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# DAILY *manna*

JANUARY – MARCH 2014

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GENERAL EDITOR

Rev Isaac Ong

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*Daily devotions for reading through the Bible*

Dear *Daily Manna* readers,

Welcome to 2014 and a new beginning. The Lord says, “Behold, I make all things new” [Revelation 21:5]. That is certainly true when we see our Lord Jesus face to face, but it is also true even now. God is gracious. “It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness” [Lamentations 3:22-23].

It is our prayer that in 2014, you will draw near to God through the daily reading of His Word. For the next 12 months, we will be working our way through the rest of the Pentateuch: Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. God willing, you will see in these books, the covenantal faithfulness of God to His people. We pray that you will be encouraged to love Him more deeply, know Him more intimately, and serve Him more faithfully.

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’ll 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

*Exodus 16:1–12*

### LESSON

#### Murmurings

#### VERSE 8

*And Moses said, This shall be, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD.*

This was a generation that had seen God's great and mighty acts. Many had seen the 10 plagues that befell their Egyptian oppressors. Even more had witnessed the parting of the Red Sea and how its waters covered their Egyptian pursuers. Probably all had placed their faith in the pillar of cloud in the day and the pillar of fire at night.

Yet in the wilderness of sin, they murmured. They accused Moses and Aaron of leading them out of Egypt, where they once ate meat and bread to the full, only to die starving in this harsh land [v. 3]. To those allegations, Moses had only one thing to say. Their murmurings were not against him but against God instead. It was God Who had led them out of Egypt.

To those faithless murmurings, our longsuffering God was patient. He knew this would happen and had provided them with the food they required for each day.

Though we may shake our heads in disapproval at their lack of faith, do not underestimate the circumstance that they were facing. Have you seen wasted lands that seem to stretch for infinity? Imagine yourself as one of those people. Look at the remnants of food left for the millions of people. Feel the harsh winds, the heat in the day and the cold in the night. Will you not also murmur? Come back to reality and to the everyday life you lead. Are your daily ordeals like those faced by the Israelites?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZRA I**  
**ACTS I**

#### THOUGHT

**Commit everything to God. He Who delivered Israel out of the bondage of sin and started a good work in you will surely see you through to the very end.**

### BIBLE LESSON

### *Exodus 16:13–15*

#### LESSON

#### Quails and bread

#### VERSE 15

*And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.*

The children of Israel missed their flesh pots and bread [v. 3]. Knowing that they would murmur, God was going to feed them with flesh in the evening and bread in the morning [v. 12]. How could that happen?

In the evening, quails came up and covered the camp. In the morning, a layer of dew would cover the land. After the dew had gone up, the wilderness would be covered with small round things. These were like coriander seeds [v. 31] and their taste was like wafers made with honey. Moses said to the Israelites: “This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.”

Surreal as it seems, this is not fairy tale. The truth is the Israelites were going to eat manna for the next 40 years [v. 35]. Their food problem was resolved and this was not possible without God’s provision. Who could have imagined this?

The problem with man is less of his tendency to wander than his lack of imagination. Our finite mind is unable to see the possibilities of the infinite mind of God. How often have we gone to God asking God for help and yet prayed in unbelief? God wants the best for us and will give us His best. Learn to ask according to His will. Let the Holy Spirit open your eyes to see the beauty of His providence.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZRA 2**  
**ACTS 2**

#### REMINDER

**Beware in your prayer, above everything, of limiting God, not only by unbelief but also by fancying that you know what He can do. – Andrew Murray**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 16:16–24*

**LESSON**

**Daily manna**

**VERSE 16**

*This is the thing which the  
LORD hath commanded,  
Gather of it every man  
according to his eating,  
an omer for every man,  
according to the number of  
your persons; take ye every  
man for them which are in  
his tents.*

God's blessings are for all His children—every man an omer according to his needs [v. 16–17]. Every child of God is treated fairly. This applies to our lives. God gives us talents in different areas. We may be weak in some aspects but God always makes up for it with strengths in others.

We are taught to go to God every day for our daily bread [v. 18–19]. We are to rely on Him always. God has promised that as long as we walk in His way, He will surely provide. This extends beyond meeting our daily needs. Learn to go to God for wisdom and strength to continue each day of your life.

We are also warned about unbelieving people who hoarded on God's daily blessings, fearing for their own bellies the next day [v. 20]. All their efforts had gone to waste. They must have kept manna for tomorrow with a guilty conscience, knowing that God had clearly commanded them not to do so. Yet they did and the price they paid, the worm-bred stink aside, was the absence of peace in their hearts. We should gather our manna early [v. 21]. We should work in the morning because the manna would melt at noon. Work while the day is young.

It is important to rest on the Sabbath day [v. 22–24]. The Israelites were told to take a double portion on the sixth day and miraculously the manna stayed fresh on the seventh. The sabbatical model set since creation was already in place.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZRA 3**  
**ACTS 3**

**PRAYER**

**Dear Lord, give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 16:25–36*

**LESSON**

**That we may see**

**VERSE 32**

*And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt.*

The 40 years of manna not only served to fill the otherwise starving Israelites in the wilderness but also stood as a great testimony of God's grace and faithfulness for the future generations of His children. When we look back in history through God's revealed Word, we marvel at this great work made possible only by God.

This is also what God wants us to do: remember His loving-kindness towards us. God wants us to know Him. He has revealed His will to us through His Word as well as in the daily sustenance we get from Him. The historical episode of the daily manna leaves us a legacy to pass on to generations to come, should the Lord tarry. Similarly, we should also ask ourselves what kind of legacy we are leaving to our children. Do they see us as a generation that feeds on God's manna every day?

Yet we should also be reminded that God did not have to supply manna to the Israelites for 40 years. If not for their murmurings and disobedience, the Israelites would have reached Canaan a lot quicker. In fact, God could have struck them dead every time they sinned against Him. But He did not. It was His longsuffering that enabled them to continue living. But they missed out the greater blessing of entering Canaan.

How is your walk with God? Are you trusting in Him every day? Or are you going round in circles, going through the routine of eating manna and missing the promised milk and honey?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZRA 4**  
**ACTS 4**

**HYMN**

**O deeper yet, I pray,  
And higher ev'ry day,  
And wiser, blessed Lord,  
In Thy precious, holy Word.**

## BIBLE LESSON

*Exodus 17:1–7*

### LESSON

**Trust, not tempt**

### VERSE 7

*And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?*

Today's passage covers the sad episode of the waters of Meribah. To have a fuller picture of what actually happened, read Numbers 20. This episode of faithlessness eventually resulted in Moses and Aaron not being able to enter Canaan.

The account in Exodus is simpler and focused more on the unbelief of the people. The heat in the wilderness got the better of the Israelites. They remembered the abundance of water in the Nile delta and challenged Moses, even accusing him of bringing them all the way to a foreign land only to die there. They even threatened to stone him.

God knew this would happen and He gave instructions to Moses on how to get water from the rock [v. 6]. However, the people were to suffer for their faithlessness in years to come. Their challenge against Moses was actually a challenge against God Himself. They tempted God, calling God to prove that He was present with them [v. 7]. Their physical thirst had clouded their spiritual eyes.

Sojourning in this world is not easy, if not God would have told us otherwise. However, He has provided us sufficient grace to meet our needs. What we need to do is simply trust in Him with our whole heart. And we will realise He has long provided for us before we even asked. May today's lesson be a warning to us not to try the Lord's patience.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZRA 5**  
**ACTS 5**

### MEDITATION

**But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. – John 4:14**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 17:8–16***LESSON****The Lord is my banner****VERSE 15***And Moses built an altar,  
and called the name of it  
Jehovah-nissi.*

This is a well-known battle between Israel and the Amalekites. The two troops clashed in Rephidim. While Joshua led the chosen warrior to fight, Moses was standing on top of a hill lifting up the rod of God. And it happened that whenever Moses held up the rod, Israel prevailed; whenever he let down his hand, Israel suffered loss. The people were quick to discover that pattern and they placed a stone under Moses' arms so that the rod of God was lifted up always.

