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# DAILY *manna*

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GENERAL EDITOR

Rev Isaac Ong

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*Daily devotions for reading through the Bible*

Dear *Daily Manna* readers,

*Genesis* is a book of beginnings. In it, we have the record of creation, the beginning of sin, the first murder, and from then on, human life is on the decline. Paul reminds us that men “shall wax worse and worse” [2 Timothy 3:13]. We certainly see the decline in our study of *Genesis*. However, in the darkness of human depravity, we also see the light of God’s mercy. Our Lord Jesus says, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” [John 8:12]. Look for that Light. Search the Scriptures for the Light that is Christ. Keep on reading the Bible.

Let me also encourage you to write in with your comments as to how we may improve *Daily Manna* (email: [calvary@singnet.com.sg](mailto:calvary@singnet.com.sg)). Parents, we want to remind you that *DM Junior* is also available for your children.

### ***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 Old Testament with the aim of giving you a more in-depth study of the OT 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

*Genesis 31:17–21*

## LESSON

**The flight from Laban**

## VERSE 19

*And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's.*

As we read the account of how Jacob quietly took all his possessions and fled with his family while Laban was in the fields, some questions arise concerning the ‘images’ that Rachel had stolen from her father. What were these ‘images’ and why did Rachel steal them?

Little is known about ‘household idols’ (*teraphim* in Hebrew) but they generally served two purposes. The first is divination and fortune telling. Laban referred to them as his ‘gods’ [v. 30]. He probably placed them in his house for protection and to increase the substance thereof, as well as consult them regarding future events. Secondly, these *teraphim* satisfied the sinful desire of man to have a physical representation of God. Jeroboam, the first king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, set up two calves of gold at Bethel and Dan to prevent his people from going to Jerusalem to worship God. He told them, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” [1 Kings 12:28b].

A third reason could be that she simply wanted the precious metal in these idols, having felt that Laban owed her and Jacob’s family much. This was equally sinful, as God had warned that “thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee” [Deuteronomy 7:25]. Whatever the reason, it was wrong for Rachel to steal them.

While most Christians do not worship idols of stone and wood, the idols of the self—self-gratification, self-interest, self-confidence, self-pity—are in the eyes of God no less abominable than the household idols of Laban.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 1**  
**PSALMS 126–128**

## REMINDER

**Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. – Exodus 20:4**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 31:22–35***LESSON****Pursuing Jacob****VERSE 23**

*And he took his brethren  
with him, and pursued  
after him seven days'  
journey; and they overtook  
him in the mount Gilead.*

After a furious chase, Laban caught up with Jacob and confronted him with two questions. The first question: “Why did you sneak away without giving me a chance to say farewell and giving you a proper sending off?” What Laban was really angry about was that he did not have a chance to persuade, trick or even coerce Jacob into continuing to serve him and be exploited by him.

Knowing his real motives, Jacob answered, “Because I was afraid; for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me.” In other words, he feared that Laban would become desperate and force him to stay by refusing to let his daughters leave with him.

Laban’s second question: “Why have you stolen my gods?” At this accusation, Jacob became furious. Jacob had spent 20 years serving Laban, during which time he laboured hard and endured a number of humiliations. In the end, he learnt that Laban’s sons were speaking poorly of him, and noticed that Laban’s attitude towards him had also changed. When he finally left, he took only his own possessions and the livestock he had acquired in Padan-aram [Genesis 31:18].

Not knowing that Rachel had stolen Laban’s idols, he pronounced a curse that whoever may be found with the *teraphim* should die. One has to wonder if this could be the cause of Rachel’s death during her next childbirth [Genesis 35:16–20]. She was the only matriarch not interred in Machpelah, the gravesite of the other matriarchs and patriarchs.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 2**  
**PSALMS 129–131**

**THOUGHT**

**It is not wise to be too confident in the goodness of those connected with us.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 31:36–42***LESSON****Confronting Laban****VERSE 36**

*And Jacob was wrath,  
and chode with Laban:  
and Jacob answered and  
said to Laban, What is  
my trespass? What is my  
sin, that thou hast so hotly  
pursued after me?*

Now it was Jacob's turn to be angry. Often, we read in the newspapers of court cases where the aggrieved party would say at the end of the trial, "I just want to put everything behind me and get on with my life." Perhaps this was what Jacob had felt when he decided to sneak away quietly without his father-in-law's knowledge. Of course, he probably also wanted to avoid a confrontation just like the one in the last lesson. But faced with the unjust accusations and feigned indignation of the man who had cheated, exploited and abused him for two decades, he finally 'let it all out', so to speak.

Those must have been 20 very long years—he mentioned it twice—for Jacob, the supplanter and the man who did not hesitate to cheat his own twin brother of the latter's birthright.

Behind these events, we can see God's sovereign hand at work, moulding His chosen vessel for His great plan of salvation for fallen mankind. As the lyrics of a well-known hymn go, "God never moves without purpose or plan, when trying His servant and moulding a man."

Another lesson Christians who have undergone unjust treatment should learn from today's reading is that vengeance belongs unto the Lord, as He will recompense and He will judge [Hebrews 10:30]. Jacob had not taken anything that rightfully belonged to Laban, only what God had given him. Hence, he could confidently say to Laban, "God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight."

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 3**  
**PSALMS 132–134**

**REMINDER**

**Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. – Romans 12:19**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 31:43–55***LESSON****The parting covenant****VERSE 44**

*Now therefore come thou,  
let us make a covenant, I  
and thou; and let it be for  
a witness between me and  
thee.*

Solomon was right when he said that a fool was full of words [Ecclesiastes 10:14]. Failing to incriminate Jacob and overwhelmed by the force of Jacob's self-defence, and no doubt mindful of God's warning, Laban could only propose an expedient covenant to avoid further trouble, to which Jacob readily agreed.

It is interesting to contrast the two men's approach to this covenant. Laban prefaced his lengthy speech with another sample of vain boasting and affected generosity while Jacob was mostly reticent.

To Laban, the covenant was a guarantee for the future. It meant that Jacob would not treat Rachel and Leah badly now that their father would no longer be present to protect them. It was a gratuitous insult. Laban had no grounds for such thought. Jacob had always loved Rachel and treated Leah with courtesy. Jacob was not allowed to take any more wives. This was another insult because the only wife that Jacob had ever desired was Rachel. That he had Leah and others was Laban's fault, not his. Laban called the pillar, "the heap of witness" and Mizpah. He called on Jacob's God, as though Jacob was the one who needed watching to keep him from returning to find trouble with Laban.

Jacob made no reply to Laban's boasting. He chose to focus on God and "offered sacrifice upon the mount". He obviously thanked God for delivering him from "the house of bondage" and bringing him to "the promised land" without fear of being hounded by his wicked father-in-law.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 4**  
**PSALMS 135–136**

**THOUGHT**

**In any covenant or oath, God is the One to whom men are ultimately accountable.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 32:1–5***LESSON****Meeting God's angels****VERSE 2**

*And when Jacob saw them,  
he said, This is God's host:  
and he called the name of  
that place Mahanaim.*

This vision came at a crisis in Jacob's life. He had just escaped from the persecutions of his father-in-law, and was now expecting to meet with a fiercer enemy in his brother. All was dread and anxiety as he led his 'camp' with a long caravan, consisting of wives, children, servants, and all his wealth turned into cattle, on the lonely road back to Canaan.

Just then, he met a second camp comprising God's angels, prompting him to name the place 'Mahanaim', which meant 'two camps'.

We are not told what these angels looked like but if they were anything like those that Elisha's servant saw at Dothan [2 Kings 6:17], then Jacob need not fear what lay ahead. Jacob's God, who is the same yesterday, today and forever, had protected him from Laban, and will likewise protect him from Esau. Nevertheless, Jacob humbled himself and sent messengers to his brother to seek for peace and favour. They were to give a report on how much God had blessed him those past 20 years.

On the road of life, Christians will face fears and dangers. But if the road you travel is the one God has set before you, then even if it brings you through the valley of the shadow of death, you need fear no evil because God, Who sent His host to meet Jacob, Who was with Daniel in the lion's den, and Who walked with Daniel's three friends in the fiery furnace, is the same God Who will be with you.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 5**  
**PSALMS 137–138**

**SONG**

**And the path that is my portion, May be through  
the flame or flood; But His presence goes before  
me, And I'm covered with His blood. – Ira Forest  
Stanphill**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 32:6–8***LESSON****Preparing to meet Esau****VERSE 7**

*Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands;*

**U**nbelief is deeply entrenched in the human heart. As soon as Jacob heard that his brother was approaching with 400 men, fear gripped his heart and he forgot all about the unseen host that marched with him in the spirit world. And back he went to his scheming ways.

Assuming the very worst, Jacob divided his company into two divisions. His thought was that while one group might be attacked, the other had a chance to escape. Since the group was divided into two camps and the word for camp is the same as that of verse 2, it is possible that Jacob somehow concluded that his encounter with the angels was intended to provide him with a pattern for this decision to divide into two companies. He was forced to consider the agonising question of who he should be willing to lose first. In the end, he placed nearest to danger those he cared for least.

That was Jacob's weakness, and it could well be ours. In the face of peril, we forget the hymns that we often sing, declaring our trust in God. We often add "I do trust you Lord, but ..." Jacob's dilemma is often ours as well. His fear of his brother was the direct consequence of his sin—the sin that embittered his whole life.

When we sin, we have to live with the consequences, and that often robs us of the peace that our Lord so graciously gives us [John 14:27].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 6**  
**PSALM 139**

**THOUGHT**

**What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee. –  
Psalm 56:3**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Genesis 32:9–12*

**LESSON**  
**Jacob's prayer**

**VERSE 9**

*And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee.*

Matthew Henry wrote: “Times of fear should be times of prayer; whatever causes fear, should drive us to our knees, to our God.” This was exactly what Jacob did in his time of desperation. And Jacob’s prayer is a beautiful model for us to emulate if we are ever in such a similar situation.

Jacob’s prayer consisted of four parts. First, Jacob reminded God that he was in his present situation because he had obeyed God’s commandment to return to his country and that God had promised to “deal well” with him. Then he humbly confessed that he was not worthy of all the favours that God had showered on him these past 20 years. Thirdly, he pleaded for God’s protection, stating plainly his fears of the violence of Esau. Finally, he claimed God’s promise: “I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.”

There are many similar prayers by the man of God in the Bible that we can study and learn from concerning how a Christian should pray. The objective of our prayers should not just be for God to deliver us but that God’s name should be glorified.

Thus, King Hezekiah’s prayer for deliverance from annihilation by Sennacherib’s army in 2 Kings 19 ended this way: “Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.”

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
 IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 7**  
**PSALMS 140–141**

**THOUGHT**

**And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee: for Thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee. – Psalm 9:10**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 32:13–23***LESSON****A present for Esau****VERSE 20**

*And say ye moreover,  
Behold, thy servant Jacob  
is behind us. For he said, I  
will appease him with the  
present that goeth before  
me, and afterward I will see  
his face; peradventure he  
will accept of me.*

Jacob has not seen Esau for more than 20 years. After Jacob deceived Isaac of Esau's birthright, he ran away because Esau vowed to kill him [Genesis 27:41]. God would have blessed Jacob but Jacob was impatient to wait and had instead wanted to get his blessing through deceit.

There is no joy for one who obtained blessings this way. "And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul" [Psalm 106:15]. The Psalmist says that if we insist on having our way, we may seem to have received what we wanted. However, we cannot find joy because it is not in the will of God. And thus we will have leanness (no joy) instead of fat (joy).

Jacob knew what he did to Esau was wrong. He learnt his lesson the hard way, too. He had worked for Laban for 20 years and had been deceived several times because he wanted Rachel. Smart as he was in outwitting Esau, he was no match for Laban in deceit. Jacob paid for his lessons dearly. Yet God allowed him to be moulded for bigger responsibilities and duties.

Jacob was repentant and intended to speak peace. He presented a large amount of his animals to his brother. This was to appease Esau so as to ask for forgiveness for the wrongs that he had done. He was eager for reconciliation with his brother.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 8**  
**PSALMS 142–143**

**THOUGHT**

**Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.**  
– Galatians 6:7

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 32:24–27***LESSON****Please bless me****VERSE 26**

*And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*

Jacob was waiting tensely for daybreak to meet Esau. Would his brother forgive him or would he carry out his promise to kill him? In the least expected moment of the night, a man came to wrestle with Jacob. They wrestled the whole night. Jacob was in the midst of his wives, children and all his servants. No one warned him that a man was approaching his tent. What a surprise! Jacob knew this man was not an ordinary person. Indeed, he was the Angel, a theophany—a manifestation of God Himself.

Note how God dealt with Jacob. He touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh. One touch that rendered Jacob helpless. Jacob was really no match for the Angel. This was not a match between equals. But Jacob clung on to the Angel and refused to let go. Jacob acknowledged that he depended on the Angel to bless him.

The word 'bless' denotes a favourable relationship between the one who blesses and the one who receives the blessing. This favourable relationship then becomes the ground for all transactions between the two parties.

In this case, however, the relationship was skewed against Jacob. He had just lost the wrestling match. He could bring nothing to this relationship. He had nothing to offer. All he could offer was a plea for mercy. The relationship between Jacob and God is a picture of our relationship with God. The hymn writer says, "Just I am without one plea but that [Christ's] blood was shed for me." That is the one plea that will open the door of heaven.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 9**  
**PSALM 144**

**THOUGHT**

**A sinner's cry of mercy will move the Saviour's heart. "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee" [Psalm 86:5].**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 32:28–32***LESSON****From Jacob to Israel****VERSE 28**

*And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.*

Jacob was to be the father of nations, first being the father of the 12 chosen tribes. An appropriate name would be needed. He begged God for blessings and the Angel granted his wish. He then changed his name to 'Israel'.

Jacob means 'schemer' or 'trickster' (he cheated his brother, Esau), whereas Israel means 'a prince who has power with God and with men; one who has prevailed with God'. The order was that first Jacob prevailed with God, and then he was ready to prevail with Esau. We have to remember this sequence in dealing with our spiritual life.

Jacob had named places wherever he went. When he fled for his life, he named the place where he saw the ladder to heaven 'Bethel'. He called the place where he saw the host of God 'Mahanaim'. He named the stone of witness 'Galeed' and 'Mizpah' at the place where he made an agreement with Laban. This place, where he saw the "face of God", was named 'Peniel'. Now his own name was changed. It would be a memory forever in his life because he now limped as his thigh had been injured.

As we go through life, there will be Peniels too in our lives—landmarks that have special significance for us. For Jacob, he left Peniel with a limp. For us, it may be a scar of some sort—physical or emotional. But note also that Jacob "passed over Peniel" [v. 32]. He moved on by the grace of God and the assurance of divine blessing. Likewise, we must all press forward. Do not dwell at a Peniel experience. By God's grace, press on for Christ!

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 10**  
**PSALM 145**

**THOUGHT**

**Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. –  
Philippians 3:13b–14**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Genesis 33:1–16*

**LESSON**  
**Meeting Esau**

**VERSE 4**

*And Esau ran to meet him,  
and embraced him, and fell  
on his neck, and kissed him:  
and they wept.*

To Jacob's pleasant surprise, Esau accepted the gifts reluctantly, as he was now a wealthy man. They had a tearful reunion and were reconciled. They were twins and would have been very close to each other growing up. Sin (the deceit of Jacob) separated them and changed love to hatred. Jacob deceived his father Isaac into giving him the birthright though he was the younger of the two.

Despite all that had happened, Esau was human. He loved his brother enough that he forgave him, as he noted the sincerity of Jacob in preparing a gift of more than 550 animals. On the other hand, Jacob acknowledged his sin and asked for forgiveness. Notice that Jacob instructed his family and servants to address Esau as 'my lord'.

