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DAILY *manna*

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GENERAL EDITOR

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Daily devotions for reading through the Bible

Dear *Daily Manna* readers,

Welcome to the last quarter of *Daily Manna* for 2013. If you have been a regular *Daily Manna* reader, you would have known that we have been diving deep into God's Word. The Word of God is amazing. There is something for every humble and sincere seeker.

In this quarter, we will see the workings of a merciful and faithful God. Despite the faithlessness of Israel, the Lord remains faithful to them. Just as Paul remind us, "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself" (2 Timothy 2:13). It is my prayer that you will continue to delight in God's Word, and experience the goodness of God in your own life.

Let me also encourage you to write in with your comments as to how we may improve *Daily Manna* (e-mail: 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 49:1–7

LESSON

Instability and cruelty

VERSE 1

And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.

Before Jacob died, he called his sons together and prophesied what would happen to them. These last words of the patriarch should not be seen as his personal judgement. Instead, we should see it as his prophecies as guided by the Holy Spirit. More importantly, there are precious lessons that Christians today can apply to their lives.

Verses 1 to 7 cover three of Jacob's son, namely Reuben, Simeon and Levi. Reuben is Jacob's eldest son. He was invested with so much privilege simply because he was the firstborn. He was Jacob's might, and the beginning of his strength, the excellence of dignity, and the excellence of power [v. 3]. Yet with great privileges came greater responsibilities. As the eldest of all, Reuben had to be stable and reliable, yet he had failed to do so. He had even taken his father's concubine, Bilhah [Genesis 35:22].

Reuben's transgression was not totally that of lust; it was essentially a challenge to his father's authority and a bad example to his siblings. If he could not even control his lust for flesh and power, how could he lead God's people?

Simeon and Levi did not fare well either, they were remembered for their deceit and cruelty against the people of Shechem [Genesis 34]. What do you want to be remembered for? We see here how the character of a man is judged by the things he does. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold" [Proverbs 22:1].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

1 KINGS 1–2
EPHESIANS 1

QUESTION

What shall befall you then in the last days?

BIBLE LESSON
Genesis 49:8–12

LESSON
The Messianic line

VERSE 8

*Judah, thou art he whom
thy brethren shall praise:
thy hand shall be in the
neck of thine enemies; thy
father's children shall bow
down before thee.*

Jacob continued with the prophecy of another son, Judah [v. 8–12]. Although Judah was not exactly blameless in his life [Genesis 38], he and his descendants were blessed. He was to receive the praises of both his brethren and his enemies [v. 8]. Indeed, although Reuben lost his birthright to Joseph, Judah was the one who eventually “prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler” [1 Chronicles 5:2].

This corresponds to Moses’ blessing of Judah: “Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be Thou an help to him from his enemies” [Deuteronomy 33:7]. How privileged is it to be heard by God! How blessed is it to be made sufficient by Him! With God as our help, of whom shall we be afraid?

The tribe of Judah would not only enjoy military prowess [v. 9] and great prosperity [v. 10–11], its line would also be where the Messiah would come [v. 8], the Star out of Jacob and a Sceptre risen out of Israel [Numbers 24:17], the One Who would deliver Israel from her enemies and free God’s children out of the bondage of sin and death.

It is amazing how the Messianic prophecy can be found even in this page of the Bible. Jacob, in his dying words, prophesied the coming of the Saviour. The Holy Spirit had opened his eyes to see what would come thousands of years after him—the vision of the coming of the Son of God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 3–4
EPHESIANS 2

THOUGHT

If Judah, like us, has his moments of folly, why did God choose him and his descendants to be blessed? Nothing but His grace! Thank God for His grace.

BIBLE LESSON

Genesis 49:13–18

LESSON

All upon the Lord

VERSE 18

*I have waited for thy
salvation, O LORD.*

Jacob continued with his prophecies of the last two sons borne to him by Leah. The tribe of Zebulun is to eventually expand to the coast and benefit from sea trade. It will also border Zidon [v. 13]. It is perhaps worthwhile to note that the prophecies have yet to come to pass, though the non-coastal Zebulun did at one time “suck of the abundance of the seas” [Deuteronomy 33:19].

While Zebulun was associated to trade and economic development, Issachar was connected to religious teaching. Out of Issachar would come “men that have understanding of the times” [1 Chronicles 12:32]. In this light, some would think that Issachar was burdened by the problems he saw in Israel [v. 14–15] instead of seeing it literally as being enslaved to forced labour.

Zebulun and Issachar are often paired together in the Bible. Their union is often seen as complementary. One sees to the economic side of running a country and the other, to the religious aspect. One cannot do without the other.

Dan, the son of Rachel’s handmaid Bilhah, was to judge his people. This is evident, for ‘Dan’ means ‘Judge’ to begin with. However, what started well may not end well. Besides losing their allotted land, they eventually succumbed to apostasy and idolatry [Judges 18]. In fact, so great was their sin that the tribe of Dan was not even mentioned when an account of the saved remnants was recorded [Revelation 7:5–8]. The judge has become the judged. Salvation is indeed of the Lord.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 5–6
EPHESIANS 3

REMINDER

God uses different people with different talents and inclinations to do His work. In whatever we do, make sure we are doing things according to His will.

BIBLE LESSON

Genesis 49:19–21

LESSON

**Different threads in God's
tapestry**

VERSE 19

*Gad, a troop shall
overcome him: but he shall
overcome at the last.*

The destinies of the rest of the children borne by Leah and Rachel's handmaids were recorded in three verses—one for each child. Gad would face the hostility and even invasions of many enemies but would eventually emerge triumphant. The tribe of Gad was one of the tribes to be allocated lands to the east of the Jordan River, a place exposed to many enemies. However, their resilience would see to their survival.

Asher would be established by the sea in Canaan and enjoy the privileges of fertile lands and sea trade. They would be blessed with children and would be popular among the brethren, even prosperous enough to dip their feet in oil [Deuteronomy 33:24]. In the times of the United Kingdom, they would be a major provider of resources to the king.

Among the three, Naphtali was perhaps the happiest. After entering Canaan, this tribe would be given the country of Gennesaret (which literally means 'a garden of riches') with a rich water source. Perhaps due to this, the people are also well-known for their gaiety and warm-heartedness.

Three children with three destinies, yet all come within the predestination and knowledge of the omniscient God. The tribe of Gad was fraught with troubles but God used these ordeals in life to train them up to glorify Him. The tribe of Asher was given all the riches to be used by the Lord. Instead of sinking into complacency, the tribe of Naphtali presented herself as a good testimony.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

I KINGS 7
EPHESIANS 4

REMINDER

We are made and wired differently but all come together in the glory of His sovereign plan.

BIBLE LESSON

Genesis 49:22–27

LESSON

Arms made strong

VERSE 24

But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel.)

We now come to Jacob’s blessings to Joseph and Benjamin, the two sons borne to him by his preferred wife, Rachel. Among all of Jacob’s children, Joseph was the most loved, and he did not let his father down either; he bore much fruit [v. 22]. However, it was precisely because of the same reason that he had to suffer the jealousy of his brother and probably went through more hardship than his brothers [v. 23]. Yet the hands of the mighty God sustained him [v. 24], helping and blessing him greatly [v. 25–26]. And Joseph proved to be a son worthy of his father’s love.

Benjamin, Jacob’s youngest son, is described as a ravenous wolf that devours its prey and divides the spoil [v. 27]. This is evident in their warlike bravery (as shown, for example, in Judges 20).

However, it is also worthwhile to note that the descendants of Joseph did not eventually get the fullness of all the blessings. Of the two tribes that came out of the house of Joseph, the tribe of Ephraim would, like Dan, fall into apostasy and idolatry [Hosea 4:17]. The tribe of Benjamin, on the other hand, was given a gentler blessing from Moses: “The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders” [Deuteronomy 33:12].

Be it Joseph or Benjamin, the important thing is God’s strengthening, protection and guidance all day long. Pray for the Lord to lift His countenance upon you.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 8
EPHESIANS 5

PRAYER

Dear God, help me to stay close to You so that I can get the full measure of Your bountiful grace and blessings.

BIBLE LESSON*Genesis 49:28–33***LESSON****Jacob's death****VERSE 31**

*There they buried Abraham
and Sarah his wife; there
they buried Isaac and
Rebekah his wife; and there
I buried Leah.*

Perhaps nothing is more sincere than the words of a dying man. This man had his fair share of adventures in life. He went through ups and downs, experienced happiness and sorrows of life. After blessing his 12 sons, Jacob was ready to leave this transient world.

Jacob's name literally means 'the heel-puller' and he did succeed in cheating his brother of his birthright. Jacob lived up to his name—he is a go-getter. To his merit, he did work honestly for the hand of the woman he loved. He even wrestled with an angel for its blessings and his seed did multiply. He is the father of the 12 tribes of Israel. Even the country that exists today is named after him [Genesis 32:28].

Yet man, regardless of his glorious achievement, eventually has to return to dust, and this is a truth that frightens even the most powerful tyrant of this world. But Jacob died with a glorious hope in his heart. Despite all his shortcomings, God had loved and chosen him, and he in turn had placed all his trust in the true and living God, Who would be known after this as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" [Exodus 3:6].

With this hope, Jacob asked to be buried in the land where his ancestors and loved ones were buried, joining the great cloud of faithful witnesses of man's humble faith in God's amazing grace.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 9
EPHESIANS 6

REMINDER

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. – Hebrews 12:1

BIBLE LESSON

Genesis 50:1–14

LESSON

Mourning and burial

VERSE 9

*And there went up with
him both chariots and
horsemen: and it was a very
great company.*

Jacob's burial was a grand one. This was made possible because his favourite son—who loved him as much—was the most powerful and influential official in Egypt. Jacob was embalmed for 40 days and mourned for 70 [v. 3]. After that, with the permission of Pharaoh, Joseph moved Jacob's body to Canaan, together with a great procession. We can imagine the number of people that followed by simply reading the lengthy account [v. 7–9].

After crossing the Jordan, the procession mourned for yet another seven days [v. 10], and this apparently left a great impression in the minds of the Canaanites [v. 11]. Jacob was eventually buried in the place he wished to be buried in [v. 12–13].

This burial was recorded in much detail, as it might be one of the grandest among all the patriarchs. However, this is not to encourage lavish Christian vigil services and funerals, which are meant more for the living than for the dead. We see the love of Joseph for his father—he went to great extent to fulfil his father's last wish. We see how Joseph and the people (Israelites and even Egyptians) mourned for the demise of such an important man in Israel's history. We see how even in his burial, Jacob left a good testimony for the Canaanites.

“A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth” [Ecclesiastes 7:1]. What is the kind of legacy you wish to leave behind for your children?

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 10
PHILIPPIANS 1

SONG

**And then one day, I'll cross the river,
I'll fight life's final war with pain;
And then, as death gives way to victory,
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives.**

BIBLE LESSON*Genesis 50:15–21***LESSON****Joseph reassured his brothers****VERSE 20**

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

Now that Jacob their father had died, the brothers were afraid that Joseph might seek vengeance against them. After all, they did great evil to Joseph 17 years ago by threatening his life and enslaving him. They wondered if Joseph had truly forgiven them.

The brothers sent a messenger to Joseph, as instructed by their father before he died. They confessed their sins and asked for his forgiveness. They even offered themselves to be servants of Joseph. They demonstrated a true spirit of repentance. They had sold Joseph as a slave; now they offered themselves to be slaves to Joseph.

Joseph assured his brothers that he had forgiven them 17 years ago and had kept on forgiving them. He declared that God was the Judge, not he. He also declared that God had overruled evil and it worked out for good. God had used his terrible trials to strengthen him, teach him to endure hardship and work hard and exalt him to be ruler of Egypt so that he could save his people from catastrophe. Joseph spoke kindly to his brothers not to fear and assured them that he was going to provide for them and their families.

What a dynamic example of forgiving others! Once forgiven, always forgiven. If Joseph could forgive his brothers, we can forgive any person for anything. In fact we must. God demands that we forgive them. “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” [Romans 12:21].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 11
PHILIPPIANS 2

THOUGHT

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. – Luke 6:36–37

BIBLE LESSON*Genesis 50:22–26***LESSON****Joseph ended his life well****VERSE 23**

And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees.

Joseph stayed faithful to God and lived 110 years. Twelve chapters of Scripture [Genesis 37:1–50:21] cover how God prepared and used Joseph to lead the world through the famine, and brought Israel to Egypt. God had completed His purpose with Joseph over this period of 39 years, beginning when Joseph was 17 years old and ending when he was 56. The next 54 years of Joseph's life was covered in only five verses.

What did Joseph do with the rest of his life? Joseph remained faithful to God and lived a godly and righteous life. He kept Israel, the households of his brothers in Egypt, away from the worldly influence of the Canaanites. Joseph was not only faithful but he was also fruitful. He lived to see his great-grandchildren and witnessed the growth of Israel. God was giving fruit to Joseph—grandchildren who were to become the future believers and followers of God.

As he was going to die, Joseph wanted his brothers and all their households to know that the promises of God were true—that God was going to take them back to the Promised Land. He was so sure that he made them swear that they would carry his bones back to the Promised Land when they returned. This was fulfilled 400 years later [Exodus 13:19].

Like Joseph, we must be faithful to God to the very end of our life. We must also be fruitful and bear fruit for God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 12
PHILIPPIANS 3

CHALLENGE

Let us witness to our children and grandchildren, do all we can to lead them to follow Christ and trust His promises.

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 1:1–7

LESSON

**God's deliverance and
faithfulness**

VERSE 7

*And the children of
Israel were fruitful, and
increased abundantly, and
multiplied, and waxed
exceeding mighty; and the
land was filled with them.*

The book of Exodus gives a historical account of Israel's slavery, deliverance and freedom from the might of the Egyptian empire. God had delivered Israel in the past, and He will deliver Israel in the future. God cares and will help us no matter what our circumstances are.

Exodus starts by giving us a quick reminder of the key events of the book of Genesis. God had delivered and saved His people, Israel, some 400 years earlier. He had led them—every member of Jacob's household to Egypt—away from the immoral and ungodly practices of their neighbours, the Canaanites. God wanted to preserve the purity of His chosen people.

God took one of the sons of Jacob and raised him up as ruler of Egypt. The son was Joseph, who ruled Egypt second only to Pharaoh himself. Then God used a famine to move his entire family to Egypt, away from the worldly temptation and influence of the Canaanites. He then placed the family beside the Egyptians, a people who considered the Israelites an abomination and hence would have nothing to do with them. Thus the chance of intermingling and intermarriage was minimised. Hence, Israel would keep its godly identity.

God not only saved the 70 people from Jacob's household but He also kept His faithfulness by fulfilling His promise through the generations. The great multiplication of Israel is a dramatic picture of God fulfilling His great promise to Abraham.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 13
PHILIPPIANS 4

THOUGHT

God will deliver us; He will save us. This is the promise of God to His people, to those who truly love and follow Him.

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 1:8–14

LESSON

**The enslavement of Israel
by Egypt**

VERSE 14

And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.

Now there arose a new king who knew not Joseph. The land of Egypt, once a happy shelter and settlement for Israel, had become for them a house of bondage. All who knew Joseph loved him and were kind to his relatives for his sake. But after his death, all his good works and contributions were forgotten. Therefore our core purpose should be to serve God and please Him, as He will never forget our work and labour of love for Him [Revelation 14:13].

The new Pharaoh oppressed Israel for three reasons. First, he knew nothing about the true and living God. Second, he feared that the numbers and strength of Israelites would become a threat to his nation. Third, he was afraid that Israel might leave Egypt and its labour and economic power would be lost to Egypt.