The significance of that event goes way beyond the victory of that battle and the sealing of the fate of the Amalekites. The rod of God held up high is a symbol of the banner of the Lord flying high. Read what the Lord instructed Moses to do after the battle [v. 14–15]. This is exactly the meaning of Jehovahnissi: “The Lord is my Banner”.

The Christian walk is very much a continuous war against evil. We face temptations from outside and we need to fight the old man within. We are able to fight against Satan because of the Holy Spirit dwelling inside us. If we walk in God's way, we triumph. If we stray from the Lord, we fight a losing battle. The crux of the matter lies in whether we fly God's banner up high.

This is similar for our testimonies in this world. We have a choice whether to shine for the Lord or to hide our light under a bushel. Are you flying the banner of God, the Lord of hosts?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZRA 6**  
**ACTS 6**

**HYMN**

**Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Ye soldiers of the cross!  
Lift high His royal banner—It must not suffer loss.  
From vict'ry unto vict'ry His army shall He lead,  
Till ev'ry foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 18:1–7***LESSON****Moses reunited with his family****VERSE 5**

*And Jethro, Moses' father in law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God.*

**J**ethro, Moses' father-in-law, heard the news of all that God had done for Moses and Israel. He was greatly excited that God was using Moses, his son-in-law, as the leader of a great nation of people.

Sometime in the past, Moses probably felt that his wife Zipporah's bitter rebellion against God and himself would threaten the work God had set for him. So he sent her and the children back to her parents [Exodus 4:24–26]. Family strife can hinder and hamper a person's call to serve God, especially when the strife involves a bitter rebellion against one's spouse and God. We are told not to live in strife, argument, bitterness, division and rebellion against one another or against God.

Moses demonstrated great faith in naming his sons. Moses named his oldest son 'Gershom', which meant 'a stranger, alien or sojourner'. He considered himself a stranger and sojourner in Midian even though he had stayed there for 40 years. Moses' heart was looking forward to the promised land of God, the land of Canaan. He named his younger son 'Eliezer', which meant 'God is my helper', for he believed that God was the One Who delivered him from being captured and executed by Pharaoh. Moses never lost his faith in God, not even when he was a young man starting a family.

Jethro sent a messenger to tell Moses that he was coming with Moses' wife and children. Moses went out to meet his family with kindness and humility, greeting and asking about the welfare of each.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZRA 7**  
**ACTS 7**

**THOUGHT**

**Do you show courtesy, kindness, receptivity and forgiveness when receiving estranged members of your family? Reconciliation and forgiveness are God's will for divided family members.**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Exodus 18:8–18*

**LESSON**

**Acknowledging God's blessing publicly**

**VERSE 10**

*And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.*

Moses shared all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians, as well as all His goodness in their journey through the wilderness. Jethro praised God and proclaimed that the Lord was greater than all gods. Jethro even provided the burnt offerings and altar sacrifices for worship and fellowship with Moses, Aaron and all the elders of Israel. Jethro made a public acknowledgement of God's wonderful blessings upon Moses and upon Israel both in words and action.

May we learn to pray and seek God to bless our family members. May we humbly and unselfishly acknowledge the blessings of God upon them. "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" [Romans 14:19]. Let us rejoice with our friends when good things come upon them, and envy not.

The next morning, Jethro saw that Moses started his day very early and sat through to the evening, helping the people to interpret God's will and law in settling disputes. Moses was the only judge for Israel and there was a large backlog of cases. People had to stand from early morning to evening to have their cases tried before Moses.

Jethro noted that Moses and the people were being worn out. The work was too heavy for Moses to handle alone. There was a serious problem with the organisational structure and leadership. And Jethro said to Moses, "The thing that thou doest is not good." Are you overworked? What are you doing about it?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZRA 8**  
**ACTS 8**

**PRAYER**

**Take this time to remember and pray for those who are in the mission field, for they are definitely overworked.**

## BIBLE LESSON

*Exodus 18:19–27*

### LESSON

**Jethro's advice to Moses**

### VERSE 19

*Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God:*

The people's need and Moses' burden both weighed upon Jethro's spirit. Before Jethro offered his wise solution, he first appealed to God to be with Moses [v. 19]. He told Moses that his idea should not be followed unless God approved it: "If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace" [v. 23]. Here we note the affectionate care, interest, humility and plain honesty of Jethro towards Moses and his submission to God in dispensing advice.

Jethro counselled that Moses should not work alone. Instead, he should share his work with others. Moses should be the representative before God and the primary teacher of the people regarding the commandments and laws of God. However, he should select capable and godly men to serve as judges to handle simple cases of disputes while he handled major and difficult cases.

God never designed us to work alone. Do you remember back in Genesis the reason God gave for creating Eve? He said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" [Genesis 2:18]. Even Jesus did not begin His ministry alone. He selected 12 men to work alongside Him.

Moses showed readiness to listen and was not proud to resent his father-in-law's interference. He not only heard but went about selecting men who feared God, loved truth and hated covetousness as his co-labourers.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZRA 9**  
**ACTS 9**

### THOUGHT

**Readiness to listen and obedience to conviction is needful for profiting from good counsel.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 19:1–9*

**LESSON**

**The call to obedience**

**VERSE 5**

*Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.*

Chapters 19 to 24 of Exodus cover the Mosaic covenant, also known as the law of God or the law of Moses. There are three divisions, namely, God’s call to total commitment [Exodus 19:1–25]; the Ten Commandments [Exodus 20:1–26]; and the civil and religious laws of Israel [Exodus 21:1–24:18].

The first covenant was given in the third month after Israel’s deliverance from Egyptian slavery where more than three million people were encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai. God spoke to Moses, reminding the people that He had unconditionally delivered them from enslavement, saved and redeemed them from the evil world of the Egyptians. God had also provided for all their needs as they journeyed through the wilderness. God would soon be leading them into the Promised Land.

But God told His people that He now expected them to follow Him, keep His covenant and obey His commandments. The covenant of law was conditional. If they kept the covenant, they would be greatly blessed; if they broke the covenant, they would be condemned. God promised that if the people obeyed His covenant, they would be God’s treasured people. They would be a kingdom of priests and they would be a holy nation.

Moses called all the elders together and shared all that the Lord had commanded. The people committed themselves to obey and keep His commandments. God also promised to give Moses a special manifestation of His presence whenever He spoke so that the people would believe that the words of Moses actually came from God.

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

**THANKS**

**For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth. – Deuteronomy 14:2**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 19:10–15*

**LESSON**

**The call to sanctification  
and reverence**

**VERSE 10**

*And the LORD said unto  
Moses, Go unto the people,  
and sanctify them to day  
and to morrow, and let  
them wash their clothes,*

**H**aving accepted God's terms, the time had come for God to reveal the covenant that He had prepared to make with the Israelites. Moses was ordered by God to get the people to sanctify themselves. They were to do this by washing their clothes and asking God to cleanse them from all sin, all pollutions and contaminations of this world.

God called His people to fear and revere His Holy presence, as he would descend upon Mount Sinai on the third day. God demanded that His presence be acknowledged and respected. Boundaries were to be set around the mountains and people were not to cross those boundaries. The boundary represented the great gulf between God and man. Anyone who crossed the boundary would be put to death. God demanded that the people focused totally on Him. They were to be sanctified and had to abstain from sexual relations during the three days of preparation for God's descent from the mountain.