This is a picture of the Gospel. We have all sinned and there is nothing we can hide from God. He knows each of our sins. We need to come before God in confession to seek forgiveness. We cannot sacrifice enough to redeem ourselves. We need Jesus to act on our behalf. Jesus had to die for our sins (sins that Jesus could not and did not commit) as the perfect sacrifice. For this reason, we can be reconciled with God, Who forgives us of all our trespasses.

God is far more magnanimous than any man. When you come sincerely before Him and acknowledge your sins, He will forgive you. He has already accepted the gift, our Lord Jesus Christ.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 11**  
**PSALMS 146–147**

**THOUGHT**

**Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. – 1 John 4:10**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 33:17–20***LESSON****An altar called El-elohe-Israel****VERSE 20***And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel.*

Whatever we may perceive of Jacob's character, we should have noticed that he was a man who remembered and was grateful to God. Before anything else, he erected an altar so that he and his family members would not forget the deliverance and providence of God.

The action of setting up altars had been done since the time of Abraham, who did a good job inculcating this to his future generations. Our children do not necessarily follow what we say but they will certainly imitate what we do. How is your testimony as a parent or a more matured person? Do your deeds glorify God? Jacob—now called Israel—followed a good example of remembering God.

Jacob named this place El-elohe-Israel, which means 'God, the God of Israel'. Soon Jacob would realise that he would head a great nation, just as God had promised. Man cannot destroy Israel because it has been specially blessed and set aside. Why does God not bless other nations, as he had pledged to do to Israel despite all the sins that the Israelites have committed? We should thank God that He blesses us in spite of our sins. If He only blesses the obedient ones, there would be none to bless, for we have all sinned and come short of His glory.

By His grace, God extends His blessing to those who may not be born Israelites. He considers all those who trust in Him and accept Jesus as their Saviour to be His children. He allows us to call Him Abba, Father.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOSHUA 12**  
**PSALM 148**

**THOUGHT**

**And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. – Galatians 4:6**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Genesis 34:1–12*

**LESSON**  
**Dinah defiled**

**VERSE 2**

*And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.*

Jacob had seven children through his marriage with Leah. They were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun and Dinah. Sadly, while living in Shalem where Jacob bought a piece of land from Hamor, Dinah was raped by Hamor's son, Shechem. We may go all the way to say that parents are answerable for their children's behaviour, for God has given us the responsibility to teach our children. Are there lessons for us to learn here?

We read that after this episode, Shechem pestered his father, Hamor, to negotiate with Jacob for the hand of Dinah in marriage. If Shechem had loved Dinah enough to take her as his wife, why did he defile her before marriage? There is a difference between love and lust. Love always acts in the best interest of the other person. Lust is motivated by selfishness.

Perhaps Shechem had been living a life where he always got what he wanted. He was used to doing things his way, often putting self above all else. Sadly, it appeared that Shechem was not corrected. Instead, his father gave in to him and offered Jacob a dowry for the proposed marriage. It is not always in the best interest of parents to give in to children. It might be a matter of responsibility for Shechem to marry Dinah but he needed to be punished for his wilful behaviour. For children, insisting on your way by doing things to pressurise your parents is not correct.

God has shown to us that He will not tolerate sin. It is because of our sins that Jesus had to die.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
 IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 13**  
**PSALMS 149-150**

**THOUGHT**

**Let all things be done decently and in order. – 1 Corinthians 14:40**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 34:13–24***LESSON****The brothers’  
requirement****VERSE 13**

*And the sons of Jacob  
answered Shechem  
and Hamor his father  
deceitfully, and said,  
because he had defiled  
Dinah their sister.*

Obviously, Dinah’s family was extremely angry. When Hamor approached Jacob, he could have asked for a punishment for Shechem but he had asked for the opinion of his sons. His grandfather Abraham had taken great pains to make sure that Isaac did not marry the heathen. Jacob’s mother also made quite sure that he married the daughters of Laban. God specifically instructed that there should be no inter-marriages.

Jacob nevertheless agreed to the marriage. However, his sons demanded all the males under Hamor to undergo circumcision. Attracted by the wealth of Jacob, they all agreed [v. 23]. They were greedy, hoping to share Jacob’s wealth.

Outward proclamation to trust Jesus does not make one a Christian. We may do things and perform acts to show off our faith but God differentiates a true believer by his inward acceptance of Christ as his or her Saviour. We can deceive man but God is able to set aside the wheat and the tares. True repentance from the heart determines our outward actions. Outward behaviour does not affect the heart.

Hamor, Shechem and all their men were heathen and had never been instructed to turn to God. Had Jacob’s sons truly wanted to ‘convert’ them, they would have explained their practices and worship of the true and living God to them instead of just asking for them to be circumcised. As we shall read later, Jacob’s sons had a sinister motive in mind.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 14**  
**ACTS 1**

**THOUGHT**

**But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. – Romans 6:17**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 34:25–31***LESSON****The brothers' revenge****VERSE 27**

*The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister.*

The saying goes that one sin leads to another. The sin of Shechem was bad enough. He and his people were now weakened as they recovered from the circumcision. Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, could have objected to the marriage between Shechem and Dinah. Instead they took this opportunity to slay the males after their circumcision when they were too weak to fight back. This was a blow below the belt (in the terms of the sport of boxing). This was deceit and pre-meditated mass murder.

The sons objected to the marriage in their hearts but they concealed a trap to kill. As though this was not enough, they took the women and all their belongings. This was murder plus robbery. They justified their actions by the fact that their sister Dinah was defiled. They were worse than the heathen.

Some believers, by their conduct, prove that they are no better than those whom they criticise and pass judgement. When the sons of Jacob took the matter into their own hands, they made matters worse. Only God has the right to exact judgement. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" [Romans 12:19b].

Pray for God's grace to leave the injustices that we have suffered in the hands of God. He knows. And He will vindicate. "For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" [Ecclesiastes 12:14].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 15**  
**ACTS 2**

**THOUGHT**

**Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. – Romans 12:19**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 35:1–5***LESSON****God speaking to Jacob****VERSE 1**

*And God said unto Jacob,  
Arise, go up to Bethel, and  
dwell there: and make there  
an altar unto God, that  
appeared unto thee when  
thou fleddest from the face  
of Esau thy brother.*

This passage gives an account of Jacob's journey to Bethel, and building an altar there by the order and direction of God.

After the slaughter of the Shechemites by his sons, Jacob was in great distress, not knowing which course to steer for the safety of his family. God, for his comfort and direction, appeared and spoke to him, and reminded him of his vow at Bethel [Genesis 28:22], and sent him thither to perform it.

We need not suppose that he heard the voice of God outwardly speaking to his ear of flesh. It was rather the inward voice of God that speaks to the conscience. A strong conviction had grown up within his soul, which could no longer leave him at rest. Jacob had now tarried at Shechem for eight years or more, and he had not performed the vow that he had made at Bethel. The sense of a solemn duty rested upon him, growing stronger until it really became to him the voice of God urging him to action.

God does not speak to us only when we open our Bible and lapse into silence when we close it. God is never silent and has never been. It is the nature of God to speak. The Bible is the inevitable outcome of God's continuous message to us. When you approach your Bible with the idea that it is not only a book that was once spoken but a book that is now speaking, you will hear the voice of God speaking to you.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOSHUA 16**  
**ACTS 3**

**THOUGHT**

**And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. – Isaiah 30:21.**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Genesis 35:6–15*

**LESSON**  
**Building an altar**

**VERSE 7**

*And he built there an altar,  
 and called the place El-  
 beth-el: because there God  
 appeared unto him, when  
 he fled from the face of his  
 brother.*

**H**aving safely arrived in Bethel, Jacob built an altar, which he called 'El-beth-el', in remembrance of God's gracious visitation when he was forced to flee from his brother Esau, who was angry with him and sought to take away his life. Jacob was not renaming the place but was reiterating it for the benefit of his household. By thus instituting the worship of the true God, Jacob paid his vow of some 30 years before, for he distinctly remembered the revelation of God at that time.

And he called the place of the altar 'El-beth-el', the God of Beth-el. Just as he made a thankful acknowledgement of the honour God had done him in calling him Israel, he worshipped God by the name of El-elohe-Israel. Now he was making a grateful recognition of God's former favour at Beth-el. He worshipped God by the name of El-bethel, the God of Beth-el, because there God appeared to him.

The comfort the saints have in holy ordinances is not so much from Beth-el, the house of God, but from El-beth-el, the God of the house of God. The ordinances are empty things if we do not meet with God in them. Here we have the strange feeling of human nature, the utter impossibility of realising the invisible except through the visible.

Why build churches? Is it not to remember God and to be reminded that He is present in every place, and ought to be worshipped?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
 IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 17**  
**ACTS 4**

**THOUGHT**

**The spiritual feelings of the soul express themselves in outward acts of devotion.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 35:16–18***LESSON****The birth of Benjamin****VERSE 17**

*And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also.*

Jacob's departure from Bethel was not in opposition to the divine commandment [Genesis 35:1], which did not enjoin a permanent settlement at Bethel. It merely directed him to stay there and perform his vow. But in accordance probably with his own desire, if not also heaven's counsel, he proceeded to Mamre to visit his father Isaac [v. 27].

As they were travelling forward, Rachel was taken in labour not far from Ephrath. Her pains were violent. She had hard labour—harder than usual. Rachel, in expressing her sorrow amidst the pangs of childbirth and death, called her son 'Ben-oni,' or 'the son of my sorrow' but Jacob changed his name to 'Benjamin,' which means 'son of the right hand' that is, particularly dear and precious.

The name that Rachel had given her son would have perpetually put Jacob in a mind of sorrow for his beloved Rachel, and he therefore gave him a name more pleasant and agreeable. And it has been observed that both names were verified in his posterity. No tribe has been more valorous and none more subject to sorrowful disasters than the tribe of Benjamin.

Pain and sorrow in childbearing are the fruits of sin [Genesis 3:16], and women are subject to such a circumstance. Some labour is more painful than others. These family records mingle well with the story of God's grace. The mothers 'Ben-oni' is the father's 'Benjamin.' Out of the pain and the bereavement sometimes comes the consolation. A strange blending of joy and sorrow is the tale of human love.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 18**  
**ACTS 5**

**THOUGHT**

**Every newborn child is a Ben-oni in Adam, but every born-again child is a Benjamin in Christ.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 35:19–20***LESSON****The death of Rachel****VERSE 19**

*And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.*

One cannot forget the rash prayer of Rachel who had cried, “Give me children, or else I die” [Genesis 30:1]. God answered her prayer and, prophetically, she died in childbirth and was buried on the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem and hence called Bethlehem Ephratah [Micah 5:2]. Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave, so that it would be known long after to be Rachel’s sepulchre [1 Samuel 10:2], and providence so ordered it that this place afterwards fell into the lot of Benjamin.

Jacob buried her on the spot and in memory of her erected a mournful pillar, as a memorial of her life and death, and a testimony of his love, continued her remembrance, and her future resurrection. With great pertinence, Rachel is represented as if she had risen from her grave, and weeping for her children when the children of Bethlehem were slain by Herod, she being buried so near that place [Matthew 2:16].

Genesis 35:18 depicts her death as her soul departing, expressing a change of place. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

DL Moody, in his autobiography, wrote, “Someday you will read in the papers that DL Moody of East Northfields is dead. Don’t you believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now. I shall have gone up higher, that is all; out of this old clay tenement into a house that is immortal—a body that death cannot touch: that sin cannot stain; a body like unto His glorious body.”

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOSHUA 19**  
**ACTS 6**

**THOUGHT**

**A gravestone may be made a useful remembrancer and a continual sermon.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 35:21–27***LESSON****Jacob's descendants****VERSE 22**

*And it came to pass, when  
Israel dwelt in that land,  
that Reuben went and lay  
with Bilhah his father's  
concubine: and Israel heard  
it. Now the sons of Jacob  
were twelve.*

This passage gives a complete list of the sons of Jacob after Benjamin, the youngest, was born. This is the first time we have the names of these heads of the 12 tribes together. Called afterwards the 12 patriarchs because they became heads or chiefs of numerous families or tribes [Acts 7:8], the people who descended from them are called the 12 tribes [Acts 26:7; James 1:1].

Among the 12 twelve sons of Jacob, no two are precisely alike. Dark and bright traits of character intermingle strangely in this household. Joseph seems to have served the Lord from his youth, and Simeon appears to have been the darkest character of the 12. As children often differ in complexion and stature, so do these in taste and moral character. Often less like their immediate progenitors, the diversity of bodily, mental and moral qualities is a blessing when under the influence of divine grace. Otherwise, it is a source of mischief and sorrow, engendering rivalry and strife.

God had ordained the 12 tribes of the nation of Israel. They were not chosen because they were any better than others. From what we have seen in the last few chapters, this was not an 'all-star team'. "We are greatly amazed in reflecting upon the event as a whole that descendants of the worthy patriarch Abraham should almost immediately after his time already have sunk to the level upon which Jacob's sons stand in this chapter" (Leupold).

God would use this family not because they are such great candidates but because He had chosen them by His grace alone.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 20**  
**ACTS 7**

**THOUGHT**

**He who of such material laid the foundations of a great nation, can make all things work together for our good. – JC Gray**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 35:28–29***LESSON****The death of Isaac****VERSE 29**

*And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.*

The death of this venerable patriarch is related here out of chronological sequence, for Isaac lived with Jacob at least 12 or 13 years after Jacob's return with his 12 sons from Paddan-aram. Though blind and inactive for about 57 years, he lived to witness the grief of Jacob at the loss of Joseph. He died but a short time before Joseph's promotion in Egypt, which occurred 13 years after Joseph was sold, and only 10 years before Jacob moved to Egypt with his family. Jacob was 130 years old when he was presented to Pharaoh [Genesis 47:9]. The account of Isaac's death and burial here elevates Jacob to the position of covenant patriarch, a fact received and accepted by Isaac and Esau.

Isaac died at the age of 180 years and was buried by his two sons in the cave of Machpelah [Genesis 49:31], Abraham's family grave. Esau came from Seir to Hebron to attend the funeral of his father. It was the occasion of a family reunion.

Isaac was gathered unto his people, either to the society of the dead or to the congregation of the just. [Genesis 15:15; 25:8]. But how greatly men misjudge death! Death is not the end but the beginning. Here is the concept of a reunion in another world. Surely Isaac died with the thought of meeting his loved ones who had gone before, in a higher and better world.

Those who had gone before Isaac were now welcoming him home, as a saint.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 21**  
**ACTS 8**

**THOUGHT**

**I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. – Matthew 22:32**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Genesis 36:1–30*

**LESSON**  
**Esau's descendants**

**VERSE 19**

*These are the sons of Esau,  
 who is Edom, and these are  
 their dukes.*

This passage gives a genealogical account or posterity of Esau's family, who are called Edomites, and offsprings from his Canaanite wives. Esau departed from Canaan and went to Mount Seir, after which is inserted a genealogy of Seir the Horite, into whose family Esau married, and of his children, and the dukes among them. Fourteen dukes were reckoned to Esau, seven of whom came from his wife, Adah, four of Bashemath and three of Aholibamah.

Dukes are probably military commanders or captains who have soldiers under them. Esau was an obscure man and a sojourner in that country. How was it that rulers should spring from him suddenly, and a great body of people should flourish, unless the benediction from his father Isaac was fulfilled [Genesis 27:39-40].

Esau did not reign in this desert realm without opposition. The men who had inhabited before Mount Seir were mighty. So that it would not have been easy for a stranger to acquire such power as Esau did, if he had not been divinely assisted.