The new Pharaoh tried to control Israel by setting slave-masters over the Israelites and subjecting them to hard labour. The intent was to stop Israel's population growth, break their spirits and keep them from child bearing. It caused many to die from hard work and harsh treatment. But the people overcame the persecution by multiplying and bearing more and more children. The more they were persecuted, the greater in numbers they grew.

Egypt is a picture of a world that ridicules and persecutes God's people. However, God always delivers believers from persecution and enslavement, if they will only hold on to their faith and persevere in following after Him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 14
COLOSSIANS 1

THOUGHT

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness. – Isaiah 41:10

BIBLE LESSON
Exodus 1:15–22

LESSON

**The midwives who feared
 God**

VERSE 17

*But the midwives feared
 God, and did not as the
 king of Egypt commanded
 them, but saved the men
 children alive.*

Pharaoh, who was the most powerful ruler at that time, was accustomed to having people do his bidding. He now feared the numerical strength of the Israelites. One day, he ordered midwives Shiphrah and Puah to kill all newborn Jewish baby boys. However, the God-fearing midwives defied his order. This infuriated Pharaoh, who summoned them before his throne and demanded an explanation. Though terrified, Shiphrah and Puah put their faith in God.

There are only seven verses in the Bible that mention these two seemingly insignificant women. Pharaoh spoke to them in person. Any disobedience would mean certain death. Yet, despite how things looked outwardly, the courageous women looked not at the things that were seen but to God, Who was unseen.

What can we learn from Shiphrah and Puah? Believers should do what is right in God's eyes and not what is right in the eyes of the world. This can be frightening and it takes courage, too. But God always has a bigger plan that we cannot see right now. Furthermore, there is no such thing as an insignificant child of God or a minor character in His plan.

To God, Pharaoh is insignificant, as can be seen by the special mention of Shiphrah and Puah in Scripture. When they stood with God and defied the mighty Pharaoh, those two midwives were not looking for a reward. They only wanted to trust and obey God. Because of their obedience, God "made them houses". He gave them families of their own.

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

THOUGHT

Shiphrah and Puah had absolutely no idea that their courageous act would eventually lead to the redemption of Israel. Their fear of God had made history.

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 2:1–6

LESSON

**The princess who had
compassion on a child**

VERSE 6

*And when she had opened
it, she saw the child: and,
behold, the babe wept. And
she had compassion on
him, and said, This is one
of the Hebrews' children.*

God's hand was at work again in the history of Israel, through the preservation the life of one child who would become Israel's deliverer [Exodus 2]. Moses, a newborn Hebrew boy, was "thrown into River Nile" in a basket in token obedience to Pharaoh, and "taken out of the river" by none other than Pharaoh's daughter.

Though she was Egyptian, an idolater who worshiped the sun, God chose Pharaoh's daughter to save the baby boy from drowning. Although he was a Hebrew, she cared for him and this laid the foundation of his great work for God. Just as God called a heathen ruler Cyrus who allowed the exiled Israelites to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, He also used a pagan princess to deliver the child who was to become one of God's greatest servants.

For 40 years Moses was looked after and educated as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He enjoyed the privileges of a prince of the royal court. "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds" [Acts 7:22]. He put his skills and knowledge to good use when he wrote the first five books of the Bible.

The Jewish nation—and Christians alike—is indebted to Pharaoh's daughter for Moses' life and education. She alone stood effectually between the helpless baby and imminent death. Think of what would have happened if the princess had not come down to the river at the hour she did.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 16
COLOSSIANS 3

THOUGHT

Of all the people in Egypt, we would least expect to see a member of Pharaoh's household to find baby Moses. What a challenge to the limits of our faith! What a gracious God we have!

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 2:7–10***LESSON****The two mothers of
Moses****VERSE 9**

*And Pharaoh's daughter
said unto her, Take this
child away, and nurse it for
me, and I will give thee thy
wages. And the woman took
the child, and nursed it.*

Moses could not be one of God's greatest servants if not for the women who raised him. God gave him two mothers: his birth mother Jochebed and his adoptive mother, Pharaoh's daughter. Both did their best to give him life, love and knowledge.

They gave Moses life. Moses was born into an environment of death. All boys were to be killed at birth. Jochebed disobeyed Pharaoh's order and chose to hide him. She could not kill him, nor could she raise him. So she placed him in a basket and floated it in the river. Pharaoh's daughter saw the baby and brought it out of the water. She knew he was a Hebrew but her heart was filled with compassion. She disobeyed her father's decree and let the baby live.

Both of them gave Moses love. Jochebed loved her son so much that she would do anything to save him. If her defiance had been discovered, she would be killed. Her love for Moses enabled him to thrive and grow to eventually free his people from the bondage of Egypt. God filled the pagan Egyptian princess with love that she did not hesitate in adopting and caring for a Hebrew boy.

They gave Moses knowledge. The faithful Jochebed imparted to Moses the knowledge of God. His wealthy Egyptian mother gave him the best education that Egypt could offer. The knowledge and education Moses gained had enabled him to serve God mightily in leading His people out of Egypt and writing the Pentateuch of the Bible.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 17
COLOSSIANS 4

THOUGHT

The edict of Pharaoh was death, but Moses' mothers saw life, hope and possibilities.

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 2:11–15

LESSON

Fleeing from the face of Pharaoh

VERSE 15

Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 18
I THESSALONIANS 1

Moses defended an oppressed Hebrew and slew his Egyptian taskmaster. It was premeditated murder because Moses “looked this way and that way” [v. 12] prior to the killing. Moses’ motive was right but his method and timing were wrong. Instead of rising to power and delivering his people from bondage, Moses had to flee from Pharaoh. His flight was not an act of faith in God but one to save his own skin.

When Moses stepped out on his own to become the deliverer of Israel, it resulted in an unmitigated disaster. In his failure we learn that no matter how talented or educated we are, we can do nothing without God’s guidance. We will end up doing terrible things if we persist in our own ways. Moreover, hiding the wrongs we have done does not erase them; it only postpones their discovery. Moses hid the dead body in the sand but “when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses” [v. 15].

Moses had been trained to look at things from the world’s point of view. He was “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds” [Acts 7:22]. In the eyes of others—and probably in his own eyes—he was a great man. As great a man as Moses was, his strengths were also his weaknesses.

This reminds us that God is very selective in using people with great natural abilities because these abilities can so often get in the way to achieving His purpose.

THOUGHT

Moses tried to do God’s work in man’s wisdom and power. It did not work.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 2:16–22***LESSON****A stranger in a strange
land****VERSE 22**

*And she bare him a son,
and he called his name
Gershom: for he said, I have
been a stranger in a strange
land.*

Moses briefly recorded his ‘chance encounter’ in Midian, his marriage to Zipporah and the birth of his son. Moses named his child Gershom because he said, “I have been a stranger in a strange land.” This statement described aptly Moses’ state of mind at that time. In Midian, Moses thought of himself as an alien and a sojourner. To him, Egypt—not Canaan—was still his homeland, which was far away.

Egypt prepared and nurtured Moses as a scholar, a gentleman, a statesman and a soldier. He learnt to rule but not to serve. God was in his consciousness but not in his life. He needed to live a life of constant communion with God. God led him out of Egypt so that he could enter a new training school.

Moses’ coming to Midian was designed by Providence. His manner of life in his new country, where he kept the flock of his father-in-law, would greatly influence his service attitude when he led his people out of Egypt. His shepherd life would teach him hardship and poverty as well as contemplation and devotion. The leader through whom God would use to free His people from bondage was now brought very low. Exile, affliction and solitude were now his tutors to help him complete his education before he could perform his God-appointed duties.

Moses spent 40 years thinking he was somebody, 40 years realising he was nobody, and finally another 40 years seeing what God could do with somebody who was a nobody.

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

THOUGHT

Learn to wait on God. If we run ahead of Him, we may be painfully chastened by turmoil, exhaustion and failure.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 2:23–25***LESSON****Remembering His people****VERSE 24**

*And God heard their
groaning, and God
remembered his covenant
with Abraham, with Isaac,
and with Jacob.*

The Israelites were still severely oppressed under the new Pharaoh. They cried. God heard their groaning and remembered His covenant with their forefathers. Some 400 years had passed since the Israelites left Canaan. They had become too much at home in Egypt and almost forgotten their identity as God's chosen people to whom He had made covenant promises. For them, these promises were only a distant memory. Would God be faithful after all these years?

Exodus affirms that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is a faithful God. He responded to the cries of His children. He was going to act. "He heard, He remembered, He saw, He knew." That was how God responded to His people then and that is how He responds to His people now.

The emphasis is that regardless of Israel's faithfulness or lack of it, God is always faithful. The key idea in verses 24 to 25 (and throughout Scripture) is that God keeps His word and is dependable. Just because sometimes He is in no hurry to answer our prayers does not mean that God has forgotten. We can count on His faithfulness always.

It is also comforting to know that God does not forget us in our suffering. He knows our trials and temptations. We might have to suffer much, with our weaknesses exposed. But God sees our plight and feels our pain. He will help us because of His covenant relationship with us. Therefore, we can commit all our ways to Him and trust His faithfulness.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

I KINGS 20
I THESSALONIANS 3

THOUGHT

The problem today is that too many of us are crying out to everything—self-help books, horoscope, alcohol, drugs—but God for help.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 3:1–6***LESSON****Encountering God****VERSE 2**

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

Now Moses ... led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb" [v. 1]. Moses was now in the desert tending someone's sheep instead of enjoying the riches of Egypt. He had become disappointed and perplexed. All these 40 years had passed away slowly, as he lived in complete obscurity [Acts 7:30]. However, these years spent alone in the wilderness were not in vain. Solitude at the mount was a better place to meet God than in a palace or in a court.

"And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I" [v. 4]. God broke His silence! He spoke out of a burning bush. Little did Moses realise that today would be the beginning of a new chapter in his life; little did he know that here he was going to come face to face with God. This marks the beginning of God's direct intervention into the affairs of history. He had heard the cries of His people in Egypt and it was the right time to redeem them out of their captivity [Exodus 2:23–25].

While searching for answers in your life, you may well be welcomed into the sanctuary with God Himself, Who speaks the truth that will soothe your wearied heart. Like Moses, you may come face to face with God when you turn aside from the world, in reverence to hear Him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 21
I THESSALONIANS 4

PRAYER

O Lord, let me be shut in with Thee so that I can hear only Thy voice and not the noise of the world.

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 3:7–10

LESSON

Knowing our sorrows

VERSE 7

And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

For 400 years the Israelites were in Egypt, and enslaved for most of that time. Their babies were killed and their freedom restricted. There must have been many times when those people wondered why God did not care. But the Lord told Moses that He saw, He heard and He was concerned. Now, He would come to rescue them.

The Lord had already revealed His concern for His people [Exodus 2:23–25] but now He let Moses know His true nature of love for His people. Here the Divine Messenger would prepare Moses, His earthly messenger, to do the work of caring for His people. Hence Moses needed to have the same compassionate heart like God when he served His chosen people. He needed to go down to their level and meet their deepest needs. He needed to carry their burdens upon his heart and pray for them.

Do you ever feel that God has forgotten you? You feel that He must have turned away and is no longer listening to your cries for help. But the truth is God is not deaf to your cries. He is preparing to come to your aid. When Christ came, it was because God saw the need of humanity and saw us without a Shepherd. God came down in the person of Jesus Christ to rescue us. The timing was perfect and the offer of salvation has been proclaimed throughout the world.

He knows what we need. He knows where we are. He knows how to help.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I KINGS 22
I THESSALONIANS 5

PRAYER

O Lord God, I praise Thee for Thy compassions which Thou hast for Thine own; they are new every morning.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 3:11–12***LESSON****Man's nothingness****VERSE 11**

*And Moses said unto God,
Who am I, that I should
go unto Pharaoh, and that
I should bring forth the
children of Israel out of
Egypt?*

The children had been held captive in Egypt for a long time. Now was the right time for them to be delivered. But who would the Lord send to be the deliverer? Who would He choose to do this great work? In our human understanding, we would choose the brightest scholar who knows diplomacy well. We may send a great military leader or a skilled politician who can negotiate with Pharaoh. Or we may send a great orator who could give a heart-stirring speech that would grip the hearts of hearers.

But God chose a poor shepherd instead. To be exact, God chose a fugitive and a murderer who had escaped from the very land that God had intended to send him. How ironical! This is not to despise intelligence. In fact, Moses was all these and more.

But that was more than 40 years ago. He had been reduced to nothingness and thus he really felt inadequate when he met God. Moses was aware that he had tried this once and it had not worked. He had thoroughly mastered the lesson of human inadequacy that he was too timid to even respond to the call of God now.

It was said, "The task ahead of you is never as great as the Power behind you." Before, Moses had been confident of his own ability, but now he had absolutely no confidence. God had broken him in the last 40 years in the desert so that he saw his only sufficiency was in the Lord in Whom he now served.

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

PRAYER

O Lord, thank You for allowing me to go through the dark valley of humiliation so that I may rise to be Thy humble servant.

BIBLE LESSON
Exodus 3:13–14

LESSON
I AM THAT I AM

VERSE 14

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" [v. 11]. The answer God gave him showed that the only important thing is not who he is but whose he is and who is ever present with him. In other words, Moses should redirect his attention from himself and the 'mighty' Pharaoh to his God. However inadequate we feel in our service, we may march fearlessly forward if He grants us His presence.

Still in doubt, Moses raised another question to defer his calling, "What is His name?" [v. 13]. God in condescension told Moses that he should tell the Israelites that His name is "I AM THAT I AM". What a strange name! But it really means that God is, always has been and always will be. He is the One Who had sent Moses.

God cannot be confined by a name. In fact, He transcends any description of Him that we can muster. He is the God Who exists not only really and independently but also unchangeably. So it is clear that whatever God has begun to do, He will bring it to completion because there are no changes that necessitate any alterations to His original plans and purposes.

We should not be ashamed that we are serving such a God like the One Moses served so faithfully till the end of his life. Instead, we should count it our greatest joy and privilege to be called into His great work and into partnership with Him.

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

PRAYER

O Lord, what an honour it is to be Thy servant! Help me to heed Thy call and respond appropriately.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 3:15–18***LESSON****The land of milk and honey****VERSE 17**

And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

God's people were able to enjoy much fruitfulness in the land of Goshen besides having freedom to worship Yahweh. They need not depend on the Egyptians. They had special blessings from God through the leadership of Joseph. But then they were later reduced to slavery under the tyranny of another Pharaoh who knew not Joseph. Their worship of Jehovah was also curbed. This was when God promised to deliver them so that they could worship Him again without hindrances.

“And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob” [Genesis 50:24]. As promised, God, Who was aware of their situation in Egypt, was now ready to set them free.

This expression “a land flowing with milk and honey” [v. 17] occurs no fewer than 15 times in the Torah, and another five times in the Prophets. It refers to the fruitfulness of the Holy Land. According to early Jewish Rabbinical writings, it is indicative and symptomatic of a greater good—the fertility of the Promised Land. The land God will lead them to would be more fruitful, prosperous and abundant.

The God Who has promised us eternal life does not lie [Titus 1:2]. He is faithful to every word that He has uttered and all will be fulfilled. Hence we should be encouraged to pursue Him Whom we love and adore, in the light of our bright prospect.

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

PRAYER

My gracious Father, I thank Thee for Thou art a God Who will not and cannot lie.