God established guidelines for the Israelites to approach Him. God is holy. Even though the Israelites were God's chosen people, they had to realise that He is pure, righteous and Holy and they were not. They had to approach Him on His terms. This is true for salvation today, as Jesus has said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" [John 14:6].

God established boundaries for the people then but because of Christ, Christians can approach God anywhere and anytime.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**NEHEMIAH I  
ACTS 11**

**THANKS**

**Thank God that when you receive the miracle of rebirth, you receive the gift of eternal life and become a child of God with full rights and privileges as God's child.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 19:16–25***LESSON****The call to approach God  
through His appointed  
mediator****VERSE 20***And the LORD came down  
upon mount Sinai, on the  
top of the mount: and the  
LORD called Moses up to  
the top of the mount; and  
Moses went up.*

**E**arly on the morning of the third day, Moses brought his people to wait for the descent of God upon Mount Sinai. God exhibited His awesome presence with a cosmic pyrotechnic display of thunder and lighting exploding in the sky above the mountain. There were thick clouds, smoke and fire. Even the whole mountain quaked greatly. All the people were stricken, not only with awe and reverence but also with fear. God manifested Himself in the storm, in the fire and in the clouds. Finally there was a loud trumpet announcing the arrival of the King.

The lesson for us is that our God is a consuming fire, the Almighty, the King, the Judge, and we ought to fear Him. He is an awesome God and therefore drawing near to Him is an awesome thing.

God once again put His stamp of approval on Moses as the leader of His people and as the mediator of God and His people of Israel [v. 20–25]. Moses spoke to God and God answered him. It was Moses who was called by the Lord to come up to the mountain. Anyone else who did so would be struck dead.

God calls everyone to approach Him through His appointed mediator. For Israel, the mediator was Moses. For us, the mediator is the Lord Jesus Christ. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” [John 14:6].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**NEHEMIAH 2**  
**ACTS 12**

**THOUGHT**

**The very first lesson of the fear of God is to acknowledge that we cannot know Him and cannot have fellowship with Him apart from His Mediator.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 20:1*

**LESSON**

**God's spoken words**

**VERSE 1**

*And God spake all these words, saying,*

**I**t is proper to believe that God spoke to Israel as they assembled at the foot of Mount Sinai. There “Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice” [Exodus 19:19c].

The Ten Commandments form a moral code from God. It does not just state that certain behaviour is unwise or unhelpful. Instead, it instructs us on what God has commanded us to do or not do. Though we often refer to the commandments as part of Mosaic Law, they are not really Moses' law. Rather, “God spake all these words” and man must never think of himself as above the law. Only God is above all, and His law is the expression of His will.

The Ten Commandments are God's gift to Israel and humanity. It is important for us to understand, receive and obey all of the commandments. However, we must be mindful that they were never given with the aim to allow men to earn their place in Heaven by obeying them all perfectly or adequately.

From a Christian's perspective, “God spake all these words” to serve three purposes. His Word is a guardrail that is supposed to keep us on a moral path. It is a mirror showing us our moral failure and need for a Saviour. It is a guide that shows us what God expects of His people. Alan Redpath said: “The great message of the Christian faith is that we are free from the Law's condemnation in order that we may be able to fulfil its obligation by the power of Jesus.”

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**NEHEMIAH 3**  
**ACTS 13**

**THOUGHT**

**Jesus said: “If ye love me, keep my commandments” [John 14:15].**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 20:2–3*

**LESSON**

**Competing gods**

**VERSE 3**

*Thou shalt have no other  
gods before me.*

In the ancient days, God’s people were surrounded by pagan gods. Many Israelites were tempted to worship these gods of materialism, such as Baal (the god of wealth) and Ashtoreth (the goddess of fertility). Their worship of these idols led them to sexual immorality, gluttony and drunkenness. Similarly, in the present day, we too are tempted to worship the same gods, but without the archaic names and images.

Martin Luther defined idolatry as whatever our heart clings to, that is our god. Take a look around you and see the kinds of god we have. Most of us worship pleasure, position and possession. To some people, sports is all that they care about. Some people worship youthful looks. To some parents, children have become their gods. Many adults and children sacrifice their spiritual growth on the altar of academic grades. Therefore, whatever we love, fear, delight in or depend on, more than God, we make a god out of it.

In the midst of all these gods, we need to turn to the Word of God. What does it mean by “Thou shalt have no other gods before me”? The great reformer John Calvin said that it meant four things:

- Adoration: We are to worship only the Creator, giving Him our praise.
- Trust: We are to trust only the Creator God.
- Invocation: We are to turn to God for help in the face of trials.
- Thanksgiving: We are to be grateful to God for all His blessings.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**NEHEMIAH 4**  
**ACTS 14**

**THOUGHT**

**“Thou shalt have no other gods before me” does not imply that it is permissible for us to have other gods, so long as they line up behind the true God.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 20:4–6*

**LESSON**

**Graven images**

**VERSE 4**

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

The First Commandment tells us Who we worship. The Second tells us how we worship. We are not to make unto ourselves any graven images. Notice how comprehensive the Second Commandment is. It covers the heaven above, the earth beneath and the sea. With one sweeping statement, God rules out pagan worship involving statues, pictures, beads, trinkets and ‘holy’ objects. Why is this so wrong? Because religious images not only promote the worship of false gods but also breed superstition and divert our attention to the creation instead of the Creator.

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” [John 4:24]. God wants us to worship Him directly. He does not want us to go through any intermediary. We do not need statues, pictures, beads, incense or any other man-made object to bring us into God’s presence.

Sometimes we think of the Second Commandment as the most irrelevant of the ten. We have such a narrow view of idolatry that we say, “So long as we don’t bow down to a statue or an image, this commandment doesn’t apply to us.” How wrong are we!

The shapes of idols have changed since the days of Moses. There are ‘golden calves’ all around us today, such as tangible objects like houses and cars or intangible things like health and school grades. Anything that dominates our time, compromises our loyalty or confuses our priorities so that God becomes second is a ‘graven image’. Take heed.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**NEHEMIAH 5**  
**ACTS 15**

**THOUGHT**

**None who enjoys daily communion with Christ requires any pictures of Him to help him pray.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 20:7*

**LESSON**

**Taking God's name in  
vain**

**VERSE 7**

*Thou shalt not take the  
name of the LORD thy God  
in vain; for the LORD will  
not hold him guiltless that  
taketh his name in vain.*

The Bible has consistently denounced taking the Lord's name in vain. The word 'vain' means 'for no good reasons' or 'disrespectful way'. Many people today no longer respect God's name. Not only do non-believers misuse God's name, many Christians abuse it, too. The exclamation "Oh my God", or OMG in the social media, is a classic example. This phrase is used by millions of people every day and they give no thought to God when they use His name. For many it is 'just an expression'. But the Bible does not make exceptions for expressions, figures of speech or parochial sayings. To trivialise God's name regardless of any reason is wrong.

Our Lord Jesus reinforces the idea when He taught His disciples how to pray: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name" [Matthew 6:9]. The word 'hallowed' means 'to honour and treat as holy'. It means we should recognise God's name as being sanctified and set apart. To use His name means that we are acknowledging His greatness, holiness, purity and righteousness.

Believers are called to live a life of reverence to God and obedience to His Word. Let us all consider carefully what comes out of our mouths and make sure we do not use God's name in vain, even in our normal everyday conversation, messages or e-mails.

We should also check that we do not use His name as an expression of joy, surprise, anger or pain, "for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain".