We may suppose that these dukes had numerous families of children and servants in their dukedoms. God had promised to multiply Jacob and to enrich him, yet Esau increased and was enriched first. Edomites might be dukes with men but Israelites were made to our God kings and priests. It is no new thing for the men of this world to be prosperous and full of children. God's promise to Jacob began late but the effect of it was longer, and it has its complete accomplishment in spiritual Israel, the Church.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
 IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 22**  
**ACTS 9**

**THOUGHT**

**As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. – Romans 9:13**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 36:31–39***LESSON****Spiritual descendants of  
the ungodly****VERSE 31***And these are the kings  
that reigned in the land of  
Edom, before there reigned  
any king over the children  
of Israel.*

As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" [Romans 9:13]. Yet, between two stages of the history of the covenant family stands the genealogy of Esau's descendants. The text suggests a contrast between their course and that of the family of Jacob and, interestingly, it appears to favour Esau instead of Jacob.

On the death of Isaac, Esau departed from Canaan with his family and possessions [Genesis 27:40]. The desert and the valleys of Seir were more attractive than the quietness of Canaan. Prosperity, such as Esau cared for, attended him. Among Esau's family we read of dukes and kings. And what of the line of promise of Isaac? Kings were foretold of them [Genesis 17:6, 35:11]. Yet while kings were reigning in Edom, the Israelites were slaves in Egypt or wanderers in the desert. Is God slack to fulfil His word? [2 Peter 3:4].

This is often a trial to believers [Psalm 73:3]. But God's promises are sure, though the time may seem long. The fulfilment of great blessings has almost always been slow in fulfilment, as we count it. Abraham waited [Genesis 12:2]. It was then long before the kingdom of Israel arose; far longer before the promise of the Saviour fulfilled [Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4].

We are still waiting for the Lord's return today. The same truth appears in nature. Great and precious things are of slow growth [Mark 4:5].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOSHUA 23**  
**ACTS 10**

**THOUGHT**

**And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to  
judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall  
be the LORD'S. – Obadiah 1:21**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 36:40–43***LESSON****The dukes of Edom****VERSE 40**

*And these are the names  
of the dukes that came of  
Esau, according to their  
families, after their places,  
by their names; duke  
Timnah, duke Alvah, duke  
Jetheth,*

The state of Edom between the times of Esau and those of Moses seems to be like this: there were first dukes, then kings and dukes again. If one thinks that the time was too short for a succession of so many persons [v. 40–43], it may be noted that what was confessed concerning the dukes preceding the kings might be true also of these succeeding dukes: the Edomites, either having taken some distaste at kingly government or differing about the choice of a new king, had divided themselves again into petty principalities or dukedoms. So several of those were dukes at the same time in diverse parts.

In external prosperity and honour, the children of the covenant were often cast behind and those that were out of covenant often got a head start. The triumph of the wicked may be quick but it is short. It ripens and becomes rotten quickly as well. But the products of the promise, though slow, are sure and lasting.

We may suppose it was a great trial to the faith of God's Israel to hear of the pomp and power of the dukes of Edom, while they were bond-slaves in Egypt, but those who look for great things from God must be content to wait for them. God's time is the best time.

The children of this world have their all in hand, and nothing in hope [Luke 16:25] while the children of God have their all in hope and next to nothing in hand. But, all things considered, it is better to have Canaan in promise than Mount Seir in possession

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOSHUA 24**  
**ACTS 11**

**MEDITATION**

**Read Psalm 73.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 37:1–3***LESSON****The favourite son****VERSE 3**

*Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.*

Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph more than all his children. He was the firstborn of his beloved Rachel and a lovely youth—very promising, prudent and pious. The reason given in the text was because he was the son of his old age—being 91 years of age when Joseph was born—and the youngest children are generally most beloved, especially such as are born to parents in advanced years. Benjamin was younger than Joseph and was described in like manner [Genesis 44:20].

It was supposed to be the custom then that, with old men, to take one of their little children to be with them continually, and attend upon them, and minister to them, and lean upon their arm; and such a one was called the son of their old age, because he ministered to them in their old age.

Joseph was a shepherd, feeding the flock with his brethren [v. 2]. Though he was his father's darling, he was not brought up in idleness or spoiled by him. Israel trained him so that he could acquire practical life skills.

However, Jacob made a serious mistake. He proclaimed his affection for Joseph by dressing him finer than the rest of his children. He made him a coat of many colours, which clearly showed him to be the favourite son. To make things worse, probably because of their intimacy, Joseph brought to his father the evil report of his brothers and they hated Joseph for that. Soon, they plotted against him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JUDGES 1**  
**ACTS 12**

**THOUGHT**

**When parents treat their children partially, their children soon take notice of it and it often occasions feuds and quarrels in families.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 37:4***LESSON****Hated by his brothers****VERSE 4**

*And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.*

Jacob's somewhat foolish love, and still more foolish way of showing it, eventually cost him his favourite son. He had naturally clung to the son of his lost but never-forgotten first love, Rachel, and as naturally found, in Joseph's freedom from the vices of his other sons, a solace and joy.

It has been suggested that the 'coat of many colours' with which he decked on Joseph indicated an intention of transferring the rights of the firstborn to him. In any case, it meant distinguishing affection. The father or mother who is weak enough to show partiality in the treatment of their children need not wonder when their unwise acts of love create bitter sibling rivalry.

So Joseph's brothers hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him. They not only inwardly hated him but also could not conceal their hatred, betraying it by their speech towards him. They could not speak to him on any occasion except in a cross and ill-natured manner. They could not greet him or give him the common salutation (shalom).

Whenever Jacob's other sons did wrong and acted sinfully outside the presence of their father—acts that they would not have done if they had been at home with him—Joseph gave his father an account of their bad deeds. He did so not as a malicious tale-bearer to sow discord but as a faithful brother who, being the younger brother would not admonish them himself but represented their faults to one (their father), who had the authority to do so.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JUDGES 2**  
**ACTS 13**

**THOUGHT**

**The Bible does not idealise its characters but lets us see the seamy side of the tapestry, that we may more plainly recognise the mercy and mighty providence of God working through imperfect men.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 37:5–8***LESSON****The dream of the sheaf****VERSE 8**

*And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.*

Joseph's dream is the other principal point in the story. In fact, the key events of his life revolve around dreams—his own, his fellow-prisoners', Pharaoh's. The narrative recognises these dreams as divinely sent. No higher form of divine communication appears to have been made to Joseph.

Note that Joseph did not tell his dreams with elation or with a notion that they meant anything particular. It is plainly the singularity of the dreams that makes him repeat them, as is clearly indicated by the repeated 'behold' in his two reports. With perfect innocence of intention, and as he would have told any other strange dream, Joseph repeats them.

The commentary was the work of his brothers, who were ready to find proof of his being put above them, and of his wish to humiliate them, in anything he said or did. They were, after all, older than he and presumably wiser than he was. Perhaps they suspected that Jacob meant to set him at the head of the clan when he died, and that the dreams were trumped up and told to them to prepare them for the decision that the special coat might have already hinted.

Joseph was more of a prophet than a politician, or he would have kept his dreams to himself. By telling them faithfully of God's revelation, he had put himself in harm's way. His pureness of heart had caused jealousy in the wicked and deceitful nature of his brothers.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JUDGES 3**  
**ACTS 14**

**THOUGHT**

**[Joseph] was loved and hated, favoured and abused, tempted and trusted, exalted and abased. Yet at no point in the one-hundred-and-ten-year life of Joseph did he ever seem to get his eyes off God or cease to trust him. – Boice**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 37:9–11***LESSON****The dream of the sun,  
moon and stars****VERSE 10**

*And he told it to his father,  
and to his brethren: and  
his father rebuked him,  
and said unto him, What is  
this dream that thou hast  
dreamed? Shall I and thy  
mother and thy brethren  
indeed come to bow down  
ourselves to thee to the  
earth?*

Joseph told his dream to his father as well as to his brothers, as now the dream concerned both his brothers and his father. He had reported the first dream only to his brothers because it was only about them. That he did not tell it to his mother might be an indication that Rachel was by this time dead.

Jacob rebuked him, either to avoid irritating his brothers, or to repress an appearance of pride in Joseph, or to express his own irritation. It could also be the sense of absurdity of the dream, which he further demonstrated when Jacob added and said to him, “What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?”

By the ‘sun’, he understood himself to be the principal and head of the family, the active instrument of the generation of it, the light, life, and support of it, who was Jacob. By the ‘moon’, Jacob’s wife (Leah rather than Bilhah). And by the 11 ‘stars’, he understood that as the 11 brethren of Joseph, who were as stars that receive their light from the sun and in allusion to the 12 constellations in the Zodiac, to which Joseph and his eleven brethren answered.

Although Jacob rebuked him gently, he observed the saying, suspecting that the dream was from God but not quite understanding how all this would work out.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JUDGES 4**  
**ACTS 15**

**THOUGHT**

**The dreams of youth are often the prophecies of what God means and makes it possible for the dreamer to be, if he wakes, to work towards that fair thing which shone on him or her from afar.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 37:12–17***LESSON****The search for his brothers****VERSE 17**

*And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.*

Joseph was dispatched to this important sheep-station in the north to inquire after the welfare of his brothers. Jacob was rather foolish to have sent his young and beloved son on a journey that was arduous and an errand fraught with danger, considering the well-known hostility of his brothers towards him.

But there may be reasons for Jacob to do this. For one, it was in Shechem near to Dothan that the rogue sons of Jacob unjustly killed the men to avenge their sister [Genesis 34] and plundered the town. Thus there was the possibility that the inhabitants of the neighbouring cities would rise upon them and cut them down. For another, perhaps Jacob wanted to effect a reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers.

Despite the hatred of his brothers towards him and the perilous journey, Joseph did not hesitate to comply with his father's instructions, making nothing of the long journey and keeping silent about the risks involved. He cheerfully replied, "Here am I." What a bright example of true filial piety and obedience!

Arriving at Shechem, he failed to find his brothers, and then lost his way. Ultimately, after being directed by a stranger, he discovered them at Dothan. The perseverance of Joseph in carrying through his father's commission may be profitably studied, as a pattern to all to whom any sort of work, but more especially Christian mission, is entrusted.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JUDGES 5**  
**ACTS 16**

**THOUGHT**

**Though Joseph seemed to be afflicted with the sort of pride often apparent among the favoured and blessed, he obeyed the command of his father without reluctance. He also harboured no malice towards his brothers and searched for them anxiously.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 37:18–27***LESSON****The brothers' conspiracy****VERSE 18**

*And when they saw him  
afar off, even before he  
came near unto them, they  
conspired against him to  
slay him.*

The brothers of Joseph spotted him from a distance and they immediately began to plot to assassinate him. Their deep jealousy of Joseph had turned into bitter hostility. There was no longer brotherly love for Joseph but animosity, to the extent that they just wanted him dead. This shows the danger of harbouring evil thoughts and deep jealousy towards others as one's heart could quickly be filled with hatred and malice, and be uncontrollably led to committing sins.

As Paul puts it, all people are sinful in nature, being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, back biters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful [Romans 1:29–31]. Our sins can only be forgiven and cleansed by God through faith in Christ. By God's power, believers have the strength to live a sanctified life through a growing relationship with Christ.

We ought to always fill our hearts and minds with the knowledge of God. Do not underestimate the power of Satan to tempt you into committing sinful acts that are not pleasing in God's eyes. Surrender to the grace and mercy of God. Reach out to God in daily prayer, asking Him to cleanse your thoughts and lead you out of sin and into His love.

Approach your pastor for counselling if you find difficulty in pulling yourself out from the deep hatred against your own family members or friends.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JUDGES 6**  
**ACTS 17**

**MEDITATION**

**Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. – Ephesians 4:31–32**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 37:28–30***LESSON****Sold to Ishmeelites****VERSE 28**

*Then there passed by  
Midianites merchantmen;  
and they drew and lifted  
up Joseph out of the pit,  
and sold Joseph to the  
Ishmeelites for twenty  
pieces of silver: and they  
brought Joseph into Egypt.*

Many human sins are highlighted in today's passage. Jealousy aside, the brothers also made a profit by selling Joseph to slave traders for 20 shekels of silver. They were merciless despite hearing the bitter cry and pleading from a distressed Joseph begging them to free him [Genesis 42:21]. Although Judah's proposal not to kill Joseph but to sell him away might seem like an escape from the guilt of murder, it was still a merciless and heartless decision for Joseph. The brothers knew that life as a slave was not better than being dead but they took the money in exchange for the life of their own brother.

Covetousness is a common sin, both in the past and in the present. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" [1 Timothy 6:10].

Reuben, the eldest brother, returned to the pit and found that Joseph was gone. He was more afraid to be blamed by his father than worried for the safety of Joseph. His first question was, "The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?" This is clearly a selfish behaviour—a self-centred action with no sympathy and love for his brother.

Do you at times put self above others and ignore the pains suffered by your neighbours? Always be reminded that you should never act from motives of rivalry or personal vanity. There will not be joy and peace in life.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JUDGES 7**  
**ACTS 18**

**PRAYER**

Dear Lord, I offer myself to You and surrender to You. Please help me to search for the flaws in my life and understand where I had been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and covetous. Cleanse my heart and help me to be a vessel of blessings to others.

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 37:31–35***LESSON****Deceived by his own sons****VERSE 33**

*And he knew it, and said,  
It is my son's coat; an evil  
beast hath devoured him;  
Joseph is without doubt  
rent in pieces.*

In order to cover up their evil deed, the brothers of Joseph cooked up a story to deceive Jacob. They dipped Joseph's robe in the blood of a slaughtered goat and told Jacob that his son had been devoured by a ferocious animal.

It is terrible for men to commit sin. It is worse if one does not repent but conceal it with lies or another sinful act. God sees all the sins we commit. It does not please God if we do not immediately confess our sins, ask for forgiveness and make a resolution not to repeat the act in future. Things will only get worse if we continue to use another lie to cover the initial lie. Lying destroys trust between the two parties and ultimately breaks down the relationship. Deception between husband and wife destroys a marriage. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" [Proverbs 28:13].

Jacob was overwhelmed with grief over the 'death' of his beloved son. He was inconsolable [v. 35]. He lost all hope in life and was prepared to mourn for as long as he lived. Joseph's brothers added sin to sin by pretending to console their father. They were the cause of their father's grief and yet they chose to remain silent about what they had done to Joseph.

Is there any hidden sin in you? Come to God and surrender yourself. Do not allow Satan to entice you to sin. Humble yourself before the Lord and He will lift you up.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JUDGES 8**  
**ACTS 19**

**THOUGHT**

**"Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" [Ezekiel 18:31]. Search your heart, repent and pray for God's cleansing.**

### BIBLE LESSON

*Genesis 37:36*

#### LESSON

**Sold to Potiphar**

#### VERSE 36

*And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.*

Joseph now commenced a new chapter in his life. He had been taken to Egypt and sold by slave traders to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials.

Joseph has often been considered as a type of Christ. He was the beloved son of Jacob, as Christ is the dear son of God. Joseph was sold for 20 pieces of silver, as proposed by his brother Judah. Jesus was sold for 30 pieces of silver by His own disciple Judas. Joseph was delivered into the hands of foreigners as a slave. Christ was given into the hands of Gentiles to be crucified. Joseph ultimately saved his family from famine, and our Lord Jesus Christ redeems sinners from eternal death.

We read later that Joseph remained faithful to the Lord despite all his trials and persecutions. He lived in a foreign land where almost everyone else worshipped countless gods and idols. As believers, we should not be obsessed with worldly possessions that may hinder our walk with Christ. Turn to God for understanding, endurance and deliverance when you face trials or go through unbearable suffering.

Our sovereign God has His plan for each one of us. Although it seemed to Joseph then that he had to endure a bitter and terrible life, everything worked out brilliantly eventually for the good of both Joseph and his family in the divine plan of God. Joseph's story reassures us that we ought to be steadfast in our faith in God. It proves that all things work together for good to them that love Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JUDGES 9**  
**ACTS 20**

#### REMINDER

**Fix your eyes on Jesus and run with perseverance the race marked out for you. Learn from Job, who firmly believed that God would be on his side amidst all the horrible disasters brought upon him.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Genesis 38:1–5*

**LESSON**

**Judah's descendants**

**VERSE 1**

*And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.*

This chapter contrasts the immoral character of Judah with the faithfulness of Joseph [Genesis 39]. Here we read how Judah failed to obey God, lived a wayward life and, as a consequence, did not enjoy blessings and peace from God.