BIBLE LESSON
Exodus 3:19–22

LESSON
God's out-stretched hand

VERSE 20

And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

With all these promises made to Moses, he now seemed ready to begin that momentous task. But there still stood a formidable opponent: Pharaoh. It was made clear to Moses that Pharaoh would stand in the way of a smooth transition. But God would deal with him.

Pharaoh was so obstinate that no human power was strong enough to bend his will. Thus God would have to stretch out His hand and compel Pharaoh to submission. God can force even the proudest of men to comply to His will by His might. One can be as hard as steel against men's power but God's hand can crush and break the strongest will. Indeed, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" [Hebrews 10:31].

"And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty" [v. 21]. God commanded the Israelites to ask or demand a certain recompense for their past services. He would incline the hearts of the Egyptians to give liberally. This would be compensation for the long and painful services that the 600,000 Israelites had rendered to Egypt for many years. After all, Egypt owed its policy, opulence and even political existence to the Israelites.

No labour of love of yours is forgotten by our generous and good Master, Who will reward us accordingly in due time. Therefore, do not faint or grow weary in your humble service for the Lord that you are rendering in His Name.

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

PRAYER

O Almighty God, it is a fearful thing to fall into Thy hand for judgement. Let me rather be submissive to Thee and Thy will.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 4:1***LESSON****They will not believe me****VERSE 1**

And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.

Moses was well aware of his status in Egypt. He was a man with a bad past, one that he would rather not revisit. He had provoked the anger of Pharaoh, and worse, his Hebrew brethren's last words to him were: "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" [Exodus 2:14]. The prospect of him going back and leading the Hebrews out of Egypt seems very remote indeed.

He was a fugitive from Pharaoh and also from his own people. That was the reason why he had to spend 40 years in the wilderness, leaving behind the courts of Pharaoh in Egypt.

Herein is the first lesson for all of us. Most of us have a past that we are not proud of. "For all hath sinned and come short of the glory of God" [Romans 3:23]. Let not your past be a hindrance to your effective service for God. We have to look at the task at hand. We have been redeemed for a purpose, and that purpose is weightier than the burden of our past. God is the One Who enables those He calls. He has promised that He will be with us always [Matthew 28:20].

Our adversary will cast doubt to thwart us but listen to Paul, who said: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" [Hebrews 12:1].

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

PRAYER

Lord, keep me focused on You so that I will not stumble and fall.

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 4:2–5

LESSON

What is that in thine hand?

VERSE 2

And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.

Our wise God had the perfect response to Moses' hesitations: "What is that in thine hand?" The Lord knew what Moses was afraid of. But He had prepared Moses for his task since he was born.

Nothing happens by chance but God is in control of everything. Thus Moses cast into the river as an infant was found by Pharaoh's daughter and raised as her prince. Thus also was Moses fallen into disfavour by both Pharaoh and the Hebrews, and exiled for 40 years into the wilderness. Moses had nothing to call his own except what was in his hands. The humble shepherd's rod was all he had to account for his 40 years in the wilderness—but it was sufficient for the Lord's use.

What about you? Has God not given you opportunities to learn and practise the talents that He has given you? Is this, then, your 'burning bush' moment, as the Lord calls you to serve Him with the talent that He has given to you? Is the Lord now asking you the same question: "What is that in thine hand?"

You have wielded your talents for your own purposes. Now you need to consider: Whatever the Lord has put into your hands, would you not use it for the real purpose that He has intended it? Banish all hesitation and step forth boldly into His service. Make this your purpose from this day forth and see how the Lord can make use of your talents to bless those you encounter in life.

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

PRAYER

Lord, use me today to bring more souls into Your Kingdom.

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 4:6–9

LESSON

Put forth thine hands

VERSE 6

*And the LORD said
furthermore unto him,
Put now thine hand into
thy bosom. And he put his
hand into his bosom: and
when he took it out, behold,
his hand was leprous as
snow.*

The Lord had shown Moses a miraculous sign: using Moses' rod, which turned into a serpent [Exodus 4:2–5]. Now, the Lord showed Moses another sign, using Moses' hand. Upon removing his hand from his bosom, Moses discovered that his hand had become leprous. Then, the Lord healed his hand when He asked Moses to put his hand into his bosom a second time.

As if in anticipation of further arguments from Moses, the Lord showed Moses that He did not really need any external objects—like the rod—to perform His will. God can even make use of just Moses' hands. Later, Moses would stretch forth his hand to bring hail [Exodus 9:22], locusts [Exodus 10:12] and darkness [Exodus 10:22] to Egypt, as the Lord commanded. In all these, the Lord made use of Moses because Moses was willing to be used for His purposes.

Oftentimes, we use our circumstances as an excuse for not doing God's work: "I would have gone to church if my car was not at the workshop"; "I would have given more to my church if I had more resources, money and time." We should realise that if the Lord calls us to do His work, it is because He wants us to submit to Him first. Once we have submitted and are willing to be used by Him, then our Lord will enable us to do the tasks that He has called us to do.

In the end, it is not us but God's name that is magnified and glorified.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 7
1 TIMOTHY 4

PRAYER

Lord, I am willing to be used by You.

BIBLE LESSON
Exodus 4:10–12

LESSON
I will teach thee

VERSE 12

*Now therefore go, and I will
 be with thy mouth, and
 teach thee what thou shalt
 say.*

God next countered Moses' argument that he was not eloquent, slow of speech and slow of tongue. Perhaps Moses had been in the wilderness for too long and, as a result, had forgotten that he was brought up in all the wisdom of the Egyptians [Acts 7:22], where he was trained to be a prince. His solitary years in the wilderness must have dulled his oratorical skills.

God told Moses that He would be his mouth and that He would teach him what to say. By those words, God gave Moses assurances. God was not sending Moses to meet Pharaoh on his own. In fact, God would be at Moses' side all the way. What a great assurance to have the Almighty God beside him all the time! Additionally, God was also going to teach him what to say to Pharaoh. Moses did not even have to think of the right things to say before Pharaoh. He did not need the wisdom of the Egyptians when dealing with Pharaoh. God alone is sufficient.

We, too, have the same assurance from our Lord Jesus in His great commission. Our main purpose in this life is to preach the Gospel to the lost, and our Lord has assured us that He will be with us, even to the end of the world.

Our Lord Jesus, the One Who has redeemed us, is with us all the time. Like Moses, we do not have to rely on the wisdom of this world to be an effective soul-winner. God alone is sufficient.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
 IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 8
1 TIMOTHY 5

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for walking beside me.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 4:13–18***LESSON****I will be with his mouth****VERSE 16**

*And he shall be thy
spokesman unto the people:
and he shall be, even he
shall be to thee instead of a
mouth, and thou shalt be to
him instead of God.*

God's anger was kindled against Moses when he asked God to send someone else. But He gave Aaron to him as his assistant. It was not clear why Aaron went to look for Moses in the wilderness but God in His providence appointed Aaron to perform the task together with Moses. Aaron was to be Moses' spokesman unto the Hebrew people, as he was more readily accepted by the people.

Thus God had given Moses many assurances. First, his rod will become God's rod to be a sign to the Egyptians. Then, God Himself will be with Moses to teach and guide him. Finally, God had also given Moses an assistant who shall speak what Moses asked him to speak, getting his directions from Moses.

In our service for God, we are also given similar assurances. God has given us the talents and the tools to do His work. In addition, He has promised to be with us always [Matthew 28:20]. Finally, God will send us helpers to share our burdens as we labour together for Him. In the same context, God has given us the church as a body of believers who will be able to help one another, with their own talents and gifts, so that God's work can be magnified.

It is also important for us to disciple others in the faith so that we can together be an effective ministry for God. This also ensures that God's work will continue, even when we are no longer around.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 9
1 TIMOTHY 6

PRAYER

Lord, teach me so that I can teach others to serve You.

BIBLE LESSON
Exodus 4:19–23

LESSON

I have put it in thine hand

VERSE 21

And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.

Moses must have had the most daunting task in the entire history of the world. After being exiled from Egypt for 40 years, the Lord asked him to return to the very place that he had run away from. He also had a near-impossible task: To ask Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go, knowing full well that these people are under Pharaoh's bondage.

To make the task even more daunting, the Lord said that He would harden Pharaoh's heart. In human terms, this would be the exact justification not to go at all. Other than that, Moses was also to give Pharaoh the ultimate warning from Jehovah: that God would kill all firstborn, including Pharaoh's, if he refused to let the Hebrews go. How would Pharaoh respond to such a threat?

There were other characters in Scripture who were given difficult tasks. Jonah was given the task of delivering God's judgement to Nineveh. Hosea was asked to marry a harlot. Abraham was asked to sacrifice his only son. Yet all of them performed their duties according to God's command. What was their motivation? Simply that God had put the tasks in their hands. Implicit in this is the belief that the Almighty God Who had called them to their tasks would also enable them to perform them successfully.

What tasks has the Lord put in your hands? See to it that you complete them, because God is able to uphold you in your tasks, just as our Lord Jesus Who took our sins on the Cross simply because God had put this task in His hands.

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

PRAYER

Lord, I will do your bidding today because You have put it in my hands.

BIBLE LESSON
Exodus 4:24–27

LESSON
Neglecting God

VERSE 24

And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him.

During his 40 years of exile in the wilderness, Moses married Zipporah, Jethro's daughter, and she bore him a son called Gershom [Exodus 2:22]. Moses' sin was highlighted in today's reading in that he had neglected to circumcise his son. For this sin, the Lord met him by the way in the inn and sought to kill him. Notwithstanding that God had just called Moses to return to Egypt, the Lord was also seeking to restore Moses to his Jewish obligations. Upon learning of this, Zipporah took a sharp stone and performed the circumcision on their son.

This episode in Moses' life teaches us a lesson on one of the characteristics of God. Our God is holy and cannot tolerate sin. Even Moses, who was called by God to perform a mighty task, could not evade the consequences of sin [Romans 6:23]. Moses sinned when he failed to observe the commandments of God regarding circumcision and God was rightly displeased with him. Zipporah's quick action averted a tragedy and the Lord released Moses after the commandment had been fulfilled.

We should all examine our lives to see if there are any uncontested sins. God is no respecter of persons. Regardless of who you are, recognise that you are a sinner in God's sight and He is displeased whenever we sin.

God may have called us to various tasks, great or small, but first, we need to cleanse ourselves before we can be effective vessels fit for the Master's use.

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

PRAYER

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

BIBLE LESSON
Exodus 4:28–31

LESSON
The people believed

VERSE 31

*And the people believed:
and when they heard that
the LORD had visited the
children of Israel, and
that he had looked upon
their affliction, then they
bowed their heads and
worshipped.*

The Lord commanded Aaron to meet Moses in the wilderness and Aaron faithfully obeyed. In the mount of God, Moses and Aaron met and embraced each other with mutual endearments, as brothers do. There, Moses told Aaron all that God had said to him and all the signs that God had commanded him to perform before the people and before Pharaoh.

Without delay, Moses and Aaron went and gathered the elders of the Israelites, where Aaron spoke the words that God commanded him to speak, and Moses performed the signs as God commanded. And, behold, the people believed all Aaron and Moses had spoken and shown them. Upon hearing and seeing, they realised that the God of their fathers had visited them, and had acknowledged their sufferings. Their immediate reaction was to bow their heads and worship Jehovah.

All that the Lord said to Moses regarding the people so far had come true. Gone were the objections and excuses that Moses presented to God earlier before he took on that task. The Israelites did not reject Moses. He was accepted as one sent by God.

We live in a sin-cursed world but our Lord has seen the afflictions of His creation and has devised a plan to save us all from it. Jesus had come to be born a man, lived a sinless life, and died a sacrificial death on the Cross to bear the punishment for our sins. Will your reaction to this fact be like the Israelites, to believe, and to bow down your head in worship of the Almighty God?

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 13
2 TIMOTHY 3

PRAYER

Lord, I believe.

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 5:1–3

LESSON

Unbelief – a sin of defiance

VERSE 2

And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.

Who is the Lord?" Pharaoh asked this question to spite the Israelites. He certainly knew about God in his head but he was in defiance.

Do atheists know that God exists? Yes, they do but they do not accept it because they do not want to be accountable to Him. They would rather put their belief and trust in man, man's power and man's intelligence. They worship the creature instead of the Creator. They worship the idol that is in their mind. This idol may well be they themselves. When they do that, nothing seems to happen to them and their lives on earth. Perhaps they are even better off than those who trust in God.

But life here is short and we all pass away forever sooner or later. This place will know us no more. Do you know your father's great grandfather? It is but a memory based on hearsay. Who is Pharaoh? Even his own countrymen forgot his name. He did not realise that he was the king because God allowed it [Proverbs 8:15]. The greatest empire on earth will soon crumble. The most powerful man will one day die. However, God remains unchanged.

Why would God not just let Pharaoh's heart be agreeable and release the Israelites? By His grace, He has given each of us a free will. We have a choice. Fighting with God is likened to using an egg to smash a stone. Man may resist God but He will eventually fulfil everything within His plan.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 14
2 TIMOTHY 4

THOUGHT

And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. – Acts 9:5

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 5:4–9

LESSON

Continue to trust God

VERSE 4

*And the king of Egypt said
unto them, Wherefore
do ye, Moses and Aaron,
let the people from their
works? Get you unto your
burdens.*

How often do we feel that we are treated unfairly by the world? By the grace of God, we try to live honestly, following His commandments. Yet this seems to place us at a disadvantage because we appear to be receiving the short end of the stick on many occasions. We often witness godless people faring better and becoming richer. The Psalmists must have felt the same thing when they wrote Psalms 37 and 73.

We can look at life from two perspectives. From a human point of view, those who trust in God have to abide by God's laws and commandments while others do whatever they like and become better off. If you look at this world as the only and final place, then you may be right to feel that it is unfair.

Pharaoh had an upper hand. He responded to Moses' request to worship God with a heavy hand. He accused the Israelites of being idle and increased their workload, causing them more misery. His power was so great that his word was law. Just like the Israelites, we face many difficulties in today's world, where we are bossed around. We feel helpless.

Where would you go to when you face problems like these? We must remember to look to God. We should not be and are never alone. Remember that God is with us at all times. We are to turn to Him. He does not promise that difficult issues will disappear but He is there to walk through them with you and to overcome them.

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

THOUGHT

Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. – Psalm 37:3

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 5:10–13

LESSON

Still on the throne

VERSE 11

*Go ye, get you straw where
ye can find it: yet not
ought of your work shall be
diminished.*

Our difficulties seem to increase in our daily lives. We try to live a godly life but we are ridiculed for our belief. This may not happen only in our workplace or at school. There are those in our family who persecute Christians. Our ‘wrong’ is only that we trust the Lord Jesus as our Saviour. It seems that those who do not trust God are better off.

While God remembers each of His children, He also allows us to grow in the real world of sin. When we suffer cold and hunger, we appreciate warmth and providence of food all the more. In letting us experience persecution, we understand the goodness of God.

However, it is not easy to face persecution and suffering. We are often humiliated and our feelings are hurt. We perceive that we are alone and question God as to why we have to suffer for our belief in Jesus Christ.