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**NEHEMIAH 6**  
**ACTS 16**

**THOUGHT**

**Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. – Ephesians 4:29**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 20:8–11*

**LESSON**

**Rest**

**VERSE 8**

*Remember the sabbath day,  
to keep it holy.*

God set the pattern for the Sabbath at the time of creation. He rested after six days of work. When God commanded His people to remember the Sabbath, He was telling them to remember to rest. The term ‘Sabbath’ means ‘to rest or cease from work’. It does not refer to any specific day of the week.

How many people really enjoy what God intends us to do on the Sabbath, that is, to take a break from work and to worship Him? When we have a break, we prefer sports, television, recreation, hobbies and shopping to interacting with God and reading His Word. Therefore, many of us whose hearts are set more on the pleasures of the world than on the enjoyment of God will feel the Sabbath command a burden, not a blessing.

Some people do not even take a break from their work. Yes, God has indeed designed that we should work as it provides the necessities of life. The apostle Paul said, “If any would not work, neither should he eat” [2 Thessalonians 3:10]. In fact, we have elevated hard work to be one of our highest virtues. We have made a packed work schedule a badge of honour. It is true that God has given us talents and ability that He expects us to use. But our work neither saves nor sanctifies us spiritually.

Let us accept the gift of rest gratefully. Let us keep a day holy and devote ourselves to things that help deepen our relationship with God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**NEHEMIAH 7**  
**ACTS 17**

**THOUGHT**

**God instituted the Sabbath as a reminder that all the blessings in our lives come from His grace, not from our labour.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 20:12*

**LESSON**

**Honouring your parents**

**VERSE 12**

*Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*

God commands us to honour our parents because they prepare us to function in society and in all our other relationships. God is not giving us an option or a suggestion. It is a command He expects us to obey.

We have much to be thankful for in our parents. They fed us, clothed us, taught us and put up with our rebellious ways. Too many people are too self-centred to realise that. It can take a good many years for us to come to truly appreciate our parents. Sometimes it may be too late for us to say ‘thank you.’ And yet God has been calling us with an urgent command: honour thy father and thy mother.

There is a need for us to say, “Mum and Dad, thank you for always being there for me ... thank you for being so patient with me all these years ... thank you for the wisdom you’ve left me.” If you sense the need to show these sentiments, now is a good time. If there have been tensions between you and your parents, resolve them now. We may run out of time.

There are many ways in which we can honour our parents: giving them a hug, taking time to talk and pray with them, expressing thoughtful words, doing some kind deeds for them, visiting them and looking after them in their time of need. The lives of parents are encouraged and enriched when their children are grateful and respectful.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**NEHEMIAH 8**  
**ACTS 18**

**THOUGHT**

**This is the only commandment that has a time limit; we will not always have Mum and Dad around. There is a sense of urgency in this command.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 20:13*

**LESSON**

**Inward killing**

**VERSE 13**

*Thou shalt not kill.*

Our Lord Jesus makes it clear that murder begins in the heart and is rooted in anger and hatred. He said: “Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca ... whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire” [Matthew 5:22].

Anger is a strong feeling of displeasure and antagonism. Its synonyms are rage, fury, wrath and indignation. The word ‘raca’ means ‘good for nothing’. The term ‘thou fool’ is obviously a statement of condemnation. We may not actually plunge a knife into someone’s body from a sheer lack of courage, yet our hearts can be filled with so much hatred that we wish that person dead. This is inward killing.

In that sense, we are all murderers, and that is bad news unless we are forgiven. God made this command in four simple words: “Thou shalt not kill.” But our gracious Messiah spoke four other words: “Thy sins are forgiven” [Luke 7:48] if we believe in Him and place our sin of murder on His account.

Jesus has raised the bar; He has amplified the commandment from the physical to the spiritual. “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these” [Mark 12:31]. Under the New Covenant of our Lord, obedience is no longer restricted to the letter of the law and the actual commitment of murder. The Sixth Commandment, “Thou shalt not kill”, must be obeyed in our thoughts as well as our hearts.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**NEHEMIAH 9**  
**ACTS 19**

**THOUGHT**

**Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. – 1 John 3:15**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 20:14***LESSON****Adultery****VERSE 14***Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

Jesus warned that murder was an act of the heart even if we do not carry out the physical killing. Similarly for the commandment on adultery, He pointed directly to our hearts: “That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” [Matthew 5:28].

How often we hear people say, “There is nothing wrong with just looking as long as you don’t act.” We are not innocent just because we do not have the opportunity to sin the way we want to. God allows no justification for the ways that many try to defend extra-marital sex. God says it is not to be done; when it is, it is a sin and has dire consequences.

When King David was drawn into adultery with Bathsheba, it was not a surprise attack by Satan. He looked down from his rooftop and saw a beautiful woman bathing. Instead of turning away, he lusted for her in his heart; there his wicked desire arose. Because David allowed his desire to grow into lust, it became a sin. A single act of sin led to more sins. Before he realised what was happening, flesh took control of his life and he was no longer led by the spirit of God. As a result, the king committed a chain of sins that he never thought he would commit. In a moment of compromise, his life and spiritual condition spiralled out of control.

Temptation promises secret pleasure but the end result is death.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**NEHEMIAH 10**  
**ACTS 20**

**THOUGHT**

**But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. – James 1:14–15**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 20:15*

LESSON

**Stealing from God**

VERSE 15

*Thou shalt not steal.*

In today's verse, God commands us not to steal. Notice that this commandment does not specify what it is that we should not steal. As such, this commandment applies to all forms of stealing.

First, let us try to understand what it means to steal. Stealing is taking into possession something without permission or legal right, and without the intention of returning the item. The act of stealing begins with the intention to steal, and is consummated by the act itself. Sometimes, the intention and the act are instantaneous. Sometimes, there is a time lapse between the intention and the act. The intention is a necessary prerequisite for the act. Therefore our Lord warns us to guard our thoughts at all times, lest we fall into this and other sins.

As children of God, we must remind ourselves why we should not steal. First, our Father in heaven is the Creator and Maker of this world, and He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us [Ephesians 3:20]. Next, He gives us all things that are needful and necessary [Romans 8:32]. Therefore, if we steal, we are questioning God's omnipotence and the promise that He gives to His children through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Finally, let us not steal the time and the glory that rightfully belongs to God. He has redeemed us, so the remainder of our lives now belong to Christ to be spent to glorify Him alone.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**NEHEMIAH 11**  
**ACTS 21**

MEDITATION

**For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee.**  
– Psalm 84:11–12

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 20:16***LESSON****Truth and falsehood****VERSE 16**

*Thou shalt not bear  
false witness against thy  
neighbour.*

**A**fter stealing, God warns us against lying. Our God is not only a holy God but He is also the God of truth [1 Peter 2:22]. Therefore we, being children of God, must also abhor lies and falsehood, and embrace truth in all things and in our conduct. To a Christian, there is no such thing as a white lie. The conversation of a Christian should be truthful even to the smallest detail.

Our first parents, Adam and Eve, were deceived by the lies of the serpent. Satan indeed is the father of lies [John 8:44]. As a consequence of lying, mankind plunged into sin and the whole creation fell under the curse of sin. Surely, lies will lead to dire consequences, because the truth will eventually be known.

When Abraham lied about Sarah not being his wife to save his own skin [Genesis 12:13], it earned him Pharaoh's rebuke and anger. Yet again, when Abraham lied to Abimelech about Sarah being his sister, the Lord Himself appeared to Abimelech in a dream to expose the sin.

Therefore let us put off the old, lying man, and be careful not to lie anymore, neither through outright deceit nor through guile and half-truths. We are the children of truth and we should live our lives reflecting this to the world. Finally, remember that our Lord was put on the Cross because of the lies by false witnesses against Him. How then can we condone such acts in our own lives?