Judah left home, forsook the influence of his godly father and went to stay with a man of Adullam named Hirah, who worshipped foreign gods. Judah then married a Canaanite woman without consulting his father. This was dangerous for Judah's spiritual life, as he formed close fellowship with non-believers and started a family with an idolator. As cautioned by Paul to the believers, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" [2 Corinthians 6:14]

Judah and his Canaanite wife brought up their three children in an ungodly way. As parents, they did not demonstrate their faith in the Lord and failed to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Because they did not know God, their children became wicked and lived a life that was not pleasing to the Lord.

Be very careful with your choice of friends and life partner. Do not lock yourself in an intimate relationship with one who does not share your faith, as there exists the danger that your faith will be weakened and you will be tempted to compromise your moral standards and integrity. As believers, we are called unto fellowship with God and there is an absolute necessity for separation from whatever is 'darkness', that is, whatever is in direct opposition to God's nature.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JUDGES 10**  
**ACTS 21**

**REMINDER**

**Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. – Proverbs 22:6**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Genesis 38:6–12*

**LESSON**  
**Tamar, wife of Er**

**VERSE 6**  
*And Judah took a wife  
for Er his firstborn, whose  
name was Tamar.*

Judah gave Tamar as a wife to Er. But Er was so wicked that he was put to death by God. Judah then followed the law to give his second son Onan to Tamar so that Tamar could bear a son for Er. This was a common practice so that a family could preserve the name of its eldest son who died childless. Onan was also wicked. Being selfish, he refused to produce an offspring for his brother. God killed Onan because he disobeyed instructions and did not fulfil his obligation.

Though our God is a God of love, He is also a righteous God. If we continue to sin despite warnings received through His words and ignore promptings by the Spirit, God will not be pleased. Do not be corrupted with earthly desires. Do not place worldly things (wealth, beauty, honour and possessions) above God.

As believers, you need to learn how to totally surrender and give your complete obedience to God. Do not sin against God and disobey His commandments. Do not act in a manner that displeases God. God will not condone wilful rebellion. His anger will erupt against those who persist in sinning.

“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath” [Romans 2:5–8].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JUDGES 11**  
**ACTS 22**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord, I pray that I may never by my pride and ignorance provoke Your anger, but rather by my meekness and humility receive the riches of Your grace.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 38:13–26***LESSON****Deceived by Tamar****VERSE 15**

*When Judah saw her, he  
thought her to be an harlot;  
because she had covered  
her face.*

**T**amar, who was sent home by Judah after the death of her first two husbands, was anxious that Judah perpetually delayed in fulfilling his promise to give his youngest son Shelah to her, even when he had now grown up. In the olden days, a widow was not only able to raise up seed for her dead husband through his brethren, she could also do so with her father-in-law. So Tamar resorted to plotting a scheme to bear a child with Judah. Tamar also requested Judah for pledged items that could help to prove the identity of the father of her child.

Judah repented when he learnt that Tamar wanted to procure a son for his family. He cried, “She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son” [v. 26].

Here we see the mercy and grace of God. For a man like Judah, who was spiritually blind and had committed many shameful acts, God dealt with him with love. Judah was chosen to be part of the birth line for the promised Seed. Christ came from the tribe of Judah. This shows the sovereignty of God. It is purely God’s decision and grace to select us as part of His kingdom.

It is encouraging to sinners that our Lord God is gracious, full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy. We, like Judah, may have sinned and rebelled against God but we must not lose hope. Stand firm in your faith in the Lord. Rest in the Lord. Allow Him to mould you and use you to fulfil His will in your life.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JUDGES 12**  
**ACTS 23**

**THOUGHT**

**Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord. – Psalm 31:24**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 38:27–30***LESSON****Birth of Pharez and Zarah****VERSE 27***And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb.*

The closing paragraph of this chapter describes the birth of the twins that resulted from the union of Judah and Tamar. Witnessing a birth is an awe-inspiring event. However, when the abnormal occasionally happens in childbirth, God certainly can do miraculous things to safeguard both mother and child. What peace it brings to know God is there with us at every birth. Ultimately, it is God Who brings life.

Neither Judah nor Tamar is an example of godliness but both of them are in the family line of our Lord Jesus through Pharez. Tamar was the woman who had faith in God. Therefore, she became the very first woman listed in the genealogy of Christ [Matthew 1:3].

In order to receive the precious blessing of God, there is nothing we need to do except to follow the will of God. By doing things that are right in our own eyes, we cannot receive the blessings of God. Our salvation is fulfilled not by our efforts but only by the work of Jesus Christ according to the will of God.

Through Tamar, we can clearly see this truth. No matter how badly we have been misused by others today, we need to remember it is impossible for us to have fallen so far down that God cannot reach out and lift us to His loving heart. Tamar's story is a story that once again illustrates the grace of God in choosing whom He wants to call upon and use for His purpose.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JUDGES 13**  
**ACTS 24**

**THOUGHT**

**God is no respecter of persons when it comes to being first, second or last.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 39:1–3***LESSON****The Lord with Joseph****VERSE 2**

*And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.*

Joseph's trials were probably worse than the troubles any of us has gone through. At the most uncertain point of Joseph's life, when he could see no hope, even at this early point when Joseph had no control over his circumstances, God was overruling the choices of man to accomplish His eternal purpose. It was not a coincidence then that Joseph ended up in the house of Potiphar. God's blessing upon Joseph was not ordinary prosperity. If God had allowed Joseph to be a slave, then he would be successful as a slave.

Even Potiphar had to sit up and take notice, and admit that the Lord was with Joseph, causing him to prosper. Imagine how strong Joseph's testimony had to be for Potiphar to recognise and admire Joseph's character and to attribute it to God rather than to Joseph.

The trials that God allows into our lives bring about in us what delights Him. In all the anguish of our trials, God's invisible hand of grace and sovereignty is present with us. In the same way, as we walk with the Lord, He too is with us.

Even though the circumstances of life may not seem to go our way, God is always in control. He orchestrates His purposes behind the scenes. We can trust and lean on Him. He will be faithful to us. He wants us to live a life that is different from the world and yet attracts its attention, so that people can see the presence of God in you. Will you be that type of person?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JUDGES 14**  
**ACTS 25**

**THOUGHT**

**God's blessing should be used as a witness to others.**

## BIBLE LESSON

*Genesis 39:4–6*

### LESSON

**Joseph as overseer**

### VERSE 4

*And Joseph found grace  
in his sight, and he served  
him: and he made him  
overseer over his house, and  
all that he had he put into  
his hand.*

Joseph was at the bottom rung of the social strata. He was a slave sold into a foreign culture. But God prospered him and he rose to the top in the house of Potiphar. Life was about as good as a slave could expect at that point. When Potiphar made Joseph in charge, it was a positive action. It means that Potiphar saw something in Joseph unique from his other servants. Joseph was successful in all that he did regardless of the situation in which he found himself.

Every one of us wants to succeed in life. But if we want true success, it is crucial to work out a biblical definition of the term. The world defines success in terms of achieving goals, acquiring wealth and gaining prestige, favour, status and power. Successful people enjoy the good life, being financially and possibly emotionally secure, surrounded by admirers, and seemingly enjoying the fruits of their labour. Their example is emulated and their accomplishments are noticed.

But success is measured and defined differently by God. God's measure of success involves our obedience and faithfulness to Him, regardless of opposition and personal cost. His measure of success is whether or not we are loyal to Him in our personal relationship with Him and in our life, and whether we are accomplishing His goals and purposes for our life.

Joseph walked with integrity and sought to glorify God, and it showed in his life. The same thing ought to be true of each of us. The life we live should be so different from the world around us that the mark of God's favour is clear for all to see.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JUDGES 15**  
**ACTS 26**

### THOUGHT

**Successful Christians faithfully use their talents and circumstances to further the cause of God.**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Genesis 39:7–12*

**LESSON**  
**Joseph tempted**

**VERSE 7**

*And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.*

The temptation of Joseph is strikingly parallel to the test of Adam and Eve in the garden. They had free use of everything in the garden, save the fruit of one tree. So Joseph had access to anything of Potiphar's except his wife. But while the forbidden fruit just hung there tempting Adam and Eve, Potiphar's wife actively pursued Joseph. Opportunity knocks only once, but temptation knocks persistently.

We have a deliberate choice in every circumstance, whether we trust God or something (or someone). Joseph chose to trust God. He chose to move forward in life, confident that God was doing something in his life even if he had no idea what it was. He chose to dwell on the character of God rather than the pain of the injustice. He chose to continue to walk in faith even though it was difficult. He chose to believe that God was at work even when he could not see what God was doing.

Joseph understood that true blessing came from walking with God and did not have anything to do with his circumstances. The knowledge and desire to please God was what kept Joseph from giving in to temptation.

When you are tempted, do you sit there and consider the odds of whether you can get away with something, even fantasising how fun the sin might be? If so, it is no wonder that you are struggling with temptation. We have to be serious about drawing near to and walking with the Lord. It takes real commitment to follow Christ.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
 IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JUDGES 16**  
**ACTS 27**

**THOUGHT**

**The strength of temptation lies in the response of our nature to its suggestions.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 39:13–19***LESSON****Accused of wrongdoing****VERSE 19**

*And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.*

Choosing to be righteous and resisting temptation does not always receive immediate reward. Joseph suffered for doing the right thing. The lie against him must have been painful. He was accused of the very thing he had worked so hard to avoid. Yet he did not seem to defend himself against this false accusation, even as Jesus was silent before His accusers.

How does a Christian respond in such a situation? We must understand that sometimes our motives will be questioned. Sometimes our words will be twisted. Sometimes we will be ostracised for our views. Sometimes we will be deliberately misquoted. Sometimes we will be the victims of a whispering campaign where we cannot even pin down the things said against us. The point to remember here is that such things do happen from time to time. It is part of what it means to be a follower of Christ.

We cannot control what people do to you or what they say about you but we can control how we respond to their accusations. This is exactly what God wants us to work on. False accusation is nothing new. It has always existed and it will continue to exist. The key is that we as believers must learn how to deal with it by faith through prayer and the study of God's Word.

By no means let any of you suffer as an evildoer or a troublesome meddler but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed. Let him glorify God. Christians should not be taken aback by persecution and opposition. Suffering for Christ's sake is part of the normal Christian experience.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JUDGES 17**  
**ACTS 28**

**THOUGHT**

**One thing about truth is that you do not have to prove it. It always prevails.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 39:20–23***LESSON****Imprisoned****VERSE 20**

*And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.*

Potiphar, angry yet wanting to quieten his wife and end the situation, cast him into prison his once-trusted slave Joseph without a word of explanation. Joseph was guilty until proven innocent. It almost appears as if Joseph would have been better off yielding to his master's wife. But then he would have removed himself from God's blessings. Surely he would rather be imprisoned in the body than live in the prison of regret, guilt and separation from God.

Joseph's imprisonment, though unpleasant, was probably the answer to his prayers. Knowing that day after day the woman had persisted in trying to break down Joseph's resistance, we could almost imagine one of Joseph's earnest supplications: "Lord, protect me from this woman." And that was precisely what those prison bars did. His imprisonment was the answer to his prayers. Those prison bars kept him away from Mrs Potiphar. How frequently the answers to our prayers come in a different package than we expect.

Deep down, we want things to be fair. We have a longing for justice, because we are created in the image of a perfectly just God. It is unfair for Joseph to do the right thing and yet be sent to prison. Joseph had lost his master's respect and he was forced to become lower than a slave—he became a prisoner.

Do you think Joseph was alone that time? Do you believe that God would go all the way down to a dungeon to be with Joseph? Do you think that this situation was out of God's control? Read verse 23 for the answer.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JUDGES 18**  
**ROMANS 1**

**THOUGHT**

**Whether in prison or palace, the Lord is with His people for their good, giving them strength to endure every hardship.**

### BIBLE LESSON

*Genesis 40:1–4*

#### LESSON

**Served in prison**

#### VERSE 4

*And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.*

Joseph's life so far had been downhill. From being the favourite son, he was sold into slavery by jealous brothers. In Egypt, Joseph was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and thrown into prison.

However, at every juncture in his life, we find that Joseph's life was described by one phrase: "the LORD was with Joseph" [Genesis 39:2, 21, 23]. God was with Joseph in Potiphar's house and in the prison. The presence of the Lord was visible to the people around Joseph, not in a special aura or halo hovering over him but as seen in his life and his work. Potiphar "saw that the LORD was with [Joseph], and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand" [Genesis 39:3].

Joseph did not allow his circumstances to affect his testimony or his service for the Lord. It would have been easy—even with good reason—for Joseph to slump into depression. But Joseph served Potiphar faithfully [Genesis 39:4].

Even after he was wrongfully imprisoned, Joseph continued to be God's faithful servant. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that when the king's butler and baker were cast into the same prison that Joseph served them as well. The word 'serve' is also translated to mean 'minister'. It means to attend to another person's needs. Joseph did not despise the butler and baker even though he had the favour of the prison warden. He did not see them as competitors for his favoured position in prison. Instead, Joseph saw them as opportunities of service, and he served them.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JUDGES 19**  
**ROMANS 2**

#### THOUGHT

**How do you regard the people that God puts across your life's paths?**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 40:5–8***LESSON****Looking sad****VERSE 7**

*And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day?*

**F**air weather friends. Sunshine soldiers. These are phrases that describe people whose lives and moods are governed by their circumstances. The king's butler and baker are such people. Even in prison, they continued to enjoy special privileges because Joseph was charged to minister to them.

The quality of Joseph's prison life was several notches below that of the butler and the baker. Joseph was their servant. Lest we think that Joseph lived a fairly good life in prison, the Psalmist reminds us: "Joseph, who was sold for a servant: whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron" [Psalm 105:17a–18]. Yet Joseph was not susceptible to the contingencies in his life.

The baker and the butler, however, were sad. The reason was they did not know what would become of them. They each had a dream but did not know what it meant. When he saw the butler and the baker, Joseph asked, "Wherefore look ye so sadly today?" [Genesis 40:7]. A servant of God is always alert to the needs of others. The uncertainties of the future can make someone sad, especially if he cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel, or more so if he does not know the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus.

Joseph noticed the sadness of the butler and the baker, and he was able to minister to them. "Do not interpretations belong to God?" [Genesis 40:8], Joseph asked them. The question reveals Joseph's faith in a sovereign God—a truth that Joseph used to help the butler and the baker. But it all begins with a heart that is sensitive to the needs of others.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JUDGES 20**  
**ROMANS 3**

**THOUGHT**

**Christians ought to go through life with their eyes focused on the Lord and ears on the needs of people.**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Genesis 40:9–13*

**LESSON**  
**Reconciled**

**VERSE 13**

*Yet within three days shall  
Pharaoh lift up thine head,  
and restore thee unto  
thy place: and thou shalt  
deliver Pharaoh's cup into  
his hand, after the former  
manner when thou wast his  
butler.*

You have gone through a battery of tests. The results are out and the doctor has just called for you to give you the report. You are waiting outside the doctor's office. Have you ever been in this situation before?

The butler was put into prison. His future seemed bleak. Then he had a dream that he could not understand. The anxiety of waiting resulted in his sad countenance [v. 7]. In his dream, there were three branches that budded, blossomed and bore grapes. The butler could serve the king with the fruit of the vine. Joseph told the butler that he would be restored in three days. That is good news for the butler. And he was indeed released three days later. Perhaps the restoration of the butler was vindication of his innocence. Pharaoh, being the absolute ruler, had the power of life and death.

Our Lord Jesus warns of another with greater power, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" [Matthew 10:28]. Pharaoh might have the power to take a man's life but the Son of man alone has the right and the power to forgive a man's sins [Matthew 9:6].