Let us be reminded that we are not alone. Many of our brethren go through difficulties as well. More importantly, this should drive us to the arms of God to ask for His intervention and help. He is waiting for us to call upon Him. It is only when we are drawn close to God that we realise that all along the way of our earthly sojourn He has been near to us. Contrary to our thoughts, He has never departed from us and has always been at our side, holding our hands.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 16
TITUS 2

THOUGHT

For the LORD will not forsake His people for His great name’s sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you His people. – 1 Samuel 12:22

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 5:14–18***LESSON****Be strong and take
courage in the Lord****VERSE 18***Go therefore now, and
work; for there shall no
straw be given you, yet shall
ye deliver the tale of bricks.*

As Moses pressed on for Pharaoh to release the Israelites so that they could worship the Lord God, their suffering piled up. The Israelites were constructing buildings. They laid bricks made by others. These bricks were inlaid with straws. Now they have to gather the straws, make the bricks and lay them for erecting the walls. Pharaoh demanded that they produce the same output when straw was supplied. Pharaoh was challenging the God of Israel, the very same God Who created him and allowed him to rule over Egypt.

There are times when we are so stressed up and overwhelmed with problems that we cannot even understand, let alone handle or solve them? There is no way for us to go.

In situations like these, look up. God is there waiting for your call. He will provide the solution. No one has ever suffered more than Jesus. He was not recognised as God but instead persecuted and executed like a criminal. He committed no sin, nor could He commit any. Why would He ever want to suffer and die such a cruel death? Could He not find any other way out? He had to die for us and He chose to do so because He loves each of us. He did not give up.

The Israelites almost gave up but was told to persevere. The Bible reminds us to be strong and take courage in the Lord. So let us continue to trust that God will bring to pass all our difficulties as He has a higher plan for each of us.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

2 KINGS 17
TITUS 3

THOUGHT

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

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 5:19–23

LESSON

God’s way – the best way

VERSE 23

*For since I came to Pharaoh
to speak in thy name,
he hath done evil to this
people; neither hast thou
delivered thy people at all.*

Though we have already put our faith and trust in the Lord, there are also times when we are weak. Pressure increases and we withstand them further. Problems seem to come from all sides. We do not know what to do. Prayers have been said but there is no change and the sufferings continue. We begin to wonder where God is. Has He heard our prayers? If He did, why is He ignoring us? We begin to murmur and question God.

The children of Israel were at their breaking point. Moses had kindled the anger of the great Pharaoh and he had in turn multiplied their workload. Couldn’t Moses just leave them alone so that they could continue their lives without additional burdens? Moses went to God to ask similar questions, too. Did God make a mistake?

God neither slumbers nor sleeps. He makes no mistake. Whatever He has planned will be fulfilled. However, we need to note that God’s timing and workings may be very different from what we expect. We may not necessarily agree with God now but we eventually will, because the end result will make us realise that His way is indeed—and will always be—the best.

God sees the future and reads the hearts of all of us. We can only see with our naked eyes and not further. Whatever God does or allows is in the best interest of His children and this is especially for all those who trust and love Him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 18
PHILEMON

THOUGHT

Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. – Psalm 121:4

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 6:1–3

LESSON

God knows

VERSE 2

*And God spake unto Moses,
and said unto him, I am the
LORD.*

In Chapter 5, we read of Moses questioning God. Perhaps Moses was hoping that God would discharge him from the duty that He had called him for. God had asked him to talk to Pharaoh to release the Israelites. Instead, Pharaoh increased the workload for the Jews, who now blamed Moses for making their lives more difficult. Moses was immensely discouraged.

Such things still happen today, when the more we want to trust God, the greater our hardship becomes. Then doubt creeps in and our faith begins to waver. When we cannot fathom our circumstances, we begin to wonder if God is really there or if He loves us.

Notice that God did not reveal to Moses how He would deal with Pharaoh except to say that He would use a strong hand. God has never and will never fail in any of His promises. He may not reveal the details in the working of His will but it will be accomplished. Besides, our finite minds and limited perspective may not allow us to understand God's ways. From man's standpoint, it may be incomprehensible simply because we cannot see beyond the present. God's vision is from eternity to eternity and He knows what the final result will be.

God fulfils every promise. Along the same argument, we may not know when we will die and have no prior experience of death but God gives us the assurance that at death, those who trust Jesus as their Saviour will go to heaven.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

2 KINGS 19
HEBREWS 1

THOUGHT

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? – Romans 8:31

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 6:4–6***LESSON****God hears****VERSE 5**

And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant.

Does God hear our prayers? Yes, He does—even before we open our mouth. We may be in deep suffering and may even think that no one knows the anguish we are going through. But God knows.

God told Moses that He had heard the cries of the Israelites. There is no difference today because God does not change. Yes, He is the very God Who spoke to Moses. God knows and hears our cries. He remembers each of us. We are to continue to look to God and live in faith.

God created man and has graciously extended the offer of eternal fellowship. God takes care and provides for all our needs even when we are temporarily dwelling on this earth. He knows our weakness and sufferings and hears our cries for help. The world is filled with sin and suffering. He remembered the groaning of the children of Israel. He remembers our groaning of sickness and pain too. He hears our cries for help.

God loves man enough to send His only begotten Son to die for our sins. What God has promised will be fulfilled no matter what the cost may be. Salvation is free for us but it cost God His Son. Jesus was willing to die because He was unwilling for anyone to go to hell. He hears the cries of unsaved souls in hell and wants to release us from the bondage of sin. God remembers His covenant with man. All we need to do is to accept Jesus as our Saviour.

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

THOUGHT

And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. – 2 Corinthians 12:9

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 6:7–8***LESSON****God's promises****VERSE 8**

And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.

Why should God take the backsliding Israelites to be His people? To show all succeeding generations that He delights to instruct the ignorant, help the weak, and save the lost. If He is patient with Israel, shows them mercy and graciously receives them whenever they plead for His grace, no one need despair. God's will is for the sinner to turn from his iniquities and live.

God went the full distance to confirm this covenant with the children of Israel. He used the afflictions Israel faced to bring them closer to Him. They would see His power, experience His peace and know His presence. God left no doubt in their minds that He was their God and they were His people.

In similar manner, God uses our trials today to draw us closer to Him. The trials of life are designed to usher us into His arms. God is not trying to hurt you but help you grow. God cares about you today. In fact, He cares more about you than you do about yourself. Just as He moved for ancient Israel, He will move for you.

Are you burdened by some things in your life? Are you in a position to honestly say that you are enjoying the best God has offered you today? Are you walking with Him like you know you should be? Are there some earthly things that have you bound and are holding you back? Look to the Lord and He will set you free.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 21
HEBREWS 3

THOUGHT

Have you experienced the glory of salvation through the blood of Jesus?

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 6:9

LESSON

Hard of hearing

VERSE 9

*And Moses spake so unto
the children of Israel: but
they hearkened not unto
Moses for anguish of spirit,
and for cruel bondage.*

The Israelites rejected the living God Who had done wonderful signs. Their belief and worship were at best only temporal. They spurned the promise of God and never got to experience His full blessing. In their hearts, God seemed small and Pharaoh seemed big. Thus they were deceived into believing the gods of their oppressors, even worshipping the gods of the Egyptians. And this was why they did not trust the Lord Jehovah and discredited His messenger Moses. Such was the tragedy of God's people.

Nevertheless, Moses faithfully spoke, though the words of comfort from God did not touch them. Because of their despondency and bondage to slavery, they paid no heed to Moses' words. Sometimes people can be so overwhelmed by their problems that it is hard for them to hear the truth. It is not that the truth has no meaning but more that people do not respond immediately to it. Does that mean we should not say anything to these people? No. Keep on sharing. God's Word never returns void.

Are you so restless you cannot pause to listen to God? We are busy people, we are so busy sometimes that we don't even pray. God is going to accomplish in your life what He has planned to do—whether you are listening or not. Even as a Christian, we may go through our whole life fighting God or try to do our best without God, and lead a miserable life.

The thing we overlook is that when it is all over, we will be right where God wanted us all along.

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

THOUGHT

Many know Jesus only as Saviour; not as Lord and King.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 6:10–13***LESSON****Failure and rejection****VERSE 12**

*And Moses spake before
the LORD, saying, Behold,
the children of Israel have
not hearkened unto me;
how then shall Pharaoh
hear me, who am of
uncircumcised lips?*

Moses faced failure and rejection in his initial ministry to the Israelites. Many a time he even considered giving it all up. In the face of rejection, God ordered Moses back to his mission. At the prospect of having to go again before Pharaoh to present his case on behalf of the unbelieving people, how could Moses hope to prevail? Moses felt that God's way had failed. So why should he try the same failed approach again? How could Moses persuade Pharaoh if he could not even persuade his own people?

We are bad judges of what failure is. We tend to conclude that an effort has failed because no immediate fruits are visible. What Moses counted as defeats were actually not defeats but delays.

From man's standpoint, Moses chose the right move when he went back to God for counsel. He poured his anxieties and doubts before God. When we express our feelings to God, we ask God to deal with our struggles and emotions. And God gives us the strength to carry on.

However, from the Christian point of view, Moses never needed to understand how it was going to work. He just needed to obey God. The faith of Moses was so feeble that he could scarcely keep to his work. Ready obedience is always according to the strength of our faith. Though our weaknesses can humble us, they may discourage us from doing our best for God. God's authority is sufficient to answer all objections, and binds all to obey, without murmuring or disputing.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

2 KINGS 23
HEBREWS 5

THOUGHT

It is the doing of our duty that we are held responsible for, not its failure or success.

BIBLE LESSON
Exodus 6:14–19

LESSON
Spokesmen for God

VERSE 14

These be the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel; Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi: these be the families of Reuben.

This marks the beginning of a brief genealogy of Moses and Aaron, helping us to identify and authenticate them as spokesmen for God. It shows us that God has even before time ordained them as His representatives.

What is God saying to us today? Jesus charges us with bringing the Good News to the world. And He has given us His assurance that He will be with us—in the form of the Holy Spirit—to assist us.

Are you thinking right now, “I can’t do this! I’m not a speaker. I don’t speak well at all and lack confidence in speaking.” Then you are in good company. Moses had a stutter. But this is just the type of person God longs to use: someone who does not rely on his own ability but allows God to work through him. This combination—a frail human and an infallible God—is a winning team every time. This same winning formula defeated Pharaoh and freed a nation of Israelites.

Witnessing for God is not always from the pulpit. It encompasses your daily actions and conduct that others see. People ask you why you do what you do and, more often, say what you say. It starts on that bus ride or train ride to work, or that cashier you have shown kindness to. As you allow God to direct your steps, He will guide your tongue and direct your conversation. Make it a practice every day to use your tongue. You will be amazed at what He has to say through you.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
 IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 24
HEBREWS 6

THOUGHT

Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts. – Jeremiah 15:16

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 6:20–22***LESSON****Impartiality****VERSE 21**

*And the sons of Izhar;
Korah, and Nepheg, and
Zichri.*

Korah, one of the sons of Izhar, became a rebel against God and Moses. Yet Moses, led by the Spirit and in his great impartiality, inserted his name among those of his progenitors. God expects His children, and especially the leaders among them, to be impartial. We should not treat people differently because of their past. For that matter, we should not also judge people according to their present, be it financial status or outward appearance.

In many scriptural illustrations, the issue of partiality is often focused on making judgements. Practising partiality in such cases is tantamount to effecting injustice. God's commands on the subject of justice are direct and clear, even though it is also true that believers are also given the responsibility of judging other believers' words and deeds for the purpose of correcting and disciplining those who are caught in sin, and restoring them to fellowship. That is because only God can accurately judge the intentions of one's heart—our inner self that motivates our words and actions.

God is the ultimate Judge of our words and deeds, all of which reflect the inner condition of our life. We should respond by making decisions and judgements in an impartial manner.

We live in a world of partiality and prejudice. Usually when we meet someone for the first time, we decide some things about that person. We decide what kind of person he or she is and whether we are going to like him or her, or not. On the other hand, faith works impartially. We all come to Christ in the same way, no matter what a person's background is.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 KINGS 25
HEBREWS 7

THOUGHT

You can be 'partial to impartiality'.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 6:23–28***LESSON****Modesty****VERSE 26**

These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies.

In the genealogy, the names of Moses and Aaron are given twice and in a different order. Moses was the appointed leader, yet Aaron was set before Moses, because he was the eldest. He also prophesied in Egypt before Moses. Yet in a later verse, Moses is set before Aaron to assert his leadership of God's people. Nevertheless, the reason for putting Aaron before on the first count could well be the modesty of Moses, placing others before self.

Modesty is humility. Humility is one of the central keys to spiritual growth. Interestingly, to be humble is to be open, though we seldom think it that way. It is to have no pre-conceived expectations about life or about one's place and importance in the world. We all have natural tendencies to want to control our own lives and modesty is the willingness to let go of this inclination.

It is only through humility, through the simple openness of our heart and mind, uncluttered by the false beliefs and unreasonable expectations created by egoism, that we enable the Holy Spirit to come through and take control over our lives. It is through modesty that the channel is kept open for the flow of divine guidance and blessing.

Humility is not surrender of self or of ego. It is an affirmation of the soul, the spiritual core of all of us. Humility is the act of submission to God. It is the acknowledgement that God is the centre of our lives.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

I CHRONICLES 1-2
HEBREWS 8

THOUGHT

Modesty is an attitude of humility that seeks to please God rather than man or self.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 6:29–30***LESSON****Obedience****VERSE 29**

*That the LORD spake unto
Moses, saying, I am the
LORD: speak thou unto
Pharaoh king of Egypt all
that I say unto thee.*

Things had not gone smoothly for Moses. Pharaoh had increased the labour of the Israelites instead of releasing them. The people were upset with Moses, blaming him for their plight. Yet, God once again sent Moses and Aaron back to Pharaoh, when Moses still had much doubt. Even though it was hard for him to go back to the stubborn yet powerful Egyptian ruler, Moses made a choice to obey and follow God's command once again.

Why do we obey God, even when it is difficult? Why do we need to obey in the very first place? Can't we make our decisions based on our own common sense? The general concept of obedience relates to submission to a higher authority. It is an active engagement of one's will in humbling oneself. Obedience to God requires listening to Him, and not our feelings.

Are there situations in which you find yourself struggling to obey God because of the seeming impossible difficulties that lie ahead? Do you have doubts that God can use you in light of some of your weaknesses? Are you listening to God's Word or to your own feelings? Are you hesitant to step out in obedience because you feel inadequate or discouraged?

You don't have to understand what God is doing in order to be obedient to His call. God delights in our obedience. Take your thoughts to Him. Spend some time with Him. Be honest with Him about your feelings. Trust Him and His leading in your life.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

I CHRONICLES 3-4
HEBREWS 9

THOUGHT**Obedience is an act of worship**

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 7:1–2***LESSON****A god to Pharaoh****VERSE 1**

And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.

The Lord had hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let the children of Israel go [Exodus 4:21]. True to form, from the lips of Pharaoh came forth the very words that God had foretold that he would say [Exodus 5:1].

God's power would ultimately prevail. Pharaoh, who would not humble himself before the Almighty, would be crushed into submission. The Lord said that "with a strong hand" He would force Pharaoh to let Israel go. Moses, however, was unsure of going before Pharaoh a second time. His first appearance was unsuccessful. Not only did Pharaoh repulse him, the Israelites also questioned Moses' true motive.

God reminds Moses that he was in truth Pharaoh's superior. Moses was to be as "a god to Pharaoh" [v. 1]. Moses was not divine. It simply means that Moses came before and spoke to Pharaoh in the name of the Lord. Pharaoh's power was earthly; Moses' power was heavenly. Thus Moses was to Pharaoh "as a god", with a right to command obedience and power to enforce his commands. Likewise, the Sanhedrin were helpless against a group of illiterate fishermen and Felix trembled before Paul [Acts 24:25].