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
NEHEMIAH 12  
ACTS 22**

**MEDITATION**

**At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. – Deuteronomy 17:6**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 20:17*

**LESSON**

**Covetousness**

**VERSE 17**

*Thou shalt not covet  
thy neighbour's house,  
thou shalt not covet thy  
neighbour's wife, nor  
his manservant, nor his  
maidservant, nor his ox,  
nor his ass, nor any thing  
that is thy neighbour's.*

This final commandment teaches us the value of Christian contentment. In his letter to Timothy, Paul said that godliness with contentment is great gain [1 Timothy 6:6]. Indeed, covetousness will be a hindrance to our goal of living a godly life. It not only reflects our lack of faith in the ability of God to provide for our every need but also shows our discontent with what God has given us. The picture here is one where a child angrily demands from his father, "I want more!" when the father knows that the child has had enough, and anything extra will do him more harm than good.

Paul also elaborates that greed leads one to fall into temptation and the allure of other sins [1 Timothy 6]. These will lead to forbidden desires and eventually to the destruction of our souls and perdition, with the implication of eternal misery in hell.

Let us therefore heed this stark warning lest we fall into similar consequences. Let us build instead upon righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and meekness. Have faith also that our Father, Who loved us and gave His only begotten Son to redeem us, will also give us all the things that are sufficient and necessary for our earthly existence.

Remember also to give thanks for His wise provisions and to make good use of His gifts and blessings for us because "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" [Luke 12:48].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**NEHEMIAH 13**  
**ACTS 23**

**MEDITATION**

**For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. – 1 Timothy 6:10**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 20:18–21*

**LESSON**

**Fearing God**

**VERSE 20**

*And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.*

The Israelites were witnesses to the mighty presence of God on Mount Sinai, and the effects of the thunder and lightning, the noise of the trumpets and all the smoke were so overwhelming that the people feared for their lives and wanted to leave the presence of God. They did not want God to speak directly to them. Instead, they asked Moses to be their intermediary. Moses in reply assured them that they had nothing to fear and that God was there to test them, and to put His fear before their faces, so that they will not sin against Him.

Our God is not just a loving God, He is also a holy God Who abhors sin and will not withhold His righteous anger and punishment from those who transgressed His commandments. Sinful men will naturally fear and flee from the presence of the holy God. When confronted with the deity of Christ, Peter fell to his knees and said: “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”

Yet Moses was able to assure his people that God was their God, and that God had their welfare in His heart. God shows His mighty presence to His people because He wants to try them and to test their faith in Him. He was revealing His nature to a people who had not known Him after many years in Egypt.

In the same manner, God reveals His nature to His children through the Bible. And through the Bible, His children learn to fear Him and not sin against Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ESTHER 1**  
**ACTS 24**

**MEDITATION**

**Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. – Proverbs 3:7–8**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 20:22–26***LESSON****Worthy of our worship****VERSE 24**

*An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.*

The Israelites were freed from the oppression of Pharaoh and had gained the God of their forefathers. God had just given them the laws by which they should obey. In today's passage, God instructed them how He should be worshipped. They had observed how the Egyptians worshipped their gods, but Jehovah wanted them to worship Him differently. He did not want them to worship Him with their gold or silver, like the Egyptians did their gods. They were to use an altar of earth. If they were to use rocks, they should not carve anything out of the rocks.

The Israelites were reminded that their freedom was not obtained through their own strength. Nothing they did could repay their debt to Jehovah. They were to offer sacrifices upon the altars that they built. This way, they were reminded that all that they had gained from the land came by the providence of God. When God's people worship Him in the manner that He prescribes, He will be pleased to bless them. Indeed, the people needed God's continual blessing in order for them to make it through the wilderness ahead of them.

How do you worship God? Do you acknowledge that He alone is worthy of our worship? Do you acknowledge that you are a sinner, incapable of saving yourself and that Christ has died for your sins to obtain your salvation?

Our debt to God is great and can never be paid. Therefore, let us commit our lives to Him, to be used for His glory.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ESTHER 2**  
**ACTS 25**

**MEDITATION**

**Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His Name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. – Psalm 29:2**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 21:1–11***LESSON****Establishing the  
theocracy****VERSE 1***Now these are the  
judgements which thou  
shalt set before them.*

**A**fter years of cruel dominion under Pharaoh, the Israelites now found themselves under the rule of Jehovah God. They had no idea how they should be ruled so God began to instruct Moses on matters concerning the running of a new nation.

The first matter concerned a topic that was familiar to the Israelites: the relationship between a master and his servant. Unlike a slave in Egypt, the Jewish servant may only serve his master for six years. Details of other circumstances such as whether the man went to the master already married or whether he was given a wife by his master were also covered. In addition, provisions were made for instances when a servant voluntarily stayed with his master out of love and loyalty to the master. The conditions of a maidservant were different from those of a manservant, and various details including whether the master had dealt with her deceitfully or not were also covered.

We can see from here that our God is a caring God. He does not just save His people and leave them to fend for themselves thereafter. He is faithful to the covenant that He made with Abraham [Genesis 12:2–3].

We should take comfort that the same God also cares for us. He has saved us and He continues to work all things for our ultimate good. Let us take heart and give thanks to Him who continues to bless and sanctify us until we see Him face to face.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ESTHER 3**  
**ACTS 26**

**MEDITATION**

**I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright. – Leviticus 26:13**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 21:12–27*

**LESSON**

**Punishment for murder**

**VERSE 14**

*But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.*

God had given the Israelites the commandment not to kill. In today's reading, God gave Moses His judgements for those who disobeyed this commandment. Life is precious to God and only God can give and take a life. Whosoever causes the death of another man will therefore have to be punished most severely. This commandment was also given to Noah [Genesis 9:6]. Notice that the accusers have to prove that the accused committed the act intentionally [v. 14] through subtle planning. In some other cases, a life might be taken unintentionally. If that was so, then God would provide a refuge for the accused.

The punishment for taking a life is severe. Therefore, it is worthy to note the circumstances in which a life may be taken and not considered a murder. One such circumstance is when one is defending his own life. In this case, God's refuge extends to such a person as well and he is not guilty. Another instance is taking a life in wartime. It is lawful for one to take up arms to protect the lives of his family and his countrymen.

However, if one has indeed committed this grievous sin, is there a way to escape punishment? God has made a way for us to obtain forgiveness of sins through His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse us from sin. All we need to do is to confess our sins to Him and repent.

Have you come to Jesus to repent and obtain mercy?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ESTHER 4**  
**ACTS 27**

**MEDITATION**

**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. – 1 John 1:9**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 21:28–36***LESSON****Other causes of death****VERSE 29**

*But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death.*

We consider today the question of death caused by other means. If a beast belonging to a person causes the death of another person, should the owner of the beast be held responsible? If so, what should the punishment be? If the owner had known of the tendency of the beast to cause injury and yet did nothing about it (either to muzzle the beast or to keep it locked up), then the owner is responsible [v. 29], in which case the beast would be stoned and the owner put to death, unless he could pay the price of the penalty that was asked of him.

The next issue to be addressed is what would happen if the beast was killed by another man. In this case, the man would have to pay for the dead beast. If a beast killed another beast, then the owners of the beasts would divide the beasts, the live and the dead, between themselves. However, if the owner of the beast had known of the beast's tendency to cause injury, then the owner would have to pay for the dead beast.

We are stewards of God's bountiful blessings. He has blessed us with much possessions and gifts. Therefore we should make sure that what He had entrusted into our hands will also be a blessing to others, instead of causing harm.

