the beast [v. 2]. It is a song of praise and deliverance. It is the anthem of saving grace in Christ!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 29
REVELATION 15

THOUGHT**Come, fear the Lord, glorify and worship Him!**

BIBLE LESSON*Revelation 16***LESSON****The mark of the Beast****VERSE 2**

And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

Chapters 15 and 16 provide the specific details concerning the final outpouring of God's judgement; what the former introduces, the latter specifies. This chapter brings a devastating message to those who do not know Christ as their Saviour.

Seven judgements—the last in a series of three—are presented. These will be the final expression of God's wrath on sin. The seven judgements come one after another rapidly, leaving no time for anyone to breathe. The effects of the judgements are also cumulative. Before one can get over the devastation of the first bowl, the second one hits, and so on.

The severity of God's judgements is necessitated by the severity of the people's rebellion against Him. The vial judgements will be preceded by the seal and trumpet judgements. Despite the two earlier judgements, man's heart will become even more hardened against God. Thus we read that when the seven vials were poured out, the people "blasphemed God" [v. 21].

Such is the wickedness of the human heart that in the face of God's judgements, defiance still reigns. Such is man's depravity that it cannot be removed by his own deeds but only by grace in Christ Jesus. This is the message of Christmas. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" [Isaiah 1:18].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 30
REVELATION 16

THOUGHT

Do not bear the mark of the beast. Bear the mark of Christ instead. Read Galatians 6:17.

BIBLE LESSON
Revelation 17

LESSON

The overcoming Lamb

VERSE 14

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Following the seven-vial judgements [Revelation 16], Christ will return [Revelation 19]. The chapters in between represent a break in the eschatological record, describing the nature and the destruction of the world system of the Antichrist. Attention is now directed away from God's judgement to the nature of what is being judged. This chapter describes the spiritual nature of the Antichrist's kingdom.

The kingdom of the Antichrist is primarily a spiritual one. He will establish a worldwide false religion: "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" [v. 5]. The story of Babylon began with the Tower of Babel [Genesis 11]. It was the place where men first attempted to organise themselves against God. The Babylon here is synonymous with rebellion, not a place. It is known as Babylon the Great because of the extent of the Antichrist's kingdom.

This kingdom is also known as the Mother of Harlots. Harlotry (spiritual adultery) is a metaphor for false religion [Isaiah 1:21; Nahum 3:1, 4], which will dominate the world. It is the mother of harlots because it spawns all falsehood and apostasy. The extent of its influence will be universal because she is said to commit fornication with the kings and the inhabitants of the earth [v. 2].

The objective of the Antichrist [v. 11] and his cohorts is to wage a war against the Lamb. The outcome of the battle is known. The Lamb and all who are with Him will overcome. We are more than conquerors through our Lord Jesus Christ [Romans 8:37].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 31
REVELATION 17

THOUGHT

Without Christ, we will be overwhelmed. In Christ, we will overcome. Read 1 John 5:4–5.

BIBLE LESSON*Revelation 18***LESSON****The one-hour judgement****VERSE 19**

And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

Throughout mankind's history, man has always sought to build his own empire, devise and worship his own gods. The Antichrist, knowing man's propensity for self-worship, has set up a religious and commercial system that will cause the people to rebel against God but the Lord "will speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure" [Psalm 2:2–5].

This is the final episode of God's judgement on the Antichrist and his kingdom—a bastion of spiritual and moral wickedness characterised by demonic and immoral activity [v. 2–3]. The influence of the Antichrist is pervasive, as "all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" [v. 3a].

John heard two voices. The first is ominous. "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen" [v. 2a, Revelation 14:8]. Babylon will be reduced to rubble together with her pride and arrogance [v. 10, 19], all in the space of one hour. God's judgement will be as severe as it is short.

The second voice is a warning. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" [v. 4]. This is a call to God's people to separate themselves from the Antichrist and his dominion. In the Old Testament, the prophets fled from the Chaldeans [Isaiah 48:20; Jeremiah 50:8; 51:6]. In the New Testament, Paul sounds a similar warning, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate ... and touch not the unclean thing" [2 Corinthians 6:17].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 32
REVELATION 18

THOUGHT

Pray for your unbelieving friends. The call for repentance must be the loudest and most urgent to those who are closest to destruction.

BIBLE LESSON*Revelation 19***LESSON****The Marriage Supper of
the Lamb****VERSE 9**

*And he saith unto me,
Write, Blessed are they
which are called unto the
marriage supper of the
Lamb. And he saith unto
me, These are the true
sayings of God.*

So far, the writings have been warning us about God's judgement on the earth and its horrific devastation [Revelation 18:9–11; 15–19]. The scene now shifts to heaven, where there is joy unspeakable.