In the same way, when a Christian shares the Gospel, the authority is not in the person but in the Word that he speaks. The messenger is devoid of power and is to be emptied of his own presumptuousness. It is the message that has the power to change lives. The Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" [Romans 1:16].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 5–6
HEBREWS 10

THOUGHT

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. – 1 John 4:4

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 7:3–5***LESSON****The hardened heart****VERSE 3**

And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

The Lord had told Moses that He would harden Pharaoh's heart [Exodus 4:21]. Here, He says it again. This begs the question if Pharaoh could be held responsible for the hardening of his heart. As we deal with the workings of God's will, it is enough for us to know that God's sovereignty, however exercised, is righteous, holy, and loving.

From the data revealed in Scripture, the Bible says that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart [Exodus 4:21; 7:3, for example] and that Pharaoh himself also hardened his heart [Exodus 8:15, 32; 9:35].

Each time the Gospel is preached, there are only two responses: reception or rejection. In the case of Pharaoh, it was a hardening of his heart. The Word of God confirmed Pharaoh's resolution not to obey God. Likewise, the Lord sent Ezekiel to a "rebellious nation ... impudent children and stiffhearted". The Lord "do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD GOD. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, [for they are a rebellious house,] yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them" [Ezekiel 2:3–5].

We preach the Word of God so that God's will may be made known to man; any who disobey, is left with no excuse; God's purposes may be fulfilled. Man's defiance against God should not diminish our zeal for evangelising. If men disbelieve and their hearts are hardened, God will use even their hardening as the springboard to the next step of His providence.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 7–8
HEBREWS 11

THOUGHT

God's Word when resisted, hardens the heart that resists it. Hence, as Paul says, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" [2 Corinthians 6:2b].

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 7:6–7***LESSON****The ministry team of brothers****VERSE 7**

And Moses was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.

In biblical genealogy, Aaron is always mentioned first [Exodus 6:20; Numbers 3:1; 1 Chronicles 6:3; 23:13], and rightly so, because he is the elder brother. However, in reference to the ministry, the order is reversed, and Moses takes precedence.

While the younger Moses is God's appointed leader, the two brothers are almost inseparable in ministry. Moses said that he was "slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" [Exodus 4:10]. But God did not exempt Moses' apparent weakness of ineloquence from serving Him. Christians must be careful not to allow a false judgement of our abilities to pass into unbelief and disobedience.

In His mercy, God made allowance for Moses' self-confessed weakness by appointing his elder brother, Aaron, as his spokesman. When God calls, He also equips. Sometimes, He empowers His ministers with the necessary gifts to serve Him. Other times, God sends people to help His ministers to be effective. Moses and Aaron were such an example. "Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they" [v. 6]. The phrase 'so did they' emphasises the diligence with which the two brothers served God. They did everything God told them and the brothers were greatly used by God.

A second lesson from the Moses-Aaron ministry team is that age is never a factor in serving God. Samuel was a just a boy when God called him. Daniel was a teenager. Moses and Aaron were octogenarians. There is a place of ministry for every believer regardless of age or talent.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 9–10
HEBREWS 12

THOUGHT

No man is too weak, too young or too old to serve the Lord. No man's day is over if he will only yield to God.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 7:8–13***LESSON****Miracle or magic****VERSE 11**

Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.

The first sign from the Lord to manifest His power was to change Aaron’s rod into a serpent. Pharaoh must have felt unthreatened when his magicians were able to replicate Aaron’s feat. Unlike the subsequent signs, this first sign did not cause Pharaoh or the Egyptians any physical affliction. However, it was a challenge that struck at the heart of Pharaoh’s religion. The serpent was a symbol of Pharaoh’s royal and divine power.

When Aaron’s rod turned into a serpent, Pharaoh’s magicians did the same—their rods also turned into serpents [v. 12]. The human mind craves for miracles to authenticate divine revelation [Matthew 12:39]. However, such a mind is also easily impressed and misled by these so-called miracles.

The irony is that the miracle that Pharaoh got was the very thing that hardened his heart against God. The replication of the miracle by his sorcerers gave Pharaoh a plausible excuse for ascribing God’s miracles to magic. It gave him a pretext for unbelief. Even when Aaron’s serpents swallowed up the magician’s rods, Pharaoh was convinced that it was nothing more than a trick.

Pharaoh wanted a reason to defy God and he got it. It was a vicious cycle of unbelief and disobedience. When Pharaoh’s heart turned against God, it was easy for him to turn his eyes from reality and his mind from the truth. The unwillingness of Pharaoh to look at the truth further hardened his heart against God. The easiest thing in the world for a person to do is to find pretexts for unbelief. But our Lord Jesus says, “Be not faithless, but believing” [John 20:27c].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

I CHRONICLES 11–12
HEBREWS 13

THOUGHT

Truth carries its own credentials. And a faith grounded in divine truth is far more reliable than one that rests merely on miracles.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 7:14–20***LESSON****Like it or not, you shall
know the Lord****VERSE 17**

*Thus saith the LORD, In
this thou shalt know that I
am the LORD: behold, I will
smite with the rod that is in
mine hand upon the waters
which are in the river, and
they shall be turned to
blood.*

After that first sign, the judgements started. God asked Moses to stand by the Nile and repeat His demands to Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. If Pharaoh remained defiant, the waters of the Nile would be turned to blood, fish will die and the river would stink.

The Nile, one of the longest rivers in the world, was the lifeline of early Egyptian civilisation. Rendering the waters of the Nile unfit for use threatened the very existence of Egypt. As Moses smote the waters, the Nile did turn to blood, instantaneously. Pharaoh was now compelled to accede to Moses' demands. If he would not bow to persuasion and evidence, he must bow to power. "In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord." "It is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" [Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10–11].

There is a difference between Moses' doubts and Pharaoh's defiance. The Lord made every allowance for Moses' doubting excuses. But the Lord made none for Pharaoh's wilful unbelief. One can plead ignorance and inadequacies, as Moses did [Exodus 3:13]. But there is no excuse for defiance. God's will was made known to Pharaoh by Moses and with infallible proofs. Pharaoh's refusal to acknowledge the sufficiency of this evidence did not absolve him of his guilt of disobedience.

The same applies to us. God has said it, and we should believe. Our claim of insufficient evidence does not stop the Lord from executing His righteous judgements against unbelief.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 13–14
JAMES 1**

THOUGHT

When a person stands in the way of God's truth, he either humbly submits or faces the consequence of unbelief.

BIBLE LESSON
Exodus 7:21–25

LESSON
**The dangers of
 enchantments**

VERSE 22
*And the magicians of
 Egypt did so with their
 enchantments: and
 Pharaoh's heart was
 hardened, neither did he
 hearken unto them; as the
 LORD had said.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
 IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 15
JAMES 2

The evidence was irrefutable: the reddish tint of the Nile waters, the sight and smell of rotting fish, and the thirst that could not be quenched. But Pharaoh again ordered his magicians to conjure their enchantments. The word ‘enchantment’ is translated as ‘softly’ [Ruth 3:7], ‘secretly’ [1 Samuel 18:22] and ‘privily’ [1 Samuel 24:4]. It has the connotation of secrecy and stealth.

Although the magicians’ enchantments were no match for God’s power, it did not stop them from trying. Why? They wanted to show that they—mere humans—could do what God did. In other words, there was another way to explain what happened to the waters of the Nile.

Likewise, though the wisdom of man is no match for the foolishness of God [1 Corinthians 1:25], it has not stopped men from offering their own opinions of who God is, what He is like, and what He should do. Over the course of human history, man has tried to disprove God’s agency and providence in his life by attributing it to chance and works of nature. Unbelievers are always looking for a “natural reason” for the supernatural.

The magicians might have satisfied themselves with their enchantments but their thirst remained when they could not drink of the waters of the Nile. It is futile trying to explain God and His workings using our own wisdom. It is easy to dismiss the providence of God but it offers no answer to those who seek and brings little comfort to those who sorrow. The real answer comes by turning in faith to the Lord, and the real comfort is to submit ourselves to Him.

THOUGHT

Let the supernatural remain inexplicable. Trust in the Lord Who is “able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” [Ephesians 3:20].

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 8:1–7

LESSON

Set free to serve

VERSE 1

And the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

God sent Moses to Pharaoh as His ambassador to demand for the Israelites' freedom from bondage. For 430 years, God's people had been enslaved in Egyptian bondage. Pharaoh had refused to relinquish his control over them. God is a great advocate for freedom. His will is for people to live in freedom and liberty. "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" [2 Corinthians 3:17].

The cry, "Let my people go," was uttered not that the Israelites might be free to do what they desired but that they might serve Jehovah without hindrance and distraction from Egypt. They belonged to God.

Many people are in bondage to sin. God's entire plan of salvation is for the purpose of providing freedom from sin because "the wages of sin is death" [Romans 6:23]. Jesus, the Son of God, has paid for our sins by dying on the Cross. What we need is to just accept Jesus Christ as Saviour, believe that He has paid the price for our freedom and ask Him to forgive us our sins.

God saved His children so that "they [would] serve me" [Exodus 8:1]. From the day of our salvation, we should be serving God. Our purpose is that we might worship Him in spirit and in truth for all eternity. Service to God is our highest happiness as well as our principal duty and most blessed privilege.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 16
JAMES 3

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for deliverance from the bondage of sin and death. Help me to be faithful in worshipping and serving You.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 8:8–11***LESSON****Tomorrow****VERSE 10**

*And he said, To morrow.
And he said, Be it according
to thy word: that thou
mayest know that there is
none like unto the LORD
our God.*

Pharaoh cried for deliverance. He summoned for Moses and Aaron and said, “Intreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people” [v. 8a]. The Egyptian king promised Moses and Aaron that if God took away the frogs, he would let the people go. Moses asked Pharaoh to choose a day for the removal of the frogs [v. 9]. His quick response was, “Tomorrow.”

Why not ‘now’? Pharaoh hoped that the plague might disappear by natural means the following day. But he was wrong. Only the word of God could remove it. Moses declared that Pharaoh should know that there was no other god to be compared with the God of Israel.

Don’t choose to spend another night without Christ. Come to Jesus Christ for salvation today because “behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” [2 Corinthians 6:2b]. There are consequences that follow each decision. What will you decide today? Will it be sin or Saviour? God’s mercy offers the wicked immediate relief from sin and its painful consequences. Men who neglect the mercy of God for a single day will abuse it, and deserve it to be withdrawn from them. To neglect salvation for a day may be fatal to the eternal welfare of your soul.

Someone once said that the favourite word of the devil is ‘tomorrow’. Many people have died and fallen into the devil’s trap with ‘tomorrow’ on their lips. But Jesus says, “Today.” Now is the day of salvation.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

I CHRONICLES 17
JAMES 4

HYMN

**Many things about tomorrow
I don’t seem to understand;
But I know Who holds tomorrow
And I know Who holds my hand.**

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 8:12–15***LESSON****Pharaoh's heart hardened****VERSE 15**

*But when Pharaoh saw
that there was respite, he
hardened his heart, and
hearkened not unto them;
as the LORD had said.*

It is clear that Pharaoh hardened his own heart [Exodus 8:15, 32; 9:34]. While under affliction, his heart was touched. As soon as God had removed the affliction, he hardened his heart and went back on his word to release the Israelites. Today's lesson illustrates the actions of those whose hearts have not been changed towards God and His salvation.

The word 'heart', as used in the Bible, refers to the mind or the understanding. When a person's heart is hardened in connection with God, it produces resistance against God's will, rebellion against His authority and an obstinate refusal to obey Him. A hardened heart will not obey or submit to God.

God knew beforehand that the heart of Pharaoh was such that plague after plague would not overcome his obstinacy. Most of the blame was attributed to Pharaoh himself. He was a man of power, pride and reputation. His prestige, arrogance and self-interest meant more to him than submission to a 'foreign' God. He had warning after warning to perceive the truth but instead hardened his heart and refused to heed the warnings. Thus he suffered. Pharaoh's magicians, too, used deception, trickery and doubt to influence his mind and this helped harden Pharaoh's heart further [Exodus 7:22; 8:19]. Anyone who influences us to disbelieve and disobey God causes us to harden our hearts.

Our attitude towards God's gracious demands depends on whether or not our hearts are hardened or softened. May God save us all from hardening of our hearts.

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

PRAYER

**Lord, may my eyes be on You, for I need Your
purity and love to fill my heart and mind.**

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 8:16–19***LESSON****The finger of God****VERSE 19**

*Then the magicians
said unto Pharaoh, This
is the finger of God:
and Pharaoh's heart
was hardened, and he
hearkened not unto them;
as the LORD had said.*

God the Creator controls all things within the universe. Through the third plague, He is going to teach the Egyptians (as well as us) that the finger (power) of God controls all things, even the very dust of the earth.

Unlike the previous plagues (the blood and the frogs), judgement arrived without warning. Aaron's rod, by the direction of Moses who was commanded by God, was again raised and the land was infested with lice. These lice no doubt were extremely vexatious to the Egyptians. They swarmed all over people and animals. Here was another blow aimed at the false deities of Egypt. It was an attack against Set, the god of the desert, as well as the Egyptian priesthood who prided themselves in their purity.

The Egyptian pagan magicians were so crushed by their failure that they went to Pharaoh and confessed, "This is the finger of God" [v. 19]. But Pharaoh's heart was hardened. He remained obstinate and unrepentant.

The psalmist tells of God's creation as "the work of Thy fingers" [Psalm 8:3]. The 10 Commandments were written by the very finger of God. The whole purpose of the law and the commandments is to expose our sin. Jesus cast out devils by the finger of God [Luke 11:20]. But perhaps the most impressive fingerprint of God was when He became flesh and dwelt among us. It is when we look to Him on the Cross that we see the full evidence of His power and love for us.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

I CHRONICLES 19–20
I PETER I

THOUGHT

When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?
– Psalm 8:3–4

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 8:20–24***LESSON****God's longsuffering for sinners****VERSE 20**

And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh; lo, he cometh forth to the water; and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

Today's message illustrates that God is gracious and longsuffering, but there will come a time when He will no longer tolerate the disobedience and arrogance of indifferent sinners. If we walk contrary to Him, He will walk contrary to us [Leviticus 26:23–24]. Like what Spurgeon has said, God shows Himself to each individual according to his character. No individual in Scripture illustrates this truth better than Pharaoh. He had been blasphemous, cruel, insolent, pitiless and vindictive.

Like a mighty refrain, "Let my people go" is the great imperative that thundered again and again at Pharaoh [Exodus 5:1; 7:16; 8:1, 20]. God gives us fresh warnings and signs of His power, and by His mercy and goodness leads sinners to repentance. The power of God is to break the will even of the most determined and stubborn sinner.

Pharaoh was unwilling to obey God's command or even acknowledge God's authority. God sent destructive and painful plagues one after another to the land of Egypt. Pharaoh in his arrogance refused to submit to God. Both he and his subjects suffered as a consequence. God made a distinction between the Israelites and the Egyptians by keeping the plague of flies away from Goshen, where His people lived.

It is foolish to exhaust the riches of God's longsuffering. May God's goodness and mercy, and not His judgement, lead us to repentance today. Let us respond positively to God's saving grace by confessing our sins and acknowledging Him as our personal Lord and Saviour.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 21
I PETER 2**

THOUGHT

God warns us of the judgement to come. Repent and turn from our sinful ways to God while there is still time.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 8:25–27***LESSON****No compromise****VERSE 25**

And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.

Pharaoh called for Moses and offered a compromise. He offered to give permission for the Israelites to worship and sacrifice to God, but only in Egypt. He refused to give freedom to his bondmen because they were profitable to him. That compromise was unacceptable to Moses. Pharaoh's compromise was but a partial fulfilment of God's will.