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" [James 4:17].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ESTHER 5**  
**ACTS 28**

**MEDITATION**

**He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. – Proverbs 10:4**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 22:1–4***LESSON****The law of restitution****VERSE 1**

*If a man shall steal an ox,  
or a sheep, and kill it, or sell  
it; he shall restore five oxen  
for an ox, and four sheep  
for a sheep.*

Judicial laws pertaining to the different aspects of theft are mentioned in this chapter. The welfare of both the thief and the safety of the community are taken into consideration. The exact nature of the crime and the penalty of punishment are given in specific detail. The severity of the punishment depends on the nature of the crime.

This legal law teaches us that fraud and injustice will always impoverish instead of enrich evil-doers. A man's house is his castle. Any thief caught breaking into it does so at the risk of his own life, though God has a merciful provision when this happens [v. 3].

The law of restitution still holds true today. Punishment is meted out for crimes committed. Man can be very severe in weeding out punishment. Have you been guilty of making the punishment greater than the crime? The difference of four-fold and five-fold restitution [v. 1] and two-fold [v. 4] relates to the value of the property. The costlier the item, the higher the price to be paid.

However, as God's children, we must be ready and willing to show loving mercy to those who have wronged us. Let us not be guilty of obeying the letter of the law only. We must remember the spirit of the law by showing mercy to wrongdoers. Thank God that He does not deal with us according to our sins [Psalm 103:10]. Praise God for His great mercy.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ESTHER 6**  
**ROMANS 1**

**WARNING**

**Thou shalt not steal. – Exodus 20:15**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 22:5–15***LESSON****The law of borrowing****VERSE 14**

*And if a man borrow ought  
of his neighbour, and it  
be hurt, or die, the owner  
thereof being not with it, he  
shall surely make it good.*

The different types of trespasses are listed here. Anyone guilty of a crime, whether intentional or otherwise, would be dealt with accordingly. Respecting a neighbour's property is important. The borrower is fully responsible for the safety of what is put in his care. The rightful owner would not be blamed should anything happen to his property left under the charge of another.

Due care must be given when handling a borrowed item. The penalty of full restitution may sound harsh and severe. However, it is an effective reminder to every borrower not to abuse anything given to us on loan. This is also to ensure that lenders would not be 'short-changed' for their kindness.

Many of us are quite careless with borrowed items. Sometime we 'conveniently' forget to return what we have borrowed. Furthermore, this constant bad habit of borrowing is considered as stealing when we keep the items for too long without any intention of returning them. Worse still, borrowers may not even feel any obligation to return money or other items that they have borrowed. The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth [Psalm 37:21].

This restitution of making good the loss of an item to the owner acts as a check on borrowing. As believers, we must not have the habit of borrowing. Instead, we should trust in God's provision for all our needs. It is important to live within our means.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**ESTHER 7**  
**ROMANS 2**

**REMINDER**

**Owe no man anything, but to love one another. –  
Romans 13:8a**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 22:16–20*

**LESSON**

**The law against seduction**

**VERSE 16**

*And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife.*

Continuing on with judicial laws, this series of precepts deals with seduction, witchcraft, bestiality and the sin of spiritual adultery. Today's key verse concerns a very personal trespass. Note the severity of its penalty: death by stoning [Deuteronomy 22:23–24]. However, an opportunity to redress a seducer's crime was afforded to him only if he married her. But if the maid's father objected to the marriage, the seducer would have to pay a dowry befitting a virgin. In the Eastern culture at that time, a man had to pay 50 shekels of silver to the bride's parents [Deuteronomy 22:29].

In Jewish culture, a betrothed woman was considered married. A man must honour his word and make an honest woman out of her. The reverse is also true. The example of Mary is a case in point here. Joseph could have made an example out of Mary. But "Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily" [Matthew 1:19].

The law of Moses strictly forbids lewdness in every form. Loose living is now on the rise, as can be seen in the prevalence of pre- and extra-marital sex. We must heed God's warning: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" [Hebrews 13:4].

Young people should beware of this sin of seduction. Exercise care, caution and proper restraint in your relationship with the opposite sex. Pray for strength to guard against unchecked sexual lust and self-gratification. How we conduct ourselves reflects on our Saviour. Do not bring shame to His holy Name.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ESTHER 8**  
**ROMANS 3**

**WARNING**

**Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. – 2 Timothy 2:22**

## BIBLE LESSON

*Exodus 22:21–31*

### LESSON

#### The law concerning first fruits

#### VERSE 29

*Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me.*

Contrary to God's divine severity on law-breakers (in the previous section), we now see His divine protection of four groups of people: the stranger, the widow, the fatherless and the poor, who are specially mentioned here. Added in this list is also the need to honour and respect God and national leaders. Such a distinct command is to ensure a peaceful society.

This specific law concerning the firstborn was made in connection with the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt. Offering their firstborn was an acknowledgement of God's preservation of their race and their livestock. However, God did not spare the firstborn of the Egyptians.

Those telling words, 'not delay', indicate hesitancy and even reluctance in giving. Not only must we not hold back in our giving, we must also not delay in offering to God. We desire the best from God. Likewise, God expects the best from His children.

Man is basically selfish in nature. Conceived and born in sin, it is not easy for us to share our possessions willingly. The thought of God not sparing His own Son but willingly delivering Him up for us should move us to give our all to Him. We must not be guilty of neglecting to render what is due from man to God. How obedient are you in your tithing and offering? Above all, how willing are you to give your children in service to God?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**ESTHER 9–10**  
**ROMANS 4**

#### CHALLENGE

**Give of thy sons to bear the message glorious,  
Give of thy wealth to speed them on their way;  
Pour out thy soul for them in prayer victorious,  
And all thou spendest Jesus will repay.**

### BIBLE LESSON

*Exodus 23:1–8*

#### LESSON

#### **Bearing false witness**

#### VERSE 1

*Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.*

The ninth commandment, “Thou shalt not bear false witness”, is reiterated here. The judicial system is a refuge for truth and justice: to protect the young and the old, the rich and the poor. The law of justice and mercy must be upheld in society. Integrity must not be compromised. The people of Israel were instructed in the law of God, given through Moses. The legal system would be applied to the Israelites as well as to foreigners.

The accuser ought not to bring false charges, as it may harm a person for life. Be careful that you slay not the innocent and righteous. Even if you have a true charge, Paul exhorts us to “take wrong and suffer ourselves to be defrauded” [1 Corinthians 6:7]. Be warned that God will not justify the wicked [v. 7].

If you are a witness, do not give untrue evidence or fabricate a lie to your advantage at the expense of the innocent. This is bearing false witness. When you give evidence, be mindful to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The witness who caused an innocent person to be condemned is as much to blame as the false accuser.

The final issue depends on the judge. Do not act rashly with bias and prejudice. Do not behave like Pilate and “follow a multitude to do evil” [v. 2]. It is impossible for a judge to take a bribe and yet retain his integrity. Despite himself, the gift will blind his eyes, and pervert his words [v. 8].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 1**  
**ROMANS 5**

#### THOUGHT

**Remember the trials of Jesus and the Apostle Paul.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 23:9–13***LESSON****Institution of the  
Sabbatical year****VERSE 11**

*But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard.*

Resting the land in the sabbatical or seventh year was instituted by God to teach the Israelites divine providence and dependence on God. The seventh day was the day of rest. The seventh year gave the land its rest. It was intended to help the poor and the beasts. The land was not to be ploughed or sown; nor the vineyards or olive-yards be gathered. The poor had a right to the natural increase of the land. This was to teach the Israelites compassion and concern for the needy.

Only Israel had this direct command from God to rest not only man and beast but also the land. It was natural for the Israelites to ask: “If we follow this command, how are we to survive the seventh year?” The answer would surely be: “Trust in God and rely on His providence.”

Just as the sixth day’s manna was served for two days’ food, so the sixth year’s increase would suffice for two years’ subsistence. It called for great faith from the Israelites but, sad to say, they did not obey this law and forfeited the blessings of God [2 Chronicles 36:21].