Man's hope is not to attain a position of honour on earth before man but to come into a relationship of covenant grace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. So Paul says to all sinners, "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" [2 Corinthians 5:20b].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JUDGES 21**  
**ROMANS 4**

**THOUGHT**

**Be reconciled to God as your King, and "conform in all things to His will and pleasure" – John Gill**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 40:14–15***LESSON****Seeking human help****VERSE 14**

*But think on me when it  
shall be well with thee,  
and shew kindness, I  
pray thee, unto me, and  
make mention of me unto  
Pharaoh, and bring me out  
of this house.*

All that Joseph said would happen to the butler came true. Joseph also requested the butler to speak a good word for him to Pharaoh when he had the opportunity. The request was reasonable because Joseph was innocent of the crime for which he was accused. Besides, Joseph's interpretation of the dream was right and it proved that he was a man who knew the will of God.

Joseph also had a dream once. In that dream, he would be given a position of honour among men. Joseph had not lost his confidence in God by asking help from the butler. In asking the butler for help, Joseph merely thought that it was proper of him, in dependence on God, to make use of all lawful means for his deliverance. In this, Joseph did not turn his back on the providence of God. On the contrary, he was acting on God's providence.

When the Apostle Paul was caught in the midst of a political struggle, he said that he would appeal to Caesar [Acts 25:11]. In that case, Paul also did not abandon the providence of Christ for the protection of Caesar.

Likewise, it is not a lack of faith in God when we seek out human help. On the contrary, it is understanding that God's providence comes from people whom He sends. It is when we seek out help to the exclusion of God or in direct opposition to His Word that is a mark of faithlessness.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**RUTH 1-2**  
**ROMANS 5**

**THOUGHT**

**Pray as if everything depended on God. Work as if everything depended on you. – Martin Luther**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 40:16–19***LESSON****The baker's mistake****VERSE 16**

*When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head.*

The Bible did not tell us the reasons why the baker and butler were put into prison. However, it gives us a hint into the character of the two persons. We read that the butler was sad over the fact that he did not know the meaning of his dream but no such emotion was reported of the baker.

Second, the baker's reason for asking Joseph to interpret his dream was that Joseph's interpretation of the butler's dream was good. The baker must have thought that he too deserved the favour of Pharaoh and he would be restored, just like the butler. But Joseph had bad news for him. Joseph said to the baker that in three days Pharaoh would behead him and hang his body on a tree [Genesis 40:19]. This was the gruesome prospect of the baker. He would die in three days.

It is easy to be a bearer of good news but not so of bad ones. But Joseph did not hide the truth from the baker. He told the baker exactly what was revealed to him. The same was said of Samuel when God told him concerning His judgement on Eli's household. Samuel "hid nothing from [Eli] ... And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground" [1 Samuel 3:18–19].

The Gospel is the good news. But it is good news because it shows sinners the only way out of their predicament. Repentance comes to the man who is conscious of and confesses that he is a hopeless and depraved sinner. That reality must precede the good news.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**RUTH 3**  
**ROMANS 6**

**THOUGHT**

**Speak the truth and do it lovingly. Read Ephesians 4:15.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 40:20–22***LESSON****One lives; one dies****VERSE 21**

*And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.*

The fate of the butler and the baker were just as Joseph had told them. The butler was restored. The baker was executed. It may seem inexplicable to us in this day and age that one's life depends on the whims of another man. But that was the case in the days of Pharaohs, Caesars and tyrants.

We should not confuse the dictatorial powers of kings with the sovereignty of God. The basis of Pharaoh's decision was his own fancy. He exercised his power inconsistently and it was seldom beneficial to his subjects. The butler might have been restored but probably only until Pharaoh's next outburst.

The sovereignty of God, in contrast to the capriciousness of man, is based on His unchanging goodness and holiness. It can be defined as God working "all things after the counsel of His own will" [Ephesians 1:11b]. God's will alone matters. Paul also adds that God has and will do that which is "according to the good pleasure of His will" [Ephesians 1:5b]. This means that the Almighty God has the power to do what He wills but His actions are never haphazard or inconsistent.

We do not know what became of the butler after he was restored to his office but the Bible is clear as to what we should do in response to God's goodness. The Apostle Paul reminds us, "Despise thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" [Romans 2:4].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**RUTH 4**  
**ROMANS 7**

**THOUGHT**

**For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. – Romans 14:8**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 40:23***LESSON****Disappointed again****VERSE 23**

*Yet did not the chief butler  
remember Joseph, but  
forgot him.*

After Joseph had interpreted the dream for the butler, Joseph asked the butler to show kindness towards him by speaking of his innocence to Pharaoh [Genesis 40:14] but the butler did not remember Joseph and forgot him.

The butler's failure to remember and forget—a double mention—could have been a sign of his ingratitude, which was common among the king's officers who were caught up in the web of palace politics. The butler's forgetfulness was yet another broken promise, and another disappointment for Joseph. It was another two years before the butler would mention Joseph's name to Pharaoh.

As we look to man for help, we must also be prepared for disappointments. But disappointments must degenerate into unbelief. Joseph was disappointed by the butler but his faith in God did not diminish. The butler might have forgotten Joseph but God did not. The Psalmist writes, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up" [Psalm 27:10]. It would not have been right of Joseph to prescribe to God the date and the means by which he would be released from prison. So there is a reason for the two-year delay. It is to allow Joseph to see that his deliverance did not come from the butler's good words but from God's goodness.

The disappointments of man should drive us to the sure promises of God. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth ... surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" [Isaiah 40:7–8].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 1–2**  
**ROMANS 8**

**THOUGHT**

**Hang on to the man, and he will let you down.  
Cast yourself before the Lord, and He will never  
let you fall.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 41:1–8***LESSON****The two dreams of Pharaoh****VERSE 8**

*And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.*

Two full years had passed and Joseph was still confined in Potiphar's prison. He was forgotten by the butler despite Joseph's favourable interpretation of his dream and his plea to be remembered after his predictions came to pass [Genesis 40:14–15].

The reality of Romans 8:28 is beautifully illustrated in Joseph's life. God not only used His divine power to strengthen Joseph but also to disturb Pharaoh through two dreams in the same night. In his dream, Pharaoh was standing by the River Nile when he saw seven fat-fleshed cows coming up out of the river and then grazing in a meadow. Then he saw seven thin-fleshed cows emerge from the river and immediately devoured the seven fat-fleshed cows [v. 1–4]. Pharaoh awoke but fell asleep again and dreamt a second time. He saw seven ears of grain grow full and large on a single stalk. Then seven ears, thin and scorched by the east wind, sprouted up after them. The thin ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears.

“The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will” [Proverbs 21:1]. God is never at a loss to bring about what He desires. Pharaoh's spirit was troubled.

The wise men and magicians who were summoned by Pharaoh from all over Egypt the next morning found it difficult to discern the meaning of their ruler's dreams. God will strengthen and help us if we simply do what Joseph did: trust God and call upon Him for help.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**I SAMUEL 3**  
**ROMANS 9**

**THOUGHT**

**And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. – Romans 8:28**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Genesis 41:9–13*

**LESSON**  
**Joseph remembered**

**VERSE 12**

*And there was there with us  
 a young man, an Hebrew,  
 servant to the captain of  
 the guard; and we told him,  
 and he interpreted to us  
 our dreams; to each man  
 according to his dream he  
 did interpret.*

The butler, who was obviously standing by Pharaoh, suddenly remembered how Joseph remarkably interpreted his own dream and also that of his fellow prisoner, the baker. The results had been precisely prophesied and fulfilled. Confessing his sin to Pharaoh, he recounted the circumstances in which he became acquainted with Joseph in prison and his wonderful success in interpreting dreams. He told Pharaoh of this extraordinary young man, a Hebrew. Joseph was immediately summoned to interpret Pharaoh's dreams. The butler forgot Joseph, the prophet of his deliverance, and was forced to remember him only through circumstances.

It is worth stressing that God does not forget His people. Noah might have wondered whether God had forgotten him, his family and the animals when he was inside the Ark. "And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark" [Genesis 8:1a]. God had remembered Noah all along and was working out His perfect plan for all of them.

Similarly, Jesus remembered the thief who was crucified with Him. He pleaded, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom" [Luke 23:42] and Jesus did remember him. He was with Jesus before the day ended.

The Bible reminds us that "them that honour Me I will honour" [1 Samuel 2:30c]. Learn to honour God in all things at all times and see if He does not advance you in the eyes of others.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
 IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 4**  
**ROMANS 10**

**THOUGHT**

**God prodded the memory of the butler to recall God's servant, Joseph, in prison. God can stir and work within the hearts of people to remember us when we need help.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 41:14–24***LESSON****Brought before Pharaoh****VERSE 14**

*Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.*

Now that God's appointed time had come, neither human power nor policy could detain Joseph in prison. A quick shave, a wash and a change of clothing, and Joseph was brought into the king's court before Pharaoh, who was anxiously awaiting Joseph's arrival.

Joseph now stood before Pharaoh because of God's providence. He was fulfilling the part of the obedient servant, neither extracting a promise for his freedom nor attempting to bargain for his release. His purpose was to serve and to use his gifts to help others. He had learnt to be contented in any state [Philippians 4:11].

Pharaoh promptly related his double dream: the first about seven thin cows swallowing up seven fat ones and the second about seven thin and scorched ears of grain devouring seven good ones. No one could interpret his dreams. To the butler and the baker Joseph had said, "Do not interpretations belong to God?" [Genesis 40:8]. With divine boldness, Joseph told Pharaoh, "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace" [v. 16]. Joseph gave God the pre-eminence. He attributed all glory and honour to God.

The Apostle Paul went to Corinth "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling ... but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" [1 Corinthians 2:3–4]. However weak and inadequate we are, the Lord is our strength. And the Lord's strength is always sufficient for us to do our best for Him. Joseph thrived under difficult circumstances and never used them as excuses for not living up to God's expectations.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 5**  
**ROMANS 11**

**THOUGHT**

**But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. – Job 23:10**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 41:25–36***LESSON****Interpreting the dream****VERSE 25**

*And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do.*

When Pharaoh perceived Joseph's ingenuity, he promptly related his dreams. God gave Joseph wisdom to interpret correctly. He told Pharaoh that his dreams were one and the same. God had shown Pharaoh what He was about to do.

The seven fat cows and the seven full ears of grain represented seven years of full harvest and prosperity in Egypt. The seven lean cows and the seven thin ears of grain represented seven difficult years of famine that would follow the years of plenty. The great increase would be forgotten and the famine would be so severe that all of the previous abundance would be consumed. When God warns of danger to come, He also provides the way of deliverance.

The repetition of the dream in two different forms was to denote absolute certainty, speedy arrival and magnitude of the event [v. 32]. Then Joseph advised Pharaoh to organise Egypt into various districts that should be administered by local food controllers. These officers would purchase, store and save one fifth of the grain harvested every year during the seven plenteous years in preparation for the years of famine. Pharaoh had to appoint an intelligent and wise man to oversee the land and its harvest. He should be a man of action as well as of thought and knowledge.

God not only gave Joseph the true interpretation of the dreams but also provided an effective plan of action for Pharaoh to carry out.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 6**  
**ROMANS 12**

**THOUGHT**

**O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? – Romans 11:33–34**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 41:37–45***LESSON****Joseph made ruler****VERSE 40**

*Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.*

Pharaoh and his courtiers were greatly impressed with Joseph's ability to interpret the dreams and with his wise counsel. They recognised that he was a man of unique spiritual gifts. Turning to his officials, Pharaoh asked, "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" [v. 38]. God had used Joseph to cause men to acknowledge His Spirit, to acknowledge that He works in His servants and in the world. Joseph had indeed "professed a good profession before many witnesses" [1 Timothy 6:12]. Pharaoh assured him that he was the wisest and most discreet and efficient man in Egypt [v. 39].

Pharaoh therefore immediately appointed Joseph over his entire kingdom, second only in authority to himself. He would have full power to carry out his plan and to enact and implement all necessary policies and regulations. Centuries later, Daniel was also chosen to be the third highest ruler in Babylon for the same reason [Daniel 5:7, 16].

Pharaoh gave Joseph his signet ring and dressed him in royal linen clothes with a gold chain as symbols of Joseph's authority and exalted position in Egypt. He gave him his own second chariot, with men going before him commanding the people to bow down to him just as they did to Pharaoh. Finally, he gave him an Egyptian name and a wife, Asenath, from the priestly family of On.

Joseph was used to serve God and men by saving Egypt and Israel from utter devastation. God, too, can use us if we believe Him and obey Him faithfully.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**I SAMUEL 7**  
**ROMANS 13**

**THOUGHT**

**Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you. – John 15:16**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 41:46–49***LESSON****Seven years of plenty****VERSE 47***And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.*

Joseph was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh and interpreted his dreams. He had now lived for 13 years in Egypt and a considerable portion of that time was spent in prison. Joseph was of a ripe age and experience when he assumed control of the world's mightiest kingdom. Applying organisational skills he had developed in Potiphar's house and the king's prison, Joseph set out energetically to prepare Egypt for the coming famine. He carried out a general survey of the country and, having ascertained the extent of his work, he executed his plan swiftly.

Egypt began to experience harvest and prosperity greater than any time she had ever known. During the seven plenteous years of fruitful harvest, Joseph supervised the gigantic storehouse operation [v. 47–49]. He stored up grain in great abundance like the “sand of the sea” in every city. The surplus became so great that it finally became unnecessary, if not impossible, to keep precise records. God had truly blessed the land as He had said.

As the second most powerful man in Egypt, Joseph selflessly dedicated himself to the well-being of that land. He was extraordinarily capable in big things. He stored up grains not only for the Egyptian population but also for the neighbouring countries in preparation for the seven years of dearth. He persevered with patience and performed his duties faithfully and successfully. He was very well-prepared.

Just like Joseph, we can be channels of blessing to others when we yield to God's leading.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**I SAMUEL 8–9**  
**ROMANS 14**

**THOUGHT****God always carries out what He promises.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 41:50–52***LESSON****Joseph's sons****VERSE 50**

*And unto Joseph were born  
two sons before the years  
of famine came, which  
Asenath the daughter of  
Poti-pherah priest of On  
bare unto him.*

At the age of 30, Joseph was blessed by God with two sons: Manasseh (meaning ‘forgetting’) and Ephraim (‘fruitful’). Their names are significant as they reflect the joy felt by Joseph as he received the blessings of God while living in Egypt.

God had removed all sorrowful memories of his past afflictions by this present grandeur and honour. Joseph had suffered 13 years of trials and afflictions—slavery, imprisonment, jealousy and the hatred of his brothers. Now he would forget his misery of loneliness and come to a place of usefulness and service in the land of his afflictions.

It was God who caused Joseph to forget his sorrows. The painful memory of the past was removed from his mind when his adversity was changed into prosperity. God had made him fruitful in grace and good works, in holiness and humility. Joseph was now like a tree planted by rivers of water, bringing forth fruit and whose leaf never withered. Be comforted that God also cares for you and your present trials are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will follow. Take note that it is usually during these times of affliction that we are fruitful or profitable for the Lord.

God was preparing Joseph for the big task ahead of saving the people of Egypt from starvation. Joseph was the temporal saviour of Egypt and many surrounding nations. God was also paving the way for Jacob and his whole family to meet Joseph for reconciliation and subsequently for the salvation of mankind.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 10–11**  
**ROMANS 15**

**HYMN**

**God never moves without purpose or plan,  
When trying His servant and moulding a man;  
Give thanks to the Lord though your testing seems long,  
In darkness He giveth a song.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 41:53–57***LESSON****Going to Joseph****VERSE 55**

*And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.*

The seven years of plenty came and went. Now the seven years of famine were at hand. The people of Egypt cried out to Pharaoh in hunger. They were directed to go to Joseph and take instructions from him.