God's command specifically required that Israel separate from Egypt by a three-day journey. It is to be obeyed to the fullest extent in every detail. True worship requires separation from anything that is wicked, profane and ungodly. For Israel to make their sacrifices in Egypt would have been an abomination.

Compromise is knowingly doing the right thing in the wrong way. God has warned us against compromise [2 Corinthians 6:14–17]. This is not unique to the New Testament period of time. God had already stated this before the children of Israel were allowed into the land of Canaan [Deuteronomy 12:30–31].

Today, many people compromise in their devotion and service to God because they are not prepared to give up the pleasures and fancied emoluments of sin. There is no compromise possible in the worship of our God. Today, some churches have taken the Gospel of grace and turned it around to make it a gospel of man's free will. Man cannot worship God and Baal at the same time. Believers today need to be aware of the evil of compromise.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 22
I PETER 3

THOUGHT

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. – Matthew 6:24

BIBLE LESSON
Exodus 8:28–32

LESSON
Not very far

VERSE 28

And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away: intreat for me.

Pharaoh then tried to bargain with Moses in allowing the enslaved Israelites to go out of Egypt to worship God, but demanding that they not go too far. He also asked Moses to pray that the Lord would take away the flies from him and his people. The removal of plague, not the sins, was the desire of the wicked Pharaoh.

Moses entreated the Lord. God removed the swarm of flies from Pharaoh and his people. However, Pharaoh hardened his heart once again. His words were hollow and he again reneged on his promises to release the Israelites.

Satan is always anxious to retain people in his grasp. He will never allow the sinner to go far away. He fears that the awakened sinners will see the worth of their relationship with God and not return to him. He does not want Christians to go far in evangelism. He works feverishly to hide the Gospel and prevent Christians from sharing it. He does not want them to join Christian fellowships where they can confess their sins to one another or meet for prayer. He also tries to prevent people from going too far into the ministry—visiting the sick, feeding the hungry and meeting the emotional needs of people. He tries to hinder Christians from making disciples. In the area of true, genuine heart worship, his tactics are similar: “I’ll let you go ... only don’t go off too far.”

Let us serve God according to God’s terms and not Pharaoh’s.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
 IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 23
I PETER 4

PRAYER

Dear Lord, I have chosen to serve You. Give me Your strength to battle the deceptions of Satan.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 9:1–7***LESSON****The powerful hand of
God****VERSE 5**

*And the LORD appointed a
set time, saying, To morrow
the LORD shall do this thing
in the land.*

The fifth plague was directed at Egyptian livestock—the cattle, horses, donkeys, camels, oxen and sheep. This was the result of Pharaoh's disobedience not to let the people of Israel go and serve God in worship. The animals were inflicted with a disease that resulted in death, but the Israelites were immune to it. The timing of the plague was fixed on a day appointed by God [v. 5]. Such was the power of our Almighty God.

The first four plagues caused personal annoyance and suffering. This fifth plague turned deadly and wiped out one of the chief sources of the Egyptians' wealth and impoverished them. It obviously wrecked their economy and greatly affected their daily lives, as the animals were used for transportation, work and food. The Egyptians worshipped their cattle and had influenced the Israelites to make a god of a calf before [Exodus 32:4]. The true and living God of the Israelites would not tolerate idolatrous worship.

God warned Pharaoh through Moses and emphasised the fact that the Israelites were His people. He was their Protector and Defender and He owned them. It was His will that Pharaoh let His people go. There was death in the Egyptian livestock but none with the Israelites. This was clearly the hand of God but Pharaoh was unmoved and remained hard and impenitent.

Pharaoh also found that none of the livestock of the Israelites was affected. In spite of this, he continued to harden his heart against the Lord.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

I CHRONICLES 24–25
I PETER 5

MEDITATION

**For the LORD is a great God, and a great King
above all gods. – Psalm 95:3**

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 9:8–12***LESSON****Taking God at His Word****VERSE 11**

And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.

The sixth plague of boils struck both Egyptian and beast without warning. This was a skin disease that was brought about when Moses and Aaron threw ashes from a furnace heavenwards in front of Pharaoh.

The furnace was one of the principal instruments of oppression to the Israelites. It was now converted into a means of chastisement to the Egyptians. The magicians themselves were struck with boils as well. Though their power was restrained, they still confronted Moses and influenced Pharaoh in his unbelief. They were righteously punished by God for helping to harden Pharaoh's heart against the people of Israel, and for their contempt of the messengers and miracles of God.

Pharaoh continued to be stubborn. He had hardened his own heart and resisted the grace of God. God justly gave him up to his own heart's lusts, to a reprobate mind, and strong delusions, permitting Satan to blind and harden him, and made him more and more obstinate. Pharaoh did not take this plague to heart, and was given up to the divine sentence of hardening. These boils was the first plague that attacked and endangered the lives of men. In this respect, it was the first foreboding of the death that Pharaoh would bring upon himself by his continued resistance.

This plague is typical of the personal moral corruption that results from resistance to the truth of the Word of God. Be sanctified by the Word of God for His Word is truth [John 17:17].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
I CHRONICLES 26–27
2 PETER 1

PRAYER**Help my unbelief!**

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 9:13–21***LESSON****Judgement tempered with
mercy****VERSE 20***He that feared the word
of the LORD among the
servants of Pharaoh made
his servants and his cattle
flee into the houses.*

Before unleashing the seventh plague of hailstorm, our merciful Lord warned Pharaoh of that impending judgement. Divine mercy was extended to God-fearing Egyptians who obeyed the word of God. Their animals were sheltered from harm.

The people were not doomed to suffer this plague. It was made clear that anyone outside during the storm would be punished. If they would go inside and take any animals in with them, they would be spared the harshness of the storm. The storm destroyed many crops as well as people and animals in the fields. However, the land of Goshen (where the Israelites lived) was again spared from the plague.

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” [2 Peter 3:9]. It is indeed comforting to know that God is desirous for all to be saved from eternal damnation. It is His same sincere desire to save the Egyptians if they are truly repentant.

It was God’s permissive will for Pharaoh to harden his heart so that God could use the situation to manifest His power and glory. Eventually, the Egyptians realised and acknowledged that the God of Israel was the only true and living God. As the hymn goes:

The Lord’s our Rock, in Him we hide—
A shelter in the time of storm;
Secure whatever ill betide—
A shelter in the time of storm.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
1 CHRONICLES 28
2 PETER 2**

THANKSGIVING

**For Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong
tower from the enemy. – Psalm 61:3**

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 9:22–26

LESSON

The omnipotence of God

VERSE 24

So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

The seventh plague was ushered in by a solemn warning and more lengthy address to Pharaoh. The hailstorm was summoned by the powerful hand and rod of Moses empowered by the divine command of God. It wreaked woeful havoc in the land of Egypt, killing both men and animals, and destroying trees and all the crops [v. 25].

This was the mightiest manifestation of the omnipotence of God to show Pharaoh that He controlled the earth and nature. “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth” [Romans 9:17].

God sent such a terrible hailstorm that no one in the history of Egypt had ever seen or heard. It came with thunder and fire and destroyed every man and beast in the field. The supernatural character of this plague was manifested in its prediction by Moses and in the exemption of the land of Goshen. The terrible fury of the hailstorm made a stronger impact upon Pharaoh than all the previous plagues. He confessed to Moses and Aaron, “I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked” [v. 27].

Judgement is coming for mankind. During the Great Tribulation this same calamity (the plague of hail) will be inflicted on the unbelievers, who will break out into blasphemy against God for causing the hail to fall on them [Revelation 16:21].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

1 CHRONICLES 29
2 PETER 3

MEDITATION

Great is our Lord, and of great power. His understanding is infinite.

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 9:27–35

LESSON

Mean what you say

VERSE 27

And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.

The plague of hailstorm softened the hard heart of Pharaoh and humbled him enough for him to acknowledge his wickedness and the sin of his people. However, the limitation of the words ‘this time’ showed that his repentance was not very sincere, and that his confession was far more the effect of terror caused by the majesty of God, which was manifested in the fearful thunder and lightning, than a genuine acknowledgement of his guilt.

This awful display of divine displeasure was so alarming to Pharaoh that he called for Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned this time.” Pharaoh admitted that the Lord was righteous and he and his people wicked. He was so traumatised by the severity of the plague that he begged the prayer of Moses to intercede for cessation of the calamity. He even agreed to let the Israelites go if the hailstorm was removed. He was in awe of God Almighty and submitted to His authority.

Recall Pharaoh’s earlier words: “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go” [Exodus 5:2]. Now he was singing a different tune: “And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked” [Exodus 9:27].

What a change in attitude, if only it were true and sincere!

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

REMINDER

But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. – Matthew 5:37

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 10:1–6

LESSON

The purpose of God's judgement

VERSE 2

*And that thou mayest tell
in the ears of thy son, and
of thy son's son, what things
I have wrought in Egypt,
and my signs which I have
done among them; that ye
may know how that I am
the LORD.*

In this section, we learn why God chastised and judged Egypt by sending one plague after another on the Egyptians. The ancient Egyptians were terrible sinners. They were a brutal, proud and idolatrous people who worshipped everything from man to birds, four-footed beasts and creeping things. They also oppressed and enslaved God's people. God wanted to demonstrate His power as He judged the sins of Egypt and the evil of their hearts. But God had a larger purpose: to show the entire world that He clearly judges sin and evil.

In particular, God wanted to tell His people, the Israelites, and believers in general, that they were not to "hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength, and His wonderful works that He hath done" [Psalm 78:4]. This commandment was repeated to the children of Israel throughout their history. But, sadly, they failed to obey over and over again, and God had to chastise them.

Sadder still, today, with the benefit of Scripture recorded and easily available for our instruction, many Christian churches and families have similarly failed. In such circumstances, can God's judgement be far away? Let us pray for our churches and our families.

May it never be said of us that "there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" [Judges 2:10b].

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

REMINDER

But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them. – Psalm 103:17–18

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 10:7–11***LESSON****God does not
compromise****VERSE 9**

*And Moses said, We will go
with our young and with
our old, with our sons and
with our daughters, with
our flocks and with our
herds will we go; for we
must hold a feast unto the
LORD.*

Upon hearing the terrible destruction that would shortly come upon the Egyptians through the next plague (locusts) if they continued to defy God [v. 4–6], Pharaoh’s advisors suggested that he relent. He could allow some to go into the wilderness to worship but keep the women and children back as hostages. Earlier, Pharaoh offered a compromise, suggesting that they take a day to sacrifice to the Lord in Egypt [Exodus 8:25–26]. Moses rejected that compromise. Surely he would reject this, too.

God does not compromise when it comes to sin and evil. He demands total obedience. We do all He says, we believe and follow Him with all our hearts [Proverbs 3:5–6]. This is a timely reminder to modern-day Christians.

In his book, *The Power of Integrity: Building a Life Without Compromise*, John MacArthur wrote: “We live in a society that has largely abandoned moral standards and Christian principles. Unkept campaign promises, false advertising, exaggerated tax exemptions, employee theft – compromise has become a way of life. Such moral concession has even invaded the church. Faced with an opportunity to proclaim Christ to unbelievers, we feel intimidated and keep silent. Or we water down God’s Word on ethical issues at work or in our community to avoid rejection ... But God longs for His people to be different – to maintain a commitment to His standards, no matter what the cost. Is consistent obedience to God attainable in this world of sin and self? By the grace and power of God, yes!”

When it comes to sin, do not compromise.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 3–4
1 JOHN 3

THOUGHT

What Pharaoh wanted is what many of us want in the flesh: a way to ‘give in’ to God, without fully submitting to Him.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 10:12–20***LESSON****Pharaoh's 'repentance'****VERSE 16**

*Then Pharaoh called for
Moses and Aaron in haste;
and he said, I have sinned
against the LORD your God,
and against you.*

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy [Psalm 103:8]. He is longsuffering towards us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance [2 Peter 3:9]. This is seen in the way He dealt with Pharaoh.

Notice that judgement did not come immediately [v. 13]. Rather, the signs first appeared in the form of an east wind, which blew all day and night, giving Pharaoh ample time to repent. Likewise, our Lord warns that prior to His second coming to judge the world, there will be signs. Sinful men will have many opportunities to repent unless they are “willingly ignorant” and “hold [suppress] the truth in unrighteousness” [Romans 1:18].

When the judgement of the plague of locusts finally arrived in the morning, Pharaoh called in desperation for Moses and Aaron. He made what seemed like a genuine confession. He confessed that he had sinned against the Lord and against His messenger, Moses. He asked for forgiveness and requested for them to pray that God remove the deadly plague. But, as before, as soon as the locusts were removed, he went back on his promise and refused to let the children of Israel depart.

The lesson is frightening. Repentance with our mouths without a genuine ‘circumcision of the heart’ is not enough [Romans 2:29]. Turning back and not fulfilling one’s promise to follow God will result in the terrible judgement that is coming. Faith without works is dead!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 5
1 JOHN 4

WARNING

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. – Matthew 7:21

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 10:21–29***LESSON****Condemnation****VERSE 29**

*And Moses said, Thou hast
spoken well, I will see thy
face again no more.*

God had been very patient with the Egyptians. He had already called the Egyptians to repentance on eight different occasions. But Pharaoh rejected God's plea each time. They had chosen to live in spiritual darkness, which blinded them almost beyond seeing the truth. God's patience had just about reached the end. The king and his people had almost hardened their hearts beyond any chance of ever repenting. Still, God longed for their repentance and sent a ninth plague. This time it was different from the previous plague. There was no 'grace period'. As soon as Moses obeyed God's instruction to stretch forth his hand towards heaven, the thick darkness fell in all the land of Egypt for three days.

Pharaoh's response, however, did not change. He still opted for compromise. He offered to free all of God's people to go and worship the Lord. But he was not willing for them to take their animals. Again, there was no repentance.

Our Lord was right when He said that "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil". This truly is the condemnation. Pharaoh could not have missed the point. The Egyptians worshipped a sun god named Ra. He was one of their chief deities. Therefore, when God cast darkness upon Egypt, it was to prove that there is only one living and true God Who controls light and darkness.

And His is able to deliver His people from judgement, as seen by the miraculous fact that the Jews had light in their houses.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

2 CHRONICLES 6
1 JOHN 5

WARNING

But, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.
– Luke 13:3, 5

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 11:1–3***LESSON****Our sovereign God****VERSE 1**

*And the LORD said unto
Moses, Yet will I bring one
plague more upon Pharaoh,
and upon Egypt; afterwards
he will let you go hence:
when he shall let you go, he
shall surely thrust you out
hence altogether.*

Towards the end of his reign, the great king Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed an amazing truth about the sovereignty of the Most High.

He said: “And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” [Daniel 4:35]. He also proclaimed: “Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgement: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase” [Daniel 4:37]. Pharaoh of Egypt was about to discover the truth of these statements.

God’s patience with Egypt had finally run out. He knew that Pharaoh and his people were not going to repent. They were not going to free God’s people of their own free will. God had no choice. He announced one final plague, the outcome of which was certain: “He [Pharaoh] will let you go hence.” In fact, this final stroke would be so severe that Pharaoh would literally drive the Israelites out of Egypt.

The outcome was so sure that Moses was to instruct the Jews to prepare for their departure by asking their Egyptian neighbours for silver and gold. The Egyptians would willingly give to them because God would stir them to favour His people. They would do so possibly out of fear or guilt—having oppressed and exploited the Israelites for so long—or out of respect for Moses.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 7
2 JOHN

WARNING

He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger for ever. – Psalm 103:9

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 11:4–10

LESSON

Escaping the judgement

VERSE 7

But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.