The institution of the sabbatical year reflects the gracious provision of our merciful God. There was a great need for God’s compassion to be demonstrated to the world [v. 11]. All farmland would be set aside for an entire year for the poor of the earth to harvest and store up food for their survival. Besides this, there was the fiftieth year of jubilee, in which liberty was proclaimed.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOB 2**  
**ROMANS 6**

**MEDITATION**

**But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. – Psalm 86:15**

### BIBLE LESSON

*Exodus 23:14–19*

### LESSON

#### The three annual feasts

### VERSE 14

*Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year.*

The Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Harvest and the Feast of Ingathering were the times when the Jews must try to make a pilgrimage back to Jerusalem. The feasts celebrated both an agricultural and an historical event in the life of the nation.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread began with the Passover and celebrated God's deliverance of Israel from Egyptian slavery. The eating of unleavened bread reminded the people of their miraculous exodus from Egypt. The Feast of Harvest celebrated the first fruits of the harvest. God was to receive the very best that man could offer from the harvest. It was a joyful, festive occasion. Finally, the Feast of Ingathering occurred at the time of the major harvest of crop. It was also known as the Feast of Tabernacles because the people were commanded to make small booths to stay in during the time of the feast.

These festivals were an important part of Jewish life. They helped to keep tradition alive, contribute to a sense of community and belonging, remind believers of important historical events, and ensure regular reflection and celebration of the sacred. The people were to pray, give thanks and remember the great mercy and grace of God.

Likewise, Christians must remember our great salvation so rich and free. We must thank God for His bountiful blessings. We must honour Him with our substance as well as our acts of service—not just individually but as a community of like-minded people.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOB 3**  
**ROMANS 7**

### PRAYER

**I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember Thy wonders of old. – Psalm 77:11**

### BIBLE LESSON

*Exodus 23:20–33*

#### LESSON

#### The rewards of obedience

#### VERSE 20

*Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.*

The Israelites had just been miraculously freed from 400 years of cruel bondage by the mighty hand of God. And God had just given them the Ten Commandments, which no other people had been blessed to receive.

Now they were about to embark on what would doubtless be an arduous and dangerous journey through the wilderness and desert country situated between Egypt and Canaan, the Promised Land. But God would not leave them helpless. He would send His angel to guide and protect them. He would drive out their enemies from before them. He would provide the food, water and health that they needed. He would bless them with many offspring, and long and fulfilling lives.

But these promises were not without condition. God's condition was very clear. They were to heed and obey God's special messenger, come in the form of an angel. They were not to rebel against him. They were to listen to him and pay close attention to his directions. They were to worship God and God alone. They were never to bow down and worship false gods. They must never follow the practices of false gods. In fact, they were to demolish and crush the sacred stones of false gods.

Like the Israelites, Christians have been delivered from the bondage of Satan. On the way to heaven, we will, likewise, face trials and difficulties. But God has also provided us a guide; and this guide is His written Word, the Bible. If we obey His instructions, we will similarly be blessed.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOB 4**  
**ROMANS 8**

#### PRAYER

**Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep Thy righteous judgements. – Psalm 119:105–106**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 24:1–5***LESSON****Promises, promises****VERSE 3**

*And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgements: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.*

Moses told all the Israelites that the Lord had spoken regarding His ordinances and judgements. The people, united, answered that they would obey all that the Lord had commanded, just as they had said before [Exodus 19]. Of course, it was not long before they fell back to rebellion and idolatry.

How many laws must one break to become a lawbreaker? Israel here was perhaps guilty of tremendous over-confidence. The way they so easily said to God, “We will keep your law”, seems to lack appreciation for how complete and searching God’s law is. However, a nation that had been terrified by God’s awesome presence at Sinai was in no state of mind to do anything but agree with God.

The same thing often happens to us. When you have an encounter with God—experiencing Him and hearing his Word—you cannot help but desire to live righteously. Unfortunately, when that experience fades into the distance over time, so does the desire for dedication. Our hearts grow cold in time and our desires turn to those of the flesh. That is why we need to continually experience God by reading His Word. “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee” [Psalm 119:11].

When you wander away from the Word, unrighteousness is not far behind. Many consent to the law and yet do not live up to it.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOB 5**  
**ROMANS 9**

**THOUGHT**

**God’s laws are holy, just and good, and for our blessing. Obey them!**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 24:6–11*

**LESSON**

**Close to God**

**VERSE 11**

*And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.*

The children of Israel saw God. They also sat and ate a meal in His presence. God wanted to communicate a sense of fellowship with His children. How close will you come to God today? How close do you want to be near God? How much distance do you want to have between you and God?

Getting close to God is easy; staying close to God is difficult. With the hustle and bustle of everyday life, staying close to God requires commitment and dedication.

There are degrees of closeness in relationships. We can come to a point in our walk with God where we experience a deeper and more intimate relationship with Him. We can come to a point when we become more aware of His closeness and presence in our lives. But many never realise the nearness of God in their daily walk with Him. They feel that God is far away and not interested in their lives. But God has demonstrated over and over again that if we will seek Him, He will be found.

There may be things in your heart that prevent you from drawing closer to God. Many times it is an obstacle that you allow to remain or an idol that you refuse to put away. It could be a part of you where the Word of God is not taking root, and so it does not grow and bear fruit. That thing stands in the door and hinders you from enjoying a full relationship with Him. God is always close to you but it is up to you move close to Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 6**  
**ROMANS 10**

**THOUGHT**

**When we think that God is far away, who is it that has moved to create that distance?**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 24:12–18***LESSON****Alone with God****VERSE 18**

*And Moses went into the  
midst of the cloud, and gat  
him up into the mount: and  
Moses was in the mount  
forty days and forty nights.*

Moses entered the cloud into the very presence of God and communed with Him for 40 days and 40 nights. Without communion and fellowship with God, nothing else matters. While we will never lose the reality of God's presence, we can lose the 'sense' of His presence. Being in God's presence is pure joy. Many Christians go around feeling gloomy and dejected because they lack this sense of God's presence.

There is a rest that all of us can enter into. Jesus wants this rest for us more than we want it for ourselves. This rest involves entering the inner courts of the Lord with His words before us and with worship pouring forth from our hearts.

There is a place far away from the 'busyness' of our lives that the Lord wants to take us. There is the beat of God's heart with which our hearts need to synchronise. The Lord knows how to get our hearts in sync with His. It starts with our choosing to be with Him—just by setting aside time to enjoy God. The Lord wants us to learn how to enjoy Him through the day. He is constantly calling us to come closer to Him.

Our Lord Jesus reminds us, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" [Matthew 11:28]. This is the rest of the Lord—to rest from our labours and enter into His. The rest of the Lord is the rest of faith. It is time to enter into the rest of His presence.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOB 7**  
**ROMANS 11**

**THOUGHT**

**We can make God angry because of our sin, but true believers never lose the presence of the Holy Spirit.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 25:1–9***LESSON****Giving God's way****VERSE 2**

*Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.*

God told Moses to first raise a contribution to construct the Tabernacle. He said that it was to be from every man whose heart moved him. There was to be no requisite or mandatory amount demanded from each person. They were to give as they were moved in their hearts.

This is God's desire about giving, that we learn to give willingly, not grudgingly, and that it comes from our heart and done in love. Nobody should be twisting your arm to give.

Our action of giving God's way—by giving with a cheerful heart—opens the door for God to bless us by having all sufficiency in all things. All sufficiency is having more than what we need or being in a state of having abundant blessings. By giving God's way, we learn how to give with the right attitude and for the right reasons. Greed, pride and covetousness will grow in our hearts if all we have to do is throw some money in the offering bag and receive an immediate return for the sake of self-gratification only.