Pharaoh had entrusted Joseph with this great task of feeding the people, and empowered him to take care of the nation's famine problem. He was providentially led of God to discern the intellectual and spiritual character of Joseph. "And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" [Genesis 41:38]. It was the expression of a character worthy of the highest confidence.

Joseph, the high administrative official of Egypt, was "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" [Matthew 10:16b]. He was diligent in storing up food during the years of plenty and prudent in selling and distributing the food during the famine. God was preparing the way for the arrival of Joseph's kindred in Egypt. Joseph was an eminent type of Christ, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation. Like our Lord, he was falsely accused, cast into prison and bound. Joseph was raised to great honour and glory in Pharaoh's court, just as Christ was exalted by his Father, and crowned with glory and honour.

There is a famine of the Bread of Life throughout the whole earth. The only solution is our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Go to Him for grace and spiritual sustenance and nourishment.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**I SAMUEL 12**  
**ROMANS 16**

**THOUGHT**

**And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. – John 6:35**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 42:1–6***LESSON****The dream fulfilled****VERSE 6**

*And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.*

When Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt [v. 2], he instructed his 10 sons to go there and purchase food. Jacob's words [v. 1–2] resembled those of the four lepers: "Why sit we here until we die?" [2 Kings 7:3b]. If they remain where they were, they would surely perish.

Notice the filial piety of Jacob's sons in obeying their father's command in spite of fears of retribution. The youngest son, Benjamin, was not allowed to go as Jacob was concerned that evil might befall him, as did Joseph. The 10 brethren felt uneasy at the mention of Egypt [v. 1], as it was there that they had sold their own brother. Egypt was then a dreaded place that was connected to calamities. Their consciences began to stir even as they felt remorseful over what they had done. Their road to Egypt was haunted by the memory of the awful crime they had committed.

Joseph's brothers came to Egypt and "bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth" [v. 6]. This fulfilled the dream that Joseph had of their sheaves making obeisance to his sheaf, and of the sun, moon and 11 stars doing the same to him [Genesis 37:7]. Joseph was the one who decided whether to provide food to the people. The brothers had to humble themselves before Joseph if they wanted to live.

Likewise, there is forgiveness of sins in Christ but we must humbly go to Him, and seek it from Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 13**  
**I CORINTHIANS I**

**THOUGHT**

... him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. – John 6:37

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Genesis 42:7–8*

**LESSON**

**They knew not Joseph**

**VERSE 8**

*And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.*

Imagine Joseph's emotions when he saw his brothers for the first time in 20 years. He could hardly control his feelings and had to hide his tears [v. 24]. He recognised his siblings but pretended to be harsh and hostile towards them, as he wanted to test whether they had repented of their wicked actions. He intended to find out their true nature before reconciling.

The brothers could not recognise Joseph, who had by then grown from a young lad, and clothed in Egyptian finery and spoke a foreign language. Besides, they were not in the presence of a very important person. Joseph knew his brothers but they did not know him [v. 8]. However, it must be said of the brothers that they knew what they had done. They knew the crime that they committed against Joseph.

The same can be said of us in the presence of God. We know that before the all-seeing God, He knows us—our sins and our guilt. The book of Hebrews tells us that we are not creatures “that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” [Hebrews 4:13].

The brothers could only know Joseph if he had revealed himself to them. Likewise, we can know our Redeemer-God only when He reveals Himself to us. And this He did. God knows our helpless sinful condition and has revealed Himself through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is our hope and salvation.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 14**  
**I CORINTHIANS 2**

**MEDITATION**

**The prayer of Christ for believers: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” [John 17:3].**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Genesis 42:9–17*

**LESSON**  
**One is not**

**VERSE 13**

*And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not.*

The scene was a very emotional one for Joseph. It was the first time he had seen his brothers after they had sold him. Though affected emotionally, Joseph had to feign ignorance at that first meeting. He spoke to them roughly, even accusing them of being spies. His motive was to find out whether his 10 brethren had repented of their evil ways.

The brothers told Joseph that they belonged to a family of 12 brothers. The youngest, Benjamin, had remained with the father, and “one is not”, meaning to say that one was no longer in the land of the living.

These three words are to be taken as a matter of fact. From the context of the conversation, there was remorse on the part of the brothers over what they had done to Joseph, the one who was not. At the same time, the words also expressed a deed that could not be undone—an irreparable act. We can suppose that if they were able to rewind the clock, the brothers would, but they could not.

Such is our sin. We cannot undo it on our own. Sinners are dead in their sins and trespasses [Ephesians 2:1]. In the words of the brothers, a sinner was not. However, in Christ, we are! “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” [John 3:36a]. More than that, in Christ, we will be more than we are. “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].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
 IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 15**  
**I CORINTHIANS 3**

**REMINDER**

**Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. – 2 Corinthians 5:17**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 42:18–24***LESSON****Joseph's conditions****VERSE 18**

*And Joseph said unto them  
the third day, This do, and  
live; for I fear God.*

**H**ow reassuring the short declaration, “I fear God”, must have sounded to the 10 brethren. The very mention of the fear of God by Joseph must be encouraging to them indeed. Moreover, it would bring conviction of their sin as well. Joseph set his plan in motion to check on his brethren’s integrity. He was also concerned for Benjamin’s safety since he had no idea how they felt about him.

“I fear God” reveals Joseph’s continued trust in God despite being sold as a slave in Egypt. His testimony before Pharaoh and his people was good [Genesis 41:38–39]. God’s hand at work in Joseph’s life can be seen in his dealing with his 10 brethren.

The guilty conscience over Joseph’s misfortune had been plaguing the ten of them. They acknowledged their due retribution, “We are verily guilty concerning our brother ... therefore is this distress come upon us” [v. 21]. Beware of the consequences of evil doing, for all evildoers will meet their ‘come-uppance’ one fine day.

As one writer puts it, “The only permanent and true basis of morality is the fear of God.” When a person fears God, he shows love for his brethren, as what Joseph did. Moreover, he does not recompense evil for evil. Every child of God must not think of returning tit for tat. Our Lord Jesus, the New Testament Joseph, is the perfect example of not seeking revenge and vengeance on one’s enemies’ ill treatment.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 16**  
**I CORINTHIANS 4**

**PRAYER**

**Recompense to no man evil for evil. – Romans  
12:17a**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 42:25–28***LESSON****What is this that God hath done unto us?****VERSE 28**

*And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?*

Joseph's nine brothers left Egypt with the grain. On the way to Canaan, one of the brothers found his purchase money in his sack. The discovery filled the men with dread. "Their heart failed them, and they were afraid" [v. 28]. They were already suspected as spies in Egypt. Now they could be accused as thieves, too. This must be a trap laid to get them: they would soon be pursued and brought back to Egypt, to be charged with fraud. They said to one another, "What is this that God hath done unto us?"

There is no logical explanation for the money to be returned. For the first time they suspected that God had a hand in this episode. The brothers looked upon this incomprehensible affair as a punishment from God for their evil deed against Joseph when he was a teenager. Their guilty conscience, now awakened, caused them constant turmoil.

Thinking Joseph had returned their money out of love, his brothers panicked. They did not know that the money was a gift, not a punishment. Similarly, when we sin, we can expect God to pounce on us. Very often in the midst of our fears, God also shows His love and mercy towards us. And we also wonder, "What is this that God hath done unto us?"

Though God is appalled by our sins, He wants us to repent of our sins and come back to Him. To Joseph's brothers, God used a combination of fear and grace to get their attention and bring them to their knees.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 17–18**  
**I CORINTHIANS 5**

**THOUGHT**

**When we stop blaming God, we make a huge step in finding strength and solace in Him.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 42:29–35***LESSON****The trial of Joseph's brothers****VERSE 35**

*And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.*

The brothers arrived home and told Jacob their father all that had transpired in Egypt. When they opened their sacks of grain, in the mouth of each sack was the money they had paid. They were terrified!

The trials of Joseph were long over. But the trials of his brothers had just begun. The Spirit of God was at work in their hearts and minds right now. Before they could be made partakers of the blessing of Joseph, they must go through this test.

Their guilty conscience distressed them. To the supposedly heathen Egyptian Governor, they revealed: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother ... his blood is required" [Genesis 42:21–22]. Their hearts ached within them, having left Simeon behind in prison, agonising over their own safety, and worrying for their aged father Jacob. Most painful of all, Joseph's anguish of soul and helpless cries in the pit kept haunting them. In the midst of all their trials, they felt they were being severely dealt with by God Himself. How different was their attitude from their brother Joseph!

Joseph recognised his own humanity before God in every instance, the brothers recognised God only through their guilt. Joseph's belief in God influenced his motives and actions. To the brothers, divine working was nothing more than retroactive punishment. While Joseph trusted God's plans to prevail and give meaning to his hardship, his brothers relied on their own strength and remained blind to God's work in their lives. What about you?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 19–20**  
**I CORINTHIANS 6**

**THOUGHT**

**The difference between the success of Joseph and the failure of his brothers is God's presence in their hearts.**

### BIBLE LESSON

*Genesis 42:36–38*

#### LESSON

**All these things against me**

#### VERSE 36

*And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.*

Jacob felt hapless and helpless. He had never got over the pain of losing Joseph years before, and Simeon was held hostage in Egypt. Now the Egyptian wanted his youngest son Benjamin. His heart was utterly broken.

“All these things are against me”, said the despondent Jacob. But in fact “all these things are for him”. The merciful God was using these events to preserve him and his family in order to fulfil His promise that Abraham’s descendants would be “like the stars of heaven”.

We too are afflicted in every aspect—our health, jobs and relationships—and we sometimes think that “all these things are against me”. After seeing so much evidence of God’s goodness in our lives, how strange it is that our faith should still be so frail. Our opinion of God is so imperfect that we never trust Him fully. When we see God dispensing blessings, we believe in Him. When we are afflicted, we ask why He is against us. We can see our afflictions as proof of God’s displeasure or evidence of His vindictive judgement.

Some think that God’s favour towards us is proved when He prospers us. This is deeply rooted in our minds. It requires our greatest effort to dispel it. Let us count it all joy to fall into diverse afflictions. “Though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men” [Lamentations 3:32–33].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 21**  
**I CORINTHIANS 7**

#### THOUGHT

**Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty. – Job 5:17**

### BIBLE LESSON

*Genesis 43:1–7*

#### LESSON

**Necessary companion for  
the journey**

#### VERSE 3

*And Judah spake unto  
him, saying, The man did  
solemnly protest unto us,  
saying, Ye shall not see my  
face, except your brother be  
with you.*

Since Joseph warned his brothers not to show up again without Benjamin, Judah refused to go to Egypt unless his father Jacob let the boy accompany the group. Judah repeated to his father twice the statement of the Egyptian governor: “Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.” Therefore he insisted on the absolute necessity of bringing Benjamin along so that they could buy more grain for the family to survive.

Joseph’s repeated reminders of “Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you” [v. 3, 5] may be alluded to show believers the absolute term to which we must adhere in order to draw nigh to God. Unless we have Christ walking side by side with us along life’s journey, we cannot hope to see the face of God.

Let us liken our life journey to a road trip. We will experience detours, dead ends and accidents. We will sometimes take wrong turns and get lost. We will even experience the occasional flat tyre and breakdown. With Christ travelling with us as our constant companion, we can find comfort when we are discouraged, depressed or losing our way. As He journeys with us, He sees the obstacles we have to overcome. He will surely show us His abundant grace and mercy.

This gives us hope never to lose heart or give up. Indeed, Christ’s companionship enables us to persevere until we see the face of God at the end of the journey.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**I SAMUEL 22  
I CORINTHIANS 8**

#### THOUGHT

**Christ is there not only to lead us but also to walk with us each step of the way. Let us reach out, take His hand and follow where He leads.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 43:8–12***LESSON****Judah as surety for Benjamin****VERSE 9**

*I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, then let me bear the blame for ever.*

**R**euben volunteered to exchange his two sons for Benjamin's safe return. But Jacob did not want his offer and refused to let Benjamin go [Genesis 42:37]. Judah now made a similar offer and the price was his own life. He pledged himself to be a surety (guarantee) for Benjamin's safety. Jacob relented and allowed the lad to accompany his brothers to Egypt to buy more grain.

Similarly, we are lost to our Heavenly Father. Sin has taken us away from Him. The grief of our Father in heaven is no less than that of Jacob. In fact, His grief is deeper because His love for His children is greater. Jesus has offered to be the surety for each of us, who are His Father's children.

Christ Jesus loved His Father and wanted to please the Father in all that He did. So He willingly laid down His own life in exchange for ours. His offer was acceptable to the Heavenly Father. Therefore, it is by His offering that we are saved, delivered from eternal death and restored to fellowship with the Father forever.

Our Lord Jesus undertook our cause and became bound for us. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ... he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ..." [Isaiah 53:4–5]. Our debts are charged to Him and He has paid them all. Our burdens are placed on His shoulders and He has borne them all.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 23**  
**I CORINTHIANS 9**

**THOUGHT**

**What Jesus paid for He will surely keep. He died for me when I was yet a dark sinner: He will never forsake me after I have believed. – JC Ryle**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Genesis 43:13–17*

**LESSON**

**Jacob’s generosity and honesty**

**VERSE 15**

*And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.*

As the famine worsened, Jacob thought it necessary to send his sons to Egypt again to buy more grain. Despite their dire situation, his generosity and honesty were apparent in the arrangements he made.

He told his sons, “Take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds; and take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks” [Genesis 43:11–12].

Jacob sent a present consisting of foods that the land of Canaan still produced. These items were scarce in Egypt: balm, honey, spices and nuts. Though the famine was sore in Canaan, they still had these ‘luxury’ foods. However, honey and spice could not replace the family’s desire for bread. We may live well enough on plain food without dainties, but we cannot live on dainties without plain food. Let us thank God what we need most (rice and flour) is easily available and affordable.

Jacob also made sure his sons sent back the money they found in their sacks. Honesty obliges us to restore not only things that come to us through our own fault but also things that come to us through the mistakes of others. Though we get them by oversight, if we still keep them when the oversight is discovered, we become dishonest. It is better to right a wrong late in an event than never right it at all.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 24**  
**I CORINTHIANS 10**

**THOUGHT**

**Integrity ... does not mean sinless, but it does describe a person who by God’s grace ‘sins less.’ – Sam Storms**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 43:18–25***LESSON****Preparing to meet Joseph****VERSE 23**

*And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.*

Joseph went to great lengths to test his brothers. His house steward was his ‘accomplice’. In this short passage, we read of the reaction of Judah and his brethren towards Joseph’s hospitality. Furthermore, Joseph’s good influence on his steward can be seen in the latter’s handling of the situation.

The steward’s encouraging word was meant to pacify their fear. The fact that Joseph’s steward acknowledged the God of the Hebrews was not only a comfort but also a rebuke to his brethren. It showed their lack of faith in seeing God’s hand in all this. Their fear and guilt were a result of their guilty conscience.

“I had your money” [v. 23] was very reassuring to the brothers. It was proof of their honesty in paying for the corn. Moreover, it was evidence of their integrity. To top it all, the steward brought Simeon to be reunited with them. The steward was echoing his master’s words. How true it is that a guilty conscience needs no accuser. The guilty-stricken is easily alarmed, even wary of the good intentions of others. Even the steward’s encouragement could not lift up their spirits.

Let us be warned then that nothing must come between the Lord and you. The brethren’s ill treatment of Joseph happened many years ago. Yet their guilt plagued them over the years. Is your conscience clear before God and man? Ask God to clear all obstacles hindering your Christian walk with Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 25**  
**I CORINTHIANS 11**

**PRAYER**

**Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you. – 1 Peter 5:7**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 43:26–30***LESSON****Meeting Benjamin****VERSE 29**

*And he lifted up his eyes,  
and saw his brother  
Benjamin, his mother's  
son, and said, Is this your  
younger brother, of whom  
ye spake unto me? And he  
said, God be gracious unto  
thee, my son.*

Joseph, the second-in-command next to Pharaoh in Egypt, was very gentle in his dealing with his brothers. He even threw a feast for them. The brethren's initial unease gave way to merriment, especially after observing Joseph's kind treatment of Benjamin.