Just as God's patience ran out with the Egyptians, it will do so for this rebellious world as we approach the end of the age, when God will begin His work of judgement. God will soon pour out His wrath on His enemies during the Great Tribulation. But true believers can take comfort that, just as the 10 plagues did not affect the Israelites in Egypt, the woes of the Great Tribulation will not affect them.

God revealed to His servant Moses what He was about to do to the land of Egypt. "And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more" [v. 5–6]. Likewise, He has revealed to mankind, through His Word, the Bible, what He will do when He judges this sinful earth.

More importantly, He has graciously provided a way of escape for those who love God, those are the called according to His purpose: through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world.

If you are not yet a believer and if you have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, now is the time to do so.

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

REMINDER

Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: – Isaiah 55:6

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 12:1–2

LESSON

A new start

VERSE 2

*This month shall be unto
you the beginning of
months: it shall be the first
month of the year to you.*

Of all the Old Testament records on ordinances, the account in this chapter is the most memorable. It gives a detailed observance of the institution of the Passover. From then onwards, the Israelites were to begin their year from the middle of March instead of September in their ecclesiastical computations.

“Beginning of months ... the first month of the year” [v. 2] marks the change in the Jewish calendar year. Note that in Palestine this momentous beginning of the year in spring is called Abib. It means ‘young head of grain’, signifying the new ‘life-giving nature of springtime,’ renewing the face of the earth.

For the Israelites, the Passover meant a new beginning. It marked their freedom from the sin of bondage and slavery. Likewise, for every believer, one’s conversion is the start of a new spiritual life in Christ. The Jews looked forward to their promised land in Canaan after their exodus from Egypt. Similarly, every child of God must turn away from his old sinful life and walk in his newness of life towards the promised land of God.

Have you experienced this newness of life for yourself? You will have a new beginning when you acknowledge the Lord Jesus as your own personal Saviour. Then you can begin your new life in Christ. It is the promise of many more blessings to come. As a child of God, you can claim the change and become “in Christ ... a new creature ... behold, all things are become new” [2 Corinthians 5:17].

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

THANKSGIVING

There is new life in Christ, abundant and free.

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 12:3–5

LESSON

**Only the best for our
Lord**

VERSE 5

*Your lamb shall be without
blemish, a male of the first
year: ye shall take it out
from the sheep, or from the
goats.*

Very concise, specific instructions concerning the institution of the Passover were given to the Israelites through Moses on that night. As the Passover was family-centred, the head of each Jewish household must adhere to every detail. The Jewish historian, Josephus, claimed that at least 10, and not more than 20, were needed to make up the proper paschal communion, the portion of which was about the size of an olive.

The chosen lamb for the Passover sacrifice must be without blemish, for it was a type of Christ [1 Corinthians 5:7]. That sacrificial lamb speaks of the innocence of Christ, Who is spotless and unblemished, either of the original sin or actual transgression. Furthermore, the one-year-old Passover lamb, in its prime and without defect, typifies the holiness and righteousness of Christ. Hence, whatever is offered to God must be perfect in order to be accepted by Him [Leviticus 22:21].

All of us are born in sin. How can we be acceptable to God then? The only way is to accept His Son, the perfect Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, as our Saviour from sin. Our salvation in Christ results in positional justification and righteousness [Romans 4:24–25].

The question is, “Have you acknowledged Christ as your own personal Lord and Saviour?” If so, then thank God for your positional righteousness in Him alone and live in obedience to His will. If you are still an unbeliever, confess your sins to Him and pray the prayer of salvation before it is too late.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 10
REVELATION 1**

REMINDER

Give of your best to the Master.

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 12:6–11

LESSON

Significance of the blood

VERSE 7

And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

Note that the four items mentioned here in the first Passover are not required by later Jewish families observing the ordinance. Succeeding generations need not eat of the sacrificial lamb in their houses in Goshen, prepare the lamb on the tenth day, mark the blood on the door posts or eat it hastily.

The significance of the Israelites' obedience to Moses' instructions on that night was a matter of life and death. How the sacrificed lamb was to be eaten and its blood disposed of was clearly stated [v. 7]. The blood sprinkled on the doorposts and lintels would distinguish every Jewish home from that of the Egyptians. In that last tenth plague, the angel of the Lord would pass over all the houses marked by the blood of the lamb.

The sacrificial system was very specific, right down to the time and nature of the slaughter of the lamb. This symbolises the death of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. It was necessary because of the penalty for sin [Isaiah 53:5; Romans 6:23]. Salvation and redemption can only be achieved through the blood-bought way of the Cross.

Thus the appropriate name of the first holy ordinance, the Passover, was a memorial of God's preservation and deliverance of His people out of Egypt. It was God's gift of mercy upon them. For every child of God today, we observe the Lord's Supper in remembrance of God's loving mercy upon all sinners saved by His grace.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 11–12
REVELATION 2

THOUGHT

We all need to go home by the blood-sprinkled way.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 12:12–14***LESSON****When I see the blood****VERSE 13**

And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

God prepared the Israelites in advance for the consequences of the final tenth plague. Severe judgement would be executed upon Egypt—including every man and animal as well as all the false gods of Egypt. Everyone was going to witness the absolute sovereign power of God at work that night.

The test here was in a person's faith. Those who had sprinkled the blood of the lamb would not be killed by the angel of the Lord. This external evidence of blood showed the Israelites' faith in God for deliverance. Take note of the difference between 'pass through' [v. 12] and 'pass over' [v. 13]. "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night" speaks of judgement. However, "I will pass over you" shows God's merciful deliverance of His people.

The Jews' faith in sprinkling the blood of the sacrificed lamb was evidence of their belief in God's redemption. Likewise, only our faith in God through the redeemed blood of the Lamb of God can save us. We have redemption through the shed blood of Christ and the forgiveness of our sins [Ephesians 1:7].

Have you trusted in the Lord Jesus to save you from your sins? As a child of God, you are protected by the redemptive work of Christ on the Cross. There is absolutely nothing that we can do on our part to save ourselves. The only way to God is through His Son Jesus Christ [John 14:6].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 13
REVELATION 3

THOUGHT

When I see the blood, when I see the blood, when I see the blood, I will pass, I will pass over you.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 12:15–20***LESSON****Pursuit of holiness****VERSE 20**

*Ye shall eat nothing
leavened; in all your
habitations shall ye eat
unleavened bread.*

Another important ordinance was observed by the Israelites before their exodus from Egypt that night. The feast of unleavened bread was annexed to the Passover as a reminder of their deliverance out of Egypt. The Israelites were instructed to take only unleavened bread for seven days. Whoever found guilty of eating leavened bread would be punished.

Not only was the slaughter of the lamb given in detail, but instructions were also given as to what it should be eaten with [v. 8]. Together with bitter herbs, the Jews had to eat the lamb with unleavened bread only.

Throughout Scripture, leaven has symbolised sin and unleavened typifies righteousness. The feast of the unleavened bread typifies the Christian life [1 Corinthians 5:7–8]. After acknowledging Christ as our Lord and Saviour, we must forsake our past sinful habits and pursue a new life of righteousness.

In Matthew Henry's words, "We must keep a feast in holy joy, continually delighting ourselves in Christ Jesus; no care admitted or indulged, inconsistent with, or prejudicial to, this holy joy: if true believers have not a continual feast, it is their own fault. It must be a feast of unleavened bread, kept in charity, without the leaven of malice, and insincerity, without the leaven of hypocrisy. At the point of your conversion, you are a new creature." "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]. This new life in Christ must include holy living.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

2 CHRONICLES 14–15
REVELATION 4

PRAYER**Lord, help me to abhor the leaven of sin.**

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 12:21–28***LESSON****In remembrance****VERSE 24**

And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.

Moses gave instructions to the elders on the observance of the Passover. Only on that particular night, the paschal lamb was to be killed by the heads of families in their own houses. Once the priesthood was established in the family of Aaron and the temple built in Jerusalem, the lamb would be killed only by the priests and observed by later generations till today.

Note the two newly-added injunctions: a bunch of hyssop, a type of plant, was to be used to sprinkle the blood on the lintel and the two side posts of the door [v. 22]. Quoting Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, “And it is remarkable that it was ordained in the arrangements of an all-wise Providence that the Roman soldiers should undesignedly, on their part, make use of this symbolical plant to Christ when, as our Passover, He was sacrificed for us” [John 19:29]. Furthermore, the Israelites could not leave the house until the next morning.

That first Passover was an ordinance for the Jews to observe forever. They were to instruct their children to do likewise. The paschal lamb typifies the sacrifice of Christ for every believer. In our observance of the Lord’s Supper, we are reminded of His death on Calvary.

Do you partake of the Lord’s Supper lightly? Confess any known sin to our Lord Jesus before Holy Communion. Do not allow sin to hinder you from remembering what Christ did for you on the Cross. Any known sin must be dealt with immediately by confessing to our Lord Jesus.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 16
REVELATION 5

PRAYER

Lord, lead me to Calvary to remember Your love for me.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 12:29–36***LESSON****Go, serve the Lord****VERSE 31**

And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said.

As prophesied, the final showdown has come. At the stroke of midnight, all firstborn from the palace to the dungeon, including livestock, were struck dead. The terrible wail and grievous howling coming from every Egyptian household could be heard across Egypt. It was so dreadful that the Egyptians, fearing more consequences, hurried the Israelites to leave immediately. They even offered their jewellery to expedite them on their way.

We should not be surprised at God's severe dealing with the Egyptians. Pharaoh, their leader, had stubbornly resisted and refused to release the Israelites despite being warned repeatedly. God's sovereign power over Pharaoh resulted in his letting the Israelites go. The irony here is that Pharaoh could not wait for the Israelites to leave Egypt now.

Throughout Scripture, Egypt typifies the world. Whatever happened to Egypt should serve as a stern warning to us. Do not take God's warning lightly. Judgement fell on Adam and Eve for their sin of disobedience in the Garden of Eden. Another instance was the judgement on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The day of universal judgement will soon come to pass [2 Peter 2:9].

Being forewarned is forearmed. There are many instances of warning and judgement in Scripture for our learning. Take heed of them and avoid the wrath to come. We must not take God's love for granted. Do not try His loving patience too far, as what Pharaoh did.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 17
REVELATION 6

PRAYER

Lord, help me to serve You faithfully wherever I am.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 12:37–42***LESSON****The great exodus****VERSE 42**

*It is a night to be much
observed unto the LORD
for bringing them out from
the land of Egypt: this is
that night of the LORD
to be observed of all the
children of Israel in their
generations.*

It was estimated that more than two million Israelites left Egypt on that very evening when Pharaoh instructed them to leave. This was the night that God did great things for His people and all generations ought to remember the work of redemption, even as we remember the redemption of all sinners by the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who shed His precious blood on the Cross and gave eternal life to those who believe in Him.

Like the Israelites who left Egypt for the Promised Land of Canaan, believers have broken away from the bondage of sins and received the hope of eternal life, with mansions in heaven prepared for us by our Master and Saviour.

Note that God's people took only unleavened bread. The dough was without yeast because they left Egypt in a hurry and did not have time to allow the yeast to leaven the bread. Leaven symbolises evil, which is an analogy to sin because of the way a little leaven works through the whole big lump of dough to puff it up. Our pride and sin make us 'puffed up', so we should remove it and keep our humility. We need to pray for the Holy Spirit to cleanse our heart and guide us to walk the narrow and pure path with the Lord.

It is the will of God that we are to be freed from our enslavements of this world. Our Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations [2 Peter 2:9].

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 18
REVELATION 7**

THOUGHT

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness. – Isaiah 41:10

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 12:43–51***LESSON****Separation from the world****VERSE 50***Thus did all the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.*

Separation was an absolute essential in the observance of the Passover. The Passover was not to be partaken by foreigners, temporary residents or hired workers. It was to be partaken within the house of faith and by those who were circumcised. The same is true for our walk with the Lord. We need to be spiritually pure, to truly repent and diligently keep the commandments of God. We should not conform to this world but be transformed by the renewing of our mind, so that we may prove what the good, acceptable and perfect will of God is.

We are to be set apart, as it is the will of God that we should be sanctified and live in a holy manner. Let the Holy Spirit work in us so that we walk and conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the Lord.

No bone on the Passover lamb could be broken and none of the meat could be taken outside the house. This is a picture of unity. The bone of Christ, even when he was crucified on the Cross, was never broken. Similarly, as members of Christ's body, we are not to be divided. We, as one unified family under the blood of Christ, must follow God's will to love and serve one another.

All of us who have enjoyed the blessings, grace and mercy of God should remember the goodness of the Lord. Do we keep God's commandments faithfully and obey His instructions to pursue after holiness?

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

2 CHRONICLES 19–20
REVELATION 8

PRAYER

Dear Lord, cleanse my heart and set me apart for holy living through the Holy Spirit. Help me to fix my eyes on Jesus. Shelter me from the temptation to conform to the world's unrestrained materialism, sensualism and self-centredness.

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 13:1–2

LESSON

Dedication

VERSE 2

Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.

It is a commandment of God that the firstborn of each household be dedicated to Him. This is for the children of God to know and remember that our God has redeemed us from the bondage of slavery. From generation to generation, God's will is for every child of His to hold fast in his faith and to remember that He is the only and true God, the Almighty God with the power to deliver.

We are to give the first of everything we possess to God. "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the LORD" [Leviticus 27:30]. Every single blessing comes from God. He alone is the true and living God, the Creator and the Redeemer.

As parents, we need to train our children in God's way. We need to dedicate our children to God and bring them up in the way that is pleasing to the Lord. Remember to share with them the goodness of God in your life. We are to set our children apart for God, to teach them God's Word and to keep watch over their souls.

Thank God for His grace that we are saved and through Jesus Christ we are now delivered from the enslavement to sin and evil. Everything God has given to us should be dedicated to Him, including our time, wealth, spiritual gifts and family. Do you give the Lord your heart and let your eyes keep to His ways? [Proverbs 23:26].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 21
REVELATION 9

QUESTIONS

Do we keep close to Jesus, constantly depending upon Him? Do we proudly profess our faith in the Lord and share the Gospel with others? Do we stand prepared for His service, ready to walk in His ways, and to separate ourselves from His enemies?

BIBLE LESSON
Exodus 13:3–10

LESSON
Be consecrated

VERSE 9

*And it shall be for a sign
 unto thee upon thine
 hand, and for a memorial
 between thine eyes, that
 the LORD's law may be
 in thy mouth: for with a
 strong hand hath the LORD
 brought thee out of Egypt.*

Moses said unto the people, “Remember this day, the day the Lord redeemed you and delivered you with His mighty hand.” God performed all these miracles to bring His people to the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. This is a reminder for us to count our blessings and give thanks to the good Lord. We serve a mighty God, a great God Who has given us dominion on earth and his unmerited grace so that we can call upon Him always for strength and wisdom.

God commanded His people to eat unleavened bread for seven days and let leaven not be seen in their homes [v. 7]. This symbolises righteousness. As God’s people, we are to root out the leaven of evil in our hearts. “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” [1 Corinthians 5:7–8].

Read God’s Word, meditate and pray for the Holy Spirit to help you see your sins, confess and cast out the leaven [evil] within you so that you may stay uncorrupted. The feast of the unleavened bread is a sign and a memorial that marks the people of God as special.

Do others see you as a believer who is righteous and godly? Do you constantly keep the commandments of the Lord and walk in His ways?

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
 IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 22–23
REVELATION 10

REMINDER

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.
 – John 13:34–35.