The first words that John heard were “Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God” [v. 1]. Alleluia is a transliteration of the Hebrew phrase “halal” [to praise] and “Yah” [God]. The alleluias will ring out for several times. God is to be praised for His righteous judgement of the wicked [v. 2]. God is to be praised because the Satanic rebellion has been put down [v. 3]. God is to be praised “for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” [v. 6]. The rejoicing in heaven will culminate in the marriage supper of the Lamb [v. 7–10].

A Jewish wedding has three phases: the betrothal between the two families; followed by the presentation when the bride and groom formally meet each other; and the actual ceremony and marriage supper. The relationship between believers and our Lord Jesus Christ is compared to such a marriage. First, God the Father promised His Son, and chose the people who will be His bride. The betrothal is the rapture. The last phase is the final union between Christ and His Church.

The Church—which has been imperfect—is now ready [v. 7]. She will be dressed resplendently “in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” [v. 8]. Finally, the Church will be like her Christ!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 33
REVELATION 19

THOUGHT

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” [1 John 3:2]. Are you ready to meet Christ?

BIBLE LESSON
Revelation 20

LESSON

The first resurrection

VERSE 6

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Imagine a place where every word is true, every deed is just and good, and every thought is pure, where peace prevails and joy abounds, and every need is met. This is the millennial kingdom of Christ, as described in the last three chapters of Revelation.

While Christians may differ on the exact nature of the millennium, one indisputable fact is that it will be a glorious age for believers—those who “had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands” [v. 4]. These will be the ones who have the first resurrection and who “shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” [v. 6]

The first resurrection will be a resurrection of believers. It is also known by several names: the “resurrection of the just” [Luke 14:14; Acts 24:15], the “resurrection of life” [John 5:29] and the “better resurrection” [Hebrews 11:35]. There are also people who will not be resurrected until the thousand years are up [v. 5]. Those who are not part of the first resurrection will have a part in the second death [v. 6]. The second death is the “lake of fire” [v. 14], which will be the outcome of those whose names are not written in the book of life [v. 15].

But “blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection ... they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” [v. 6].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 34
REVELATION 20

THOUGHT

Either one is of the first resurrection or the second death. Which are you?

BIBLE LESSON*Revelation 21***LESSON****All things new****VERSE 5**

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

John saw “a new heaven and a new earth” [v. 1; Isaiah 65:17; 66:22]. The word “new” has a qualitative reference. It not only describes something new in terms of time but also something new in terms of quality. This is a better “new”.

What are the “new” qualities? First, the new heaven and the new earth will be different because there will be “no more sea” [v. 1]. What a change from this present earth, which is three quarters covered by water. The human body is made up of 65 percent of water. Blood is 90 percent water. The water cycle, which is vital to present life, is redundant in the new earth. The life-giving principle in the new earth will be totally different. Second, there will be a new quality of life. “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying ...” [v. 4–5].

Think of the best place on earth, one with the best quality of life. Are there tears, pain and death there? Life in the new heaven and the new earth will be that much different—no tears, pain or death. Death will have been cast into the lake of fire [Revelation 20:14]. There will be no more sorrow or crying because there will be no disappointments. There will be no more pain because the mortal have put on immortality” [1 Corinthians 15:53].

What a blessed hope for God’s people.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 35
REVELATION 21**

THOUGHT**Heaven is whatever earth is not.**

BIBLE LESSON*Revelation 22***LESSON****Behold! I come quickly****VERSE 7**

*Behold, I come quickly:
blessed is he that keepeth
the sayings of the prophecy
of this book.*

The last 16 verses [v. 6–21] of the last chapter of the Bible constitute the epilogue of Revelation. John has brought us through the last days—God’s final judgement of the earth. Now we get a glimpse of the glorious coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Behold” is a summons to look with anticipation. “I come” or “I am coming” indicates that the coming of our Lord Jesus is imminent—the question is “when.” Christ will come as expected but He will come unexpectedly. “Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not” [Luke 12:40], “as a thief in the night” [1 Thessalonians 5:2]. There is also a sense of urgency.

The promise of our Lord’s coming is a promise of blessing to those who will give heart to these words: “Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book” [v. 7b]. This is a call for God’s people to long for heaven while we live on the earth. This book is not intended for Christians to delve into the mysteries that God has kept for Himself. Neither should it be used as a basis for political analysis or as an explanation for current trends.

If Revelation is to be relevant at all, it must be this: the future reality that we know in the book must have a present impact on our lives now. Revelation is the motivation for Christians to “live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” [Titus 2:12].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 36
REVELATION 22

THOUGHT

One year is over, and one year—one day—nearer the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” [v. 20b].