The brethren's bowing before Joseph fulfilled the latter's dream [Genesis 37:7–9], a clear sign of God's hand at work in their lives. Joseph had that dream many years ago. However, the significance of Joseph's dream was finally understood only by him at that point of time. God's leading in a believer's life is always in accordance with His perfect timing.

Joseph's seemingly outward expression of benediction upon Benjamin was actually the outpouring of his 'bursting' heart. Without God's blessing, Joseph's condescending, kind words were meaningless. Indeed, absence makes the heart grow fonder. Both Benjamin and Joseph were born of Rachel, resulting in a special bond between them. It was a natural outpouring of his pent-up feeling for his brethren, more so for Benjamin.

Though Joseph rejoiced to see Benjamin, he was not ready to reveal his true identity to his brethren. This shows his complete trust in God for the right moment to do so. As a type of Christ, we must learn from Joseph's example to leave every situation to our Lord. Furthermore, God must be in the centre of our lives. With Him in control, every incident will fall in the right place.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 26–27**  
**I CORINTHIANS 12**

**PRAYER****Lord, help me to be more loving towards others.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 43:31–34***LESSON****The feast****VERSE 33**

*And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.*

The term “set on bread” [v. 31] was a very unusual order given by Joseph. In that time of famine, one was already thankful enough to be fed. However, his brothers were treated to a great feast by the lord of the land. Joseph’s generous hospitality towards his brothers, especially Benjamin, finally dispelled their fear, and they were able to enjoy the sumptuous feast.

Take note of the three tables set for the three groups who were dining: Joseph, the Egyptians and the 11 brethren. It was easily understood why Joseph sat by himself, being the lord of the land. However, “the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians” [v. 32] must be comprehended historically. According to Adam Clarke, the Hebrews were shepherds, and Egypt had almost been ruined by hordes of lawless wandering bandits, under the name of Hycsos, or King-shepherds. Furthermore, the Hebrews sacrificed animals that the Egyptians held sacred, and fed on their flesh. Such animosity prevented any Egyptian from dining with a Hebrew.

What was even more marvellous was that the 11 brethren were seated in order from Reuben the firstborn to Benjamin the youngest. This mystified the brothers who wondered how Joseph could divine their ages correctly.

Finally, the brethren’s initial fear was completely gone because of Joseph’s generous and warm-hearted attitude. This shows that God is in complete control of any situation when we trust in His leading.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**I SAMUEL 28–29**  
**I CORINTHIANS 13**

**THOUGHT**

**God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Genesis 44:1–5*

**LESSON**

**Joseph's final test**

**VERSE 2**

*And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.*

After many unsuccessful attempts to reveal himself to his brethren, Joseph's final test was very severe and grievous indeed. Though Joseph's purpose was sincere, it was very trying for the brethren. Joseph's silver cup found in Benjamin's sack proved to be the turning point in their relationship.

Imagine the shocking scenario the next day after a very pleasant dinner the night before. Indeed, no one can ever know what the following day will bring forth [Matthew 6:34]. Even the brethren themselves could not foresee such an accusation against Benjamin. Words failed them in convincing Joseph of Benjamin's innocence in the face of such clear evidence.

Whatever their faults, all the brethren truly loved their youngest brother, Benjamin. Their willingness to protect him showed their genuine sorrow in acting wickedly against Joseph in the past. Their evil deed against Joseph had caught up with them. However, they passed Joseph's 'test' in their protection and belief of Benjamin's innocence. Truly, our Lord's teaching in the parable of the unmerciful servant [Matthew 18:21–35] proved that those who are forgiven have a forgiving spirit.

The steward's unquestioning obedience to his master, Joseph, reminds us of the obedience of Jesus to God the Father. It is a lesson for us to emulate. That steward had grown to trust in the God of the Hebrews. As God's children, we must live in obedience to His will even if we do not understand why. Learn to keep on trusting God despite adverse circumstances.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**I SAMUEL 30**  
**I CORINTHIANS 14**

**PRAYER**

**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***Genesis 44:6–13***LESSON****The search for Joseph's silver cup****VERSE 9***With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.*

The response of the brethren to the accusation of theft sounded rash and hasty. However, it was because they were very sure of their innocence [v. 8]. Joseph's main purpose was to test their loyalty and affection for their youngest brother, Benjamin, beloved of their father Jacob. Joseph wanted to check on the brethren's repentance from their past evil treatment of him. John Wesley said: "Age and experience may make men wiser and better. They that had sold Joseph, yet would not abandon Benjamin."

Rending one's clothes [v. 13] is an eastern custom to show sorrow and distress when any evil befell that person [Genesis 37:34]. The Egyptians themselves did so when they mourned their dead. There are many instances of such a practice mentioned in the Bible.

We must be wary of hasty and rash words in our speech [Proverbs 29:11; Ecclesiastes 5:2]. Hasty decisions and strong, confident assertions are often wrong, and bring those who make them into great perplexity and distress. We need to remember that the punishment meted out must not be greater than the crime.

Not only was the punishment for theft uttered rashly in haste but the crime also did not warrant such a harsh penalty as death. As God's children, we must remember to be fair when we deal with others. Joseph allowed the other brethren to be released and only detained the guilty party. This showed his fairness and justice in dealing with his brethren. Have you ever been unfairly treated?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**I SAMUEL 31**  
**I CORINTHIANS 15**

**MEDITATION**

**Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. – Colossians 4:6**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Genesis 44:14–17*

**LESSON**

**Joseph's accusation**

**VERSE 16**

*And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found.*

Joseph now saw the result of his test. His brothers felt defenceless before him so they prostrated themselves at his mercy. Judah, the spokesman, was at a loss for words. They could not even voice out their suspicion that the silver cup could have been placed there, just like the money earlier on. They did not dare to arraign Joseph's justice. Their genuine loving concern for Benjamin was seen in their willingness to be punished as well.

Moreover, the brothers chose to stay behind with Benjamin even though Joseph allowed them to return to their father in Canaan. It also proved their love for their father, Jacob, who would be very much affected by Benjamin's absence.

"God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants" revealed the brothers' feeling of guilt in their treatment of Joseph. That burden of guilt weighed heavily on their hearts. This is proof of the truth that "be sure your sin will find you out" [Numbers 32:23b]. A change of geography and location cannot absolve one's guilt from any wrongdoing.

Indeed, Joseph's patience in testing his brethren finally paid off. He could see the change in their attitude towards their youngest brother. Joseph, a type of Christ, illustrates divine direction in his dealing with his brothers. Whatever false accusation Judah felt, it could not be compared to what our Lord Jesus went through. Have you ever been falsely accused? How would you react in such a situation?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 1**  
**1 CORINTHIANS 16**

**REMINDER**

**God's will done God's way will be accomplished in God's own time.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 44:18–34***LESSON****Pleading for Benjamin****VERSE 33**

*Now therefore, I pray  
thee, let thy servant  
abide instead of the lad a  
bondman to my lord; and  
let the lad go up with his  
brethren.*

This was Joseph's last test for his brothers: the silver cup found in the sack of the youngest of them all, Benjamin. His brothers had a choice. They could choose to leave Benjamin behind as Joseph's servant when they returned to their father. They had tried to kill Joseph due to envy and jealousy so it would not surprise Joseph if they chose to give up Benjamin for their own safety.

Instead, Judah pleaded for his brother. This in itself required courage and showed his love for Benjamin. He could have kindled the anger of Joseph [v. 18]. Joseph could have changed his mind and reverted to his first proposal: killing Benjamin and making all the others slaves [Genesis 44:9]. Benjamin was very close to the father. He was Rachel's only son after the 'death' of Joseph [v. 27–28]. They could have gone back and made up another story of Benjamin's demise to relate to Jacob.

However, they did not do that. Be it out of love for their brother or their father, they had done the right thing this time. Judah and his brethren went to Joseph's house to present their case and plead for mercy. After that, Judah did something that was even more praiseworthy. He offered to replace Benjamin and stay in Egypt as Joseph's slave. He was ready to remain in a foreign land if Joseph was to let Benjamin go home with his brothers.

Thank God we need not face such difficult situations in life. But if you were Judah, what would you do?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 2**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 1**

**REMINDER**

**But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. – 1 Thessalonians 4:9**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Genesis 45:1–8*

**LESSON**

**Revealing his identity**

**VERSE 8**

*So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.*

Seeing that there was still much love within the family, Joseph finally revealed his true identity. The brothers were taken aback. They could not answer him and were very troubled [v. 3]. The brother whom they had sold to Egypt as a slave had now become the right-hand man of Pharaoh. Surely he would now take his revenge.

However, Joseph did not see things their way. He saw everything from a higher plane. He told them not to grieve or be angry [v. 5], and showed them the reason behind all his sufferings: God had sent him to Egypt so that the lives of his family could be preserved [v. 7].

God sees everything, even before events happen. Joseph's predicament seemed to be very unfortunate when it first happened but everything worked together for good. At the end of his trial, he could see the hand of God in strengthening him through tribulations, guiding him through difficulties, establishing him in a powerful position so that he could eventually provide for his family and people.

Are you facing great challenges in life now? Are you filled with anxiety and worry? Instead of wallowing in pity and mourning in pain, commit everything to the Lord in prayer. More specifically, pray for God to fill you with the Holy Spirit. Flee from the temptations of the evil one who will tell you to do otherwise. God knows best and we should trust Him. He strengthens His children and purges in love, for when we are tried and purified, only shall we come forth as gold.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 3**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 2**

**REMINDER**

**Glory ye in His holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. Seek the LORD and His strength, seek His face continually. Remember His marvellous works that He hath done, His wonders, and the judgements of His mouth. – 1 Chronicles 16:10–12**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Genesis 45:9–15*

**LESSON**  
**Jacob in Egypt**

**VERSE 9**

*Haste ye, and go up to my  
 father, and say unto him,  
 Thus saith thy son Joseph,  
 God hath made me lord of  
 all Egypt: come down unto  
 me, tarry not.*

After spending so many years in Egypt, Joseph must have missed his family a lot, especially his father, who had doted on him since young, and Benjamin, the only brother borne by his mother, Rachel. This was clearly shown by Joseph's actions after he had identified himself to his brothers. He asked them to quickly assure his father that all was well [v. 9]. Not only have they provisions for the next five years of famine, Joseph was also the lord of all Egypt and could provide even more for them. It was an emotional moment when Joseph was reunited with his brethren [v. 14–15].

Joseph must have suppressed his feelings when he first saw his brothers. As a son, he remembered his father's love for him when he was young. Now that he was in a position to provide for his family, we read that he "tarried not" in fetching his father to live with him. It was as if any waiting would deprive him of the time and opportunity to requite his father's love.

Paul once told Timothy about children: "Let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God" [1 Timothy 5:4]. He further stressed: "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" [1 Timothy 5:8].

Honouring and caring for our parents and family, as written in the Fifth Commandment, pleases God. More importantly, it should come from a sincere heart.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
 IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 4-5**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 3**

**QUESTION**

**Have you shown your love for your family today?**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Genesis 45:16–20*

**LESSON**

**Pharaoh’s invitation**

**VERSE 20**

*Also regard not your stuff;  
for the good of all the land  
of Egypt is yours.*

**M**ore good news was forthcoming. Pharaoh had heard of Joseph’s reunion with his brothers and had told them not to worry. He would grant them the good and the fat of the land [v. 18] and receive their children and wives, as well as Joseph’s father, in wagons [v. 19]. Declared from the very mouth of the king of this land, it was most assuring: “The good of all the land of Egypt is yours” [v. 20b]

Imagine yourself in the shoes of Joseph’s brothers. How would you feel? You had just suffered from famine, worry daily about your survival, and your father had sent you to a faraway land to look for food. Expecting nothing but grace and mercy, you were now given everything in a foreign land. You would have thanked the Almighty God for blessing you beyond that which you expected. Nothing but gratitude would fill your heart.

However, such a scenario is actually not inconceivable. In fact, it should be familiar to us. God has promised us that He would provide for us. Through Christ, we are joint heirs of God’s eternal heritage. We were once wandering in the wilderness, deserving nothing and expecting suffering and death, yet God in His mercy and grace has granted us blessings in the land we live and, more importantly, everlasting life in His eternal kingdom.

What is your response to the wonderful grace of God? Are you still “regarding your stuff” [v. 20]? Worry not, for the good of all eternity is reserved for us if we trust whole-heartedly in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 6–7**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 4**

**CONSIDERATION**

**Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy. – Micah 7:18**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 45:21–24***LESSON****Provisions for the journey****VERSE 24**

*So he sent his brethren  
away, and they departed:  
and he said unto them, See  
that ye fall not out by the  
way.*

The brothers were ready to go back to Canaan. They were to bring the good news to their families. They were to fetch their father and households to live in Egypt. It was going to be a long journey and Joseph had prepared them well. They had wagons to travel in [v. 21], they had enough clothing and money [v. 22], and they had also brought along many gifts for their father [v. 23]. There is also potential danger that Joseph is clearly aware of [v. 24]. He told his brothers, “See that ye fall not out by the way.”

It was interesting that Joseph’s advice to his brothers was for them to love one another on the journey back. It was not “beware of robbers”, “take care of your health” or “look out for one another”. In modern English, his reminder to them is, “Don’t quarrel with one another”.

Joseph must have known his brothers well enough to give this parting advice. He foresaw that the greatest threat they would face in this homeward journey lay not outside but would actually come from within.

Such is the depraved condition of man’s hearts! After being saved from condemnation, we often slide back to our old ways. In fact, this can become worse when we become wealthier or, in the Christian context, more knowledgeable. There are more things to quarrel about. Joseph’s advice is for us as well. Take care not to jump out from the frying pan and into the burning fire.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 8**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 5**

**REMINDER****Remember Colossians 3:12–14.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 45:25–28***LESSON****Good news for Jacob****VERSE 28**

*And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.*

Jacob was older than 130 years when he heard that his favourite son, who was once thought to be dead, was actually alive. He could not believe his ears. He thought his son was long gone and he would only see him in heaven. When he first knew about Joseph's seeming death, he might have asked God why this had happened. Now that he was old, he might have already stopped asking and had resigned to live with this great regret.

Jacob had gone through a lot: tricking Esau of his birthright, working for the hand of Rachel, experiencing Rachel's death after the birth of Benjamin, wrestling with an angel and now trying to survive a famine. He had sent his sons to Egypt to look for a way out.

His sons finally returned and they brought even better news than he could have imagined: Joseph was not only alive but had also become the governor of Egypt. Jacob's heart fainted in unbelief [v. 26] but when he heard news about Joseph from his sons, when he saw the wagons meant for fetching him, his spirit revived [v. 27]. How great it is to see the brightness in an old man's eyes restored! Jacob declared, "I will go and see him before I die." It was almost like his last wish in this earthly life.

Reunion with man is a joyous thing but reconciliation with God is of greater rejoicing. Are there still people around you whose spirits are not revived? Tell them the good news before it is too late.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 9**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 6**

**CONSIDERATION**

**Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. – Luke 15:10**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 46:1–7***LESSON****Putting God first****VERSE 1**

*And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.*

Joseph, his beloved son, is alive! That was all Jacob needed to re-energise his ageing body. After all these years, Jacob thought that he would never see Joseph again. Jacob promptly packed his belongings and, with his family members, embarked on the journey to Egypt. But first he made a stop at Beer-sheba, where the Lord gave him the assurance that going to Joseph in Egypt was part of His promise to make him a great nation.

Any father who has lost his child, especially a beloved child, must long to see the child very much. Jacob was so broken-hearted that he had purposed in his heart to “go down into his grave mourning” [Genesis 37:35]. So on hearing the great news, Jacob tarried not to leave for Egypt. However, he must have had some doubts as well, since he was already advanced in age and such a journey might not be advisable. Therefore, Jacob went to Beer-sheba to seek the Lord, to give thanks and praise God for the good news, as well as to seek assurance on the wisdom of embarking on the journey.