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 13:11–16

LESSON

God, our redeemer

VERSE 11

And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee,

God had promised Abraham a land (Canaan), a seed (descendants as numerous as the stars in the heavens) and a blessing (blessing for Abraham and his descendants, and through his seed, blessing for the world). We as children of God can claim our heritage in God’s kingdom as we have been saved by faith. Christ has redeemed us by the grace of God, and we have become the spiritual descendants of Abraham and co-heirs of the promised blessings. Like Abraham, we are saved by faith alone.

The land of Canaan symbolises the Promised Land of heaven and salvation. Jesus Christ is our living Redeemer. As followers of Christ, we are saved from eternal death. We are redeemed from our troubles [Psalm 25:22] and distress [1 Kings 1:29]. We gain joy, peace and victory in Him.

As parents, we need to share with our children the great work of God in our lives [v. 14] and God’s judgement on Egypt on those who disobey God [v.15]. We need to tell them that they too belong to the Lord. Every person needs to clearly understand the need to be redeemed by God’s mighty hand through personal belief in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. We are urged to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing unto God.

“Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine” [Proverbs 3:9–10].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 24
REVELATION 11

THOUGHT

Have we given all to Jesus? Have we given our desires, thoughts, wants, actions and all to God? Have we surrendered all to Jesus and submit to His will with a humble heart? Remember Romans 14:8.

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 13:17–22

LESSON

**God’s guidance by day
and by night**

VERSE 21

*And the LORD went before
them by day in a pillar
of a cloud, to lead them
the way; and by night in a
pillar of fire, to give them
light; to go by day and
night:*

The shortest route to the Promised Land from Egypt was along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and through the land of the Philistines. To avoid getting into conflicts with the aggressive Philistines, God led His people to the Red Sea and away from trouble.

Many times it appears to us that God does not work in the way that seems best. Yet we should have faith in the Lord, as He knows what is best. God cares for us and He will personally lead us. Trust in the Lord, for He will lead us to the right people, the right place and to do the right thing. Seek the Lord’s guidance when you face trouble, as He knows the safest and best route in life for you.

Moses carried the bones of Joseph with him because of the oath made by the Israelites to Joseph. Joseph believed in God’s promise that one day He would lead the people to the Promised Land. The act of taking along the bones of Joseph is evidence that God’s people had the same faith in God. Today, we can have the same assurance, that the promise of salvation and heaven is true.

God used a pillar of cloud to guide His people by day and a pillar of fire to lead them by night. We have the same assurance and protection as God’s children today. God leads us by His own presence and He will never leave us. He has said, “My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest” [Exodus 33:14].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 25
REVELATION 12

MEDITATION

**For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will
be our guide even unto death. – Psalm 48:14**

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 14:1–9***LESSON****Hardening Pharaoh's heart****VERSE 4**

And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so.

The deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt by our Lord is an iconic event in the Bible. It fulfils God's promise of liberating His people. We read in many parts of the Bible of how God refers to this event: how He will deliver His people from slavery from their sins and make them truly free.

The precise location of the places mentioned in verse 2 is not known in today's geography. The expected route of the Israelites should be south-east but God changed the direction of their route from south-east to south. This led Pharaoh to think that the Israelites were lost in the wilderness. Pharaoh would have rejoiced thinking that they were trapped by the waters ahead of them and they had no escape route.

Once the immediate terror of God's punishment on the Egyptians had worn off, Pharaoh's thought was to seek revenge on the Israelites. There was no true repentance on the part of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, as "the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" [v. 5]. They were surprised that they actually let the Israelites go, thinking, "No more free labour, how silly we were!" So Pharaoh gathered together 600 of Egypt's best chariots and, together with his army, pursued the Israelites.

In the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, was he forced to sin by God? God only acted on account of Pharaoh's choices. First, God knew in advance, Pharaoh's decisions. Second, Pharaoh became stubborn. Third, Pharaoh remained stubborn despite clear warnings.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 26
REVELATION 13

THOUGHT

Refer to Exodus 8:15, 19, 32 for the reasons for Pharaoh's poor choices.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 14:10–12***LESSON****The mentally defeated****VERSE 12**

Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
2 CHRONICLES 27–28
REVELATION 14**

Hot on the heels of the Israelites was one of the most powerful and feared armies of the ancient world. The children of Israel seemed to be in serious trouble indeed: Behind them was Pharaoh's army and ahead of them was the Red Sea. What was their response? They cried unto the Lord, and started to blame Moses, again.

Their crying to God made sense and was understandable because when we find ourselves in dangerous situations with no easy escape, we will naturally cry out to God, because God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble [Psalm 46:1]. However, their words to Moses showed a great lack of faith and loss of confidence in God [v. 12]. No reasonable mind would really think that Moses planned all this: to lead the Israelites to their death in the wilderness.

Their complaint here is the first complaint on record. There would be more complaints to follow over the next 40 years when they were wandering through the wilderness, repeating itself like a chorus in a song. Instead of believing that God could bring them to the Promised Land, after witnessing His mighty deeds, they started to doubt God and turned against Moses. They blamed him for having brought them out of Egypt against their will, and expressed a readiness to return to slavery, and resume their old service of bondage.

"Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea" [Psalm 106:7].

THOUGHT

The cry of the unsaved heart is: "Give me the security of slavery rather than the certainty of faith in our Lord."

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 14:13–14***LESSON****Be still, God is in control****VERSE 14***The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.*

God knows our hearts and minds. That is why God knew the thoughts and plans of Pharaoh, and how he would change his mind after he had released the Israelites. God also knew that Pharaoh would send his army and chariots after the children of Israel. God had purposed that he would utterly destroy the army of Pharaoh, “that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD” [v. 4].

So no matter how carefully evil men plan the execution of their wicked deeds, God is able to frustrate them and turn it for His glory. If the Israelites had come into Canaan by a direct course, they could not have been so readily pursued. Instead, God asked Moses to change course [v. 2] so that the Israelites would be caught between Pharaoh’s army and the Red Sea. It would then be apparent that Pharaoh’s army could easily destroy the Israelites. The deliverance of the Israelites from this grave predicament would give glory to God.

But the Israelites could not see this. They lost their faith and hurled all sorts of wicked cries against Moses and blasphemies in the face of God. The meek Moses, with his characteristic kindness, courteously exhorted them to be of good hope, lest by going too far they face the severe chastisement of God.

By the expression ‘stand still’ [v. 13], Moses meant ‘keep quiet’. There is no occasion for anyone to move a finger, because God alone will preserve and guide.

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

THOUGHT

There are occasions when we have to stand still and watch God’s acting to help us.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 14:15–20***LESSON****An answered prayer****VERSE 15**

And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.

It was indeed a tense moment. Apparently, Moses had been praying to God. Just prior to that, he had encouraged the Israelites to remain calm and trust in the Lord. This was sensible. We are about to witness one of the greatest miracles in the Old Testament, and Moses needed reassurance from God. The time for Moses to act was now.

There is a time to pray and there is definitely a time to act. It can actually be against God's will to not act and to only pray in a particular situation. The parting of the Red Sea is a well-known story. However, we know that it was not really the power of Moses' hand that held back the sea or allowed it to come crashing back into the Egyptian army. It was the power of God at work.

God could have performed this miracle just as easily without Moses' cooperation. Yet, God delights in using human agents to take part in His miraculous works. In fact, we can say that many marvellous works of God are yet to be done because no human agent has stepped forth to be the one who will 'stretch out his hand'.

In addition, this was God's vindication of Moses. The Israelites had previously accused him of the lowest of motivations and the most evil state of heart [v. 10–12]. Through this great work, God showed the whole nation that Moses was their leader, chosen by God Himself.

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

QUESTION

Is God calling you to stretch forth your hand to do His work? Are you using prayer as an excuse to procrastinate?

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 14:21–25***LESSON****Crossing the Red Sea****VERSE 22**

And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

The passage through the Red Sea is the crowning miracle by which God would effect the deliverance of His people from the bondage of Egypt. There are many lessons we can learn from that historical event.

For one, we learn of what God is to His own in the day of trouble. If God's presence comes between our enemies and us, they can do no more against us than His love permits. He is light [v. 20] to them in times of peril. The waters of trouble are divided before us. However much our way may seem blocked, God's arm will open up a path for us. The way for the Israelites was not only a path of escape but also one of perfect safety. The waters served as walls on the right and the left. Our enemies cannot attack from the flanks.

For another, we read of what God is to those who oppose Him or do not know Him. Their path is wrapped in darkness. They cannot lay hold of the weakest of those who, but a moment before, seemed wholly in their power. They are perplexed and baffled. Daring to pursue, they are filled with horror by the revelation that their contest is with the mighty God: they come face to face not with the servant but with the Master. They flee in vain. Yet to whom shall they flee to? They may flee to God but they cannot flee from God.

On which side do you belong?

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

THOUGHT

Those who have followed God through the sea need not fear following Him wherever He leads them.

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 14:26–31***LESSON****The Almighty God****VERSE 30**

*Thus the LORD saved Israel
that day out of the hand of
the Egyptians; and Israel
saw the Egyptians dead
upon the sea shore.*

The crossing of the Red Sea is a miraculous event remembered by the Israelites and recalled many times in the Scriptures because it shows the power of God and His lovingkindness towards His people. However, if we were to pick out those recollections in the Scriptures, the contexts for quoting that glorious episode are not necessarily always one of gratitude.

In recounting the event, the Psalmist once wrote, “Our fathers understood not Thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of Thy mercies; but provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red sea” [Psalm 106:7]. How forgetful and ungrateful the Israelites were after having witnessed so many miracles to liberate them from the tyranny of Pharaoh and from their slavery. Their lack of faith and unbelief ran the risk of mocking that great work of deliverance.

Can this be said about us as well? When tempest-tossed upon life’s billows, do you look upon the grace and mercies of God? When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost, do you turn your eyes upon the hope and joy in Jesus? Or do you doubt and even provoke God in your frustration and dejection?

Remember our God is the God “Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens” [Hebrews 11:33–34]. Remember that He is God.

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

REMINDER

**Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted
among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.**
– Psalm 46:10

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 15:1–3***LESSON****Singing unto the Lord****VERSE 1**

Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

Moses and the Israelites sang a song of praise to God on the banks of the Red Sea, for they had been delivered. They celebrated the power of God, gloriously manifested in the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts.

“I will sing unto the Lord.” Singing can bring us into the immediate and felt presence of Jehovah. While this idea of singing to the Lord is expressive of the singer’s attitude, as immediately before the very face of the Supreme, it indicates that the song is an acceptable offering and oblation to the Lord. “Singing,” says one, “is as much the language of holy joy as prayer is the language of holy desire.” How sublime a sight! The whole congregation singing before the one invisible God, and consciously realising their direct relationship to the Eternal God, needs no outward form or material symbol.

The Lord is the subject and theme of the entire song. Underlying all is the sense of the Divine personality. Nothing but this could have kindled the soul to song. If God is to be the subject of hymning praise, it must be from the thought of a living, personal One to evoke the spirit of glorying in and praising His name. Here, is singing, not only to the Lord and of the Lord but also for the Lord.

This is the highest reach and the final purpose of all praise: to manifest and express the Divine character, the Divine working and ways, the Divine glory and honour.

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

THOUGHT

Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually. – John Wesley

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 15:4–18***LESSON****True worship****VERSE 11**

*Who is like unto thee, O
LORD, among the gods?
who is like thee, glorious in
holiness, fearful in praises,
doing wonders?*

In looking through the various notes of this song, a notable point is that there is not a single note about 'self', its doings, its sayings, its feelings or its fruits. It is all about Jehovah from beginning to end. This is a specimen of the entire song. It is a simple record of the attributes and workings of Jehovah.

When the poor worthless self is forgotten, circumstances are lost sight of, and Christ alone fills the heart, that is when we present proper worship. There is no need for human innovation, cleverness or theatrical prettiness of showmanship to awaken the soul with feelings of devotion. It is the quickening grace of the indwelling Spirit to kindle the flame of acceptable worship. Let the heart be occupied with the Person of Christ, and 'songs of praise' will be the natural result.

It is impossible for the eye to rest on Him and the spirit not be bowed in holy worship. If we contemplate the worship of the hosts that surround the throne of God and the Lamb, we shall find that it is ever evoked by the presentation of some special feature of divine excellence or divine working.

In worship, only one object should fill our thoughts: the Lord Himself in His character and ways. It is all about Jehovah. It is an outpouring of soul produced by a view of God and His gracious and glorious workings. In all true worship, God Himself is at once the object of worship, the subject of worship and the power of worship.

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

THOUGHT

Prayer is preoccupying with our needs; praise is preoccupying with our blessings; worship is preoccupying with God. – Leonard Ravenhill

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 15:19–21***LESSON****Miriam****VERSE 21**

*And Miriam answered
them, Sing ye to the LORD,
for he hath triumphed
gloriously; the horse and his
rider hath he thrown into
the sea.*

Miriam was a prophetess with a song. Moses led the psalm, and gave it out for the men, and then Miriam for the women. The significant mention of Miriam here is appropriate, for it shows the important place of women in God's deliverance of His people.

We should recall that Miriam saved Moses' life in the events surrounding his birth. When Moses returned to Egypt as the deliverer of Israel, Miriam was there to greet him. When Pharaoh's host was overthrown in the Red Sea, she led the women in a wonderful song of deliverance.

There are six Marys mentioned in the New Testament and there is one outstanding Mary in the Old Testament. The six in the New Testament are: Mary, the mother of Jesus; Mary Magdalene; Mary, the wife of Cleophas; Mary of Bethany; Mary, the mother of John Mark, and Mary of Rome. Our seventh Mary is Mary ['Miriam' in Hebrew], the sister of Moses and Aaron.

We praise God for the Bible Marys, for they are representative of women from the various walks of life—women who knew God and served Him faithfully. From them, we learn that there is a vast difference among Christians as well as much of similarity. All the Marys of the New Testament loved Christ devotedly, and Miriam was just as loyal to her Lord. Of the majority of the New Testament Marys, we read two things wherein they excelled: they were last at the Cross, and first at the tomb.

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

THOUGHT

But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. – Luke 10:42

BIBLE LESSON*Exodus 15:22–27***LESSON****Bitter and sweet****VERSE 24**

*And the people murmured
against Moses, saying,
What shall we drink?*

From the Red Sea, the Israelites marched into the wilderness of Shur. The three-day journey to Marah, a distance of 33 miles, was their first experience of absolute hardship, for not even the curtain of the miraculous cloud could prevent them from the heat and thirst. They were already anticipating the entry into the land of Canaan. Suddenly, they ran out of water. When they found water, it was too bitter to drink.

This was their first—and acute—disappointment. From the height of exultation they fell almost at once to the depths of despair. As usual, it drove the people to murmuring, and Moses to prayer. What they did here must be hailed as an eloquent commentary on what not to do in an emergency. Did they call a council, resort to prayer, appoint a committee to look for water, or even attempt to dig a well, or call a prayer meeting to pray for rain? No, they just murmured.

Would we have borne the trial better? It is easy to sing when the heart is full of fresh joy. But let trial succeed trial, and disappointment follow disappointment, how soon do the accents of praise die away, only to be replaced by moaning and complaint.

The greatest joys and hopes are soon turned into the greatest grief and fears by those who live by sense only, and not by faith. Unless our springs are in God, and heaven begun in the heart, the needful change of external associations may bring little but pain and bitterness.

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

THOUGHT

As “to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet”, so to the murmuring soul every sweet thing is bitter. – T. Brooks