Christians should learn from Jacob’s example of putting God first in every decision in his life. When confronted with a decision, especially a life-changing decision, we should find out whether the choices we make are according to God’s will for our lives.

This is not always easy, but praying and waiting for God’s answer is the best way to navigate through life’s most difficult decisions.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 10**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 7**

**MEDITATION**

**Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. – Proverbs 3:5–6.**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Genesis 46:8–27*

**LESSON**  
**Israelites who entered  
Egypt**

**VERSE 27**

*And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten.*

When Joseph called Jacob to Egypt, we see God calling Israel to fulfil His promises to Abraham that his seed would be multiplied and that he would be a blessing to all the nations in the world. Although not fully a nation, we can see how from one man, Abraham, God had blessed and enlarged his family with 70 souls.

Jacob is the patriarch of the family. Wherever he goes, the family follows. Jacob would not leave them behind to suffer the famine. And at his command, the whole family uprooted itself and left for Egypt. This gives a glimpse into the character of Jacob. He was the revered patriarch of his family and his wishes were obeyed without question. Where did Jacob obtain such authority? The family must have observed his close relationship with God, and he must have instilled the same fear of God in his children.

Likewise, Christian parents should also set a good example for their children by walking closely with the Lord daily. Having a closer walk with God is not just going to church together on Sundays. It should also be evidenced in our daily conversations inside and outside of the home.

How do you behave when someone makes you angry? Do you engage in gossip and character assassination in your workplace? Do you litter when no one is looking? Children are great observers and imitators of their parents and will learn to act and react to daily situations just like their parents.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 11**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 8**

**MEDITATION**

**But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. – 1 Peter 1:15**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 46:28–34***LESSON****The reunion of Joseph  
and Jacob****VERSE 29**

*And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.*

After many long years, Joseph was finally reunited with his father, Jacob. When he was sold as a slave, he was merely a lad. Now he had become the most trusted advisor of Pharaoh. How he must have longed to be able to see his beloved father again! When he finally met his father, Joseph “fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while”. Jacob also was much overjoyed, being able to see his long-lost son, whom he thought was dead.

Joseph made preparations to settle his family in Goshen so that they might have shelter from the famine in Canaan. He told Jacob and his brothers of his plans to present them to Pharaoh, and seek his permission to let them stay. He even taught them what to say so that they would not offend Pharaoh.

As Christians, we are also looking forward to a reunion. Our Lord Jesus, while He was still on this earth, told His followers that He would prepare a place for them in His Father’s house, and that He would return to bring us there. Joseph had gone through trials and tribulations in Egypt, and gained the favour of Pharaoh, so that he was able to bring his family there to shelter them from the famine.

Our Lord Jesus came to earth to suffer and die on the Cross for our sins, gained the favour of God the Father, so that He can bring us to heaven, and avoid the wrath of the Father which will come to pass.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 12**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 9**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, thank You for what You have accomplished for us on the Cross. Thank You for Your cleansing blood, which washes all our sins away.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 47:1–6***LESSON****Presented to Pharaoh****VERSE 6**

*The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.*

Joseph presented his brethren to Pharaoh, as his family who had come from far away Canaan, with their flocks and herds and all their belongings. Pharaoh inquired about their occupation and was told that they were from a line of shepherds. They then entreated Pharaoh to allow them to stay in Goshen because of the famine in Canaan.

Their conduct and responses to Pharaoh's questions pleased him and Pharaoh told Joseph that he should choose the best land in Egypt for his father, brothers and their families to stay. He also instructed Joseph that if any of the men in his family were talented, they should be given the responsibility to look after his cattle.

We are reminded here that we, like the Israelites in Egypt, are merely pilgrims in this world. We are on a journey, the end of which is a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, let us not fear to heed God's calling and be ready, like the Israelites, to pack up and go at a moment's notice for the sake of the Gospel.

While we are yet on this earth, let us also not be weary in doing good. God has given us talents so that we may use it in a way that pleases Him. How then can we be sure that our talents are put to good use? Pray and commit your talents to God, and ask Him to bless your endeavours. Only then can you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 13–14**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 10**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, help us and strengthen us as we continue to labour for Thee. Guide us also as we seek Your will for us every day.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 47:7–10***LESSON****Jacob presented to Pharaoh****VERSE 9**

*And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.*

After presenting his brethren to Pharaoh, Joseph presented his father. Jacob bowed humbly before Pharaoh, and Pharaoh brought up the topic of his age. Jacob described his 130 years of life on this earthly pilgrimage as few and evil.

Jacob was comparing his age with his father Isaac [Genesis 35:28] and his grandfather Abraham [Genesis 25:7]. It must also have been a reference to Jacob's more eventful life, full of deceit and trickery. Yet, it was also a life full of blessings from God, as he received at the end of each event more from the Lord than what he had expected.

And now that he was nearly at the end of his life, Jacob was able to reminisce and rejoice in the blessings that God had showered upon him. Even at this moment, he must have been rejoicing in the fact that he was able to see Joseph again, before he closed his eyes for the last time on this earth.

Let us learn a lesson from Jacob's humility before Pharaoh. He was certainly most blessed to be chosen by God to be the father of the nation that would bring forth the Messiah. Yet, he was humble before Pharaoh, and this was a great difference from the younger Jacob, who tricked his brother Esau, and obtained Isaac's blessings, again through trickery. At the end of his life, Jacob shows us that all that we accomplish on this earth is due to God's blessings, and thus all glory should be the Lord's.

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
2 SAMUEL 15–16  
2 CORINTHIANS 11**

**PRAYER**

**Dear God, teach us to humble ourselves in all that we do, for indeed, it is in Thee alone that we live, and move, and have our being.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Genesis 47:11–12*

**LESSON**

**Settling in Goshen**

**VERSE 11**

*And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded.*

With Pharaoh's blessings, Joseph proceeded to settle his father and his brethren in the land of Rameses, the best part of the land in Goshen. Thus, Jacob and his family, all 70 of them, were able to avoid the famine in their homeland through the blessing and provision of God, Who allowed Joseph to be sold into slavery and put into prison so He could raise him up to become the trusted advisor of Pharaoh.

As Joseph was put in charge of the storehouse of Pharaoh, he was able to provide his father and his brethren with bread according to their needs. Through his wise planning, Joseph stocked up the storehouses of Egypt with sufficient grains to weather the famine in the land. Thus Egypt under Joseph's wise management was literally the house of bread in a land that was facing famine.

This 'house of bread' is a foreshadow of the nation of Israel, which God raised up in this fallen world to be the nation in which the Messiah would be born. Our Lord Jesus is the Messiah, and the Bread of Life. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" [John 6:35].

Are you weary and heavy laden? Are you facing a famine in your spiritual walk and hunger for spiritual nourishment? Our Saviour beckons to you today. Open the Scriptures once again, and feast on the bread that will satisfy your spirit and your soul.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 17**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 12**

**MEDITATION**

**All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. – John 6:37**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 47:13–17***LESSON****When money fails****VERSE 15**

*And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? For the money faileth.*

There was no bread in all the land [v. 13]. This was indeed a very desperate situation in Egypt and Canaan. These were lands of plenty and abundance in terms of natural resources but nature had taken its toll on the earth. The famine was so severe that it stripped the very life away from living things. And thus the livelihood of every human being was badly affected and they were at the point of exhaustion. There was now nothing left but starvation and death.

But with the desperation comes the opportunity for Joseph, God's chosen servant, to shine [v. 14]. God has blessed this man who feared and served Him with much wisdom in managing the great country of Egypt. It is obvious that Joseph had now seen great success in his enterprise. But he never seemed to be proud of his achievement in bringing people to their knees in utter dependence on him for deliverance.

The people at first obtained their food supplies with payment. But before long, even their money ran out. Now they had to depend on the government for their daily ration [v. 15]. And they streamed towards the land where there was a hope of survival.

The Word of God tells us very plainly in Proverbs 11:4: "Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death." It goes to show that riches cannot fully benefit one when one is faced with disaster and death. What a person really needs is a right relationship with God, the source of life.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 18**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 13**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord, let me know the vanity and folly of worldly goods without God so that I may trust only Thee.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 47:18–21***LESSON****To live and not die****VERSE 19**

*Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate.*

**T**his must be one of the saddest cries in the Bible. When people realise that they are at their wits' end and there is no other way to salvation, they will cry desperately for help. Even so now, when the majority of the people see their dire need of help, they will beg for it. They willingly offer themselves to the master—bodies and souls. When man comes face to face with a life-threatening situation, he is willing to do anything to preserve his own precious life.

Joseph was regarded as a saviour in the eyes of the people through his prudence and wisdom. He saved two nations from total destruction. With his foresight he had filled the granaries with a supply of corn for many years to come. The famine may have taken a toll on the inhabitants in Egypt and the surrounding nations but there is enough grain for all.

What a picture it was of the saving acts of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. It was through His sacrificial act that people from every nation can be saved forever. There is room for everyone.

May you see your need to be saved not just from your physical hunger but more so from your spiritual hunger as well. Thank God that Christ has sufficiently satisfied the demand of God for the salvation of our souls for all eternity. This is when He offered Himself once and for all as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 19**  
**GALATIANS 1**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord Jesus, Thou hast accomplished what others cannot by offering Thy holy body for the sake of my soul. Praise Thy holy Name!**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 47:22***LESSON****Remembering the poor****VERSE 22**

*Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands.*

As the famine continued in severity, the private supplies of the people ran low. Being now exhausted, they needed to apply to the state for help. They first parted with their money and then their own lands as well [Genesis 47:16–17]. These enriched the king's treasury, as Joseph without fail brought them. Some sources have charged Joseph as a despotic ruler who used his skills to reduce the people into poverty and slavery.

However, there are these considerations that prove otherwise. The king had bought the corn with his own private money and through Joseph's prophetic foresight stored the corn in preparation for the famine. The people had the same opportunity but they might not have laid the coming calamity to heart. The years of plenty that they also enjoyed had not been taken advantage of. Had they believed Joseph, as the king did, they might have laid up grain for themselves.

It is believed that these lands belonging to the priests were untouchable, being endowed by the temples they served. The priests received an annual allowance of provision for themselves from the state, and it would evidently have been the height of cruelty to withhold that allowance when their lands became incapable of being tilled. Thus they were spared the trouble but were freely supplied by the state.

We need to listen to the Lord's promptings, like Joseph did, and act upon it by faith. He gives us the wisdom and discernment in the paths that we should take. We do not need to suffer the same fate like those who do not believe in the Lord.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 20**  
**GALATIANS 2**

**PRAYER**

**Holy God, thank You for the anointing which Thou hast given unto us whereby we will never be groping in darkness for answers.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 47:23–26***LESSON****Thou hast saved our lives****VERSE 25**

*And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.*

It is such glory to see God's blessing on His people whom He has given such insight and wisdom to bring blessings on the people in the land. Such was the case with Joseph, an individual set for the good of the nation. Indeed, God can use one dedicated person for the blessing of an entire community. There are people whom the world is not worthy to receive.

Joseph had developed a policy that was used widely in national circles for the good of the people. His policy during the whole time of the famine was for them to buy for their necessities with money, livestock, lands and finally their services. Nothing was given free but came at a price. This was necessary to discourage idleness. His policy promoted industry and loyalty.

Although the people were put into paying taxes, they were grateful for the help rendered to them in times of great difficulties. They were satisfied with Joseph's administration. It was remarked, "By means of Joseph's measure the people were placed under the protection of a statute law. They knew the utmost extent of their liability."

We cannot be ungrateful to those who may have saved our life by risking their own for us. It would certainly be considered base and unbecoming. But how much more so not to be grateful to the One Who, by suffering and dying for us, has opened the way to save our undying soul.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 21**  
**GALATIANS 3**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord, we praise and thank Thee for the laying of Thy own life for us, the Just for the unjust, so that we may have eternal life.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 47:27–31***LESSON****Jacob's final days****VERSE 31**

*And he said, Swear unto me. And he swore unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.*

In that land of Goshen, God's people were able to enjoy their freedom without depending on the state and their interaction with the heathen. By the peculiar blessing of Jehovah, they enjoyed much fruitfulness and began to grow into a great nation [v. 27].

The patriarch Jacob saw the hand of the Lord upon His people as he outlived the famine for another 12 years [v. 28]. Nevertheless, he saw even further into the future, as he certainly must have heard and believed the words of his parents and grandparents: "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country" [Hebrews 11:14; Genesis 48:3–4]. They were just pilgrims and strangers in this land, no matter how fertile and rich it was. Nothing can be compared with the land of God's promise.

With this in mind till his dying day, Jacob made mention of his departure and his longing for the land flowing with milk and honey. "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff" [Hebrews 11:21]. He had wished to be buried beside his fathers, mostly as an expression of his faith in the promise of God that his posterity should inherit that land.

We can count on the faithfulness of God in all that He has promised to do for us. He will never forget, no matter how long it takes to accomplish it. We can be sure that He will in His own time fulfil it for the good of our souls and for His own glory as well.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 22**  
**GALATIANS 4**

**PRAYER**

**Almighty God, we thank Thee for Thou art a God who will not and cannot lie.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Genesis 48:1–7***LESSON****Recounting God's  
goodness****VERSE 3***And Jacob said unto Joseph,  
God Almighty appeared  
unto me at Luz in the land  
of Canaan, and blessed me,*

**E**ven in his old age, Jacob never forgot the incredible experience he had with God [Genesis 28:11–12]. He made reference to that highest point in his life, notably when God made a covenant with him. But most assuredly, it was the wonderful name of God Almighty, El Shaddai, that supported his own frail body and faith.

It is well to recount the past goodness of God whether in times of sickness or in health. For Jacob, God had been good to him and his family even though there were times he fell below God's expectations. It is said that the "truly thankful keep calendars and catalogues of God's gracious dealings with them, and delight to recount and reckon them up; not in the lump only and by wholesale, but by particular enumeration upon every good occasion; setting them forth one by one" (John Trapp).

Here also in his remembrance, he seems to earnestly recommend God and His salvation to Joseph, pointing out the splendid promises reserved for his posterity. He sought to engage Joseph's interest to preserve his continued connection with the people of God rather than with the Egyptians. Thus his sons as well as himself set their hearts on the land that their forefathers had come from, the land of Canaan.

How are God's dealings in your life? You can be sure they are all for the good of your soul and you will live to thank Him for being so gracious and good to you.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 23**  
**GALATIANS 5**

**PRAYER**

**O gracious Father, grant me Thy view of the land where I will spend eternity so that I may lose my grip on this temporal world.**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Genesis 48:8–22*

LESSON  
**The never-failing God**

VERSE 15

*And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,*

What a blessing it is to live to a ripe, old age and be able to see your descendants of a few generations. Such was the case with Jacob as he said to Joseph, “I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed” [v. 11]. How wonderful God is to us when He proves Himself to be kind and good, and often surprising us with many a blessing beyond our expectations.

The basis for Jacob’s pronouncement of his blessings on Joseph and his sons was the faithfulness of God. As He had been faithful in blessings to his forefathers before him, so also will He bless them who come into this special relationship with Him [v. 15–16].

Now, even at the end of his life, Jacob was fully persuaded that it was God who had been his Shepherd, keeping and leading him. God had abundantly supplied all his needs and protected him from harm and many dangers. Of course, Joseph was then in the best position and he had no need whatsoever for anyone to feed him. However, it still served as a reminder to him that without God he would have come to nothing, however powerful and rich he might be.

Let us not be too proud to say that we are “rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing”, as God who sees our hearts may say, “Knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” [Revelation 3:17].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
 IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**2 SAMUEL 24**  
**GALATIANS 6**

PRAYER

**O great God and loving Father, we thank Thee for Thy loving care throughout our earthly sojourn without fail.**