When God places upon our hearts the desire to give, we will have the money to give. And when He tells us to do something or go somewhere, we will have the time and the money to do it. The money is supernaturally provided by God, and then naturally given back as an offering. This is the way our finances should be dealt with as well.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOB 8**  
**ROMANS 12**

**THOUGHT**

**You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 25:10–22*

**LESSON**

**To be where we are**

**VERSE 22**

*And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.*

When God started talking about the making of the Tabernacle, he did not start with the tent itself. He started with what was inside. And the very first thing he started describing was the Ark of the Covenant. In the Ark was the Mercy Seat, the place where man's sin is covered by the blood. It is there that God makes atonement for that sin and reconciles man to Himself.

What does God see when you go into His presence? He sees the blood of Jesus. When He sees the blood He knows all His claims against us have been met at every point. He no longer has judgement against us. He invites us to draw near to Him.

In Christ, God came to where man was and met him in fellowship. God issues an invitation for each of us to draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and grace. Wherever people are, that is where God wants to be. Wherever you are, that is where God wants to be.

God is eager to establish that relationship. But He bases it on your willingness to recognise, acknowledge and repent of your sinful ways, as well as your determination in seeking Him. Only then can God redeem you from the penalty of death that we all deserve because of our sins. God is holy. If we are to have a relationship with him, we need to be holy as well. Therefore, when we come into the Lord's presence, we must strive to do so with reverence and awe.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 9**  
**ROMANS 13**

THOUGHT

Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

## BIBLE LESSON

*Exodus 25:23–30*

### LESSON

**A feast of God's words**

### VERSE 30

*And thou shalt set upon  
the table shewbread before  
me alway.*

At the Table of Shewbread, we partake of the Word of God. We say to the Lord with Jeremiah, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart” [Jeremiah 15:16a]. The Word of God must be our delight and feast. This is a continual process. We should read, study and meditate on the Word of God every day. Just as fresh bread was replaced each Sabbath in the Tabernacle, we, too, must continually receive something fresh from the Lord through His Word. Otherwise our Christian experience becomes stale.

The fact that fresh bread was placed on the Table of Shewbread every Sabbath tells us that as we feed upon God's Word, we enter into spiritual rest. Shewbread reveals to us Christ, Who is the Bread of Life. The Lord desires for us to feed upon His Word, digest it and have it written upon the tables of our hearts.

In our lives, we experience a time of personal revival when God pours out His spirit of revelation upon us and opens His Word to us in incredible ways. It is during these times that the Word of God is being sown in our hearts. However, there will also be times when the truths we have received seem to have died. This is a spiritual season that we must pass through for that seed to one day grow, mature and bear fruit.

In God's time, the Word will begin to grow in our lives in stages until it comes to maturity.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOB 10**  
**ROMANS 14**

### THOUGHT

**Do not content yourself with a mere hearing of the Word, without communion with the Lord.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 25:31–40*

**LESSON**

**Worshipping God's way**

**VERSE 40**

*And look that thou make  
them after their pattern,  
which was shewed thee in  
the mount.*

Moses was instructed to do exactly as God had shown him in the construction of the Tabernacle and the furniture inside. We see here the emphasis on God's instructions and an emphasis on our obedience to God's revealed instructions. God demands that the Tabernacle and its furnishings be made after the pattern shown on the mountain.

We are to do only what God tells us to do in worship. We are to worship God according to His directions, not according to our taste, whims or desires. The content, the motivation and the aim of worship is determined by God alone.

Do you realise that it is a privilege to worship the living God? Do you care that what is central is the Word of God? Do you know that the Word is read and preached? Do you know the scriptural songs that are sung? Do you know that prayers are being lifted up? Do you know that the people of God are singing praises? Do you know that the sacraments are being administered? Are these the things that you care about? The further we get away from a concern about what God wants in worship and the closer we get to a concern about our own personal tastes or style, the further we move away from biblical worship and perhaps the less we actually worship.

God determines how we worship Him because just as whom you worship determines what you will become, how you worship will determine in the end who you worship.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 11**  
**ROMANS 15**

**THOUGHT**

**If our worship aims for anything less than spiritual communion, it is not worship.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 26:1–6*

**LESSON**

**The Tabernacle of God**

**VERSE 1**

*Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them.*

This passage gives a description of the Tabernacle itself: starting from its inward curtains, of their number, matter, length and breadth, and the manner of coupling them together. The Tabernacle itself had four coverings, the lower of which would be visible from inside, being made of fine woven linen with blue, purple and scarlet material woven into this, as well as ornamental cherubim.

Here Jehovah dwells among His people in a visible and external manner. His glory is seen. He grants His presence to His children; He comes and blesses them. While the Israelites were in the wilderness and sojourned in tents, He would have a tent or tabernacle built to sojourn with them as well.

Here He is worshipped, and He accepted their sacrifices of prayer and praise. Since one would have to be inside to see the beauty of all this, we are reminded that only believers coming into the presence of the Lord are able to discern the glory and beauty of His person. The world outside sees no beauty in Him.

How much better it would have been if we had been drawn by the perfection of the Lord's moral character or the beauty of His heavenly glory, rather than by His blessings through which we might have benefitted from. Yet sometimes, while the blessings first draw us, we are further drawn by the perfection and beauty of the person of the Lord Jesus. Yet all are seen only in the sanctuary of His presence.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 12**  
**ROMANS 16**

**THOUGHT**

**One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. – Psalm 27:4**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 26:7–14*

**LESSON**

**Covering for the  
Tabernacle**

**VERSE 7**

*And thou shalt make  
curtains of goats' hair to  
be a covering upon the  
tabernacle: eleven curtains  
shalt thou make.*

God now started to describe the outward curtains of the Tabernacle, which were not considered to belong to the Tabernacle proper but “the tent over the tabernacle”, being no part of the rich ornamental interior. Over the Tabernacle hung a second set of goats’ hair, longer and broader; while the third and fourth sets were of the skins of rams and badgers, respectively [v. 14]. So the Tabernacle was covered over with four sets of curtains.

We do not know why there should have been four coverings. They might have been designed partly for respect and partly to keep out dust, dirt and the extremely fine sand that rises from the desert on every breeze. It could also partly be used to keep out the intense heat of the sun, which would otherwise have destroyed the poles, bars, boards and most of the woodwork.

When these four layers of curtains were laid on one another, the result was a very dry and very dark tent. The only light came from the lampstand described in the previous chapter. That the outside of the Tabernacle was coarse and rough, the beauty of it was in the inner curtains.

As with the tabernacle of old, those who take refuge in God’s true sanctuary, Jesus Christ, have a safe and glorious covert from all the storms of wrath and the tempests of sin without. As the Tabernacle was more beautiful within than without, so are God’s children. They are clothed with the spotless robe of Emmanuel’s righteousness and adorned with humility, love, holiness and heavenly-mindedness.

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

**THOUGHT**

**A true Christian is best within but a hypocrite seeks only outward show.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 26:15–30*

**LESSON**

**Support of the Tabernacle**

**VERSE 30**

*And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount.*

Very specific directions were given about the boards of the Tabernacle, which were to bear up the curtains. These boards had tenons, which fell into the mortises that were made for them on silver bases. The boards that made up the sides and back of the Tabernacle were made of wood covered with gold, and set in sockets of silver. They were each coupled together with gold rings at the top and the bottom, knitted together by five long bars that passed through rings parallel with the ground to keep firm, and the boards and bars were all richly gilded. The boards were made for walls on the two sides and on the back of the Tabernacle but not for the front, where a curtain was used.

Exactly how this was done may be difficult to understand [Exodus 26:30] but everything in the Tabernacle was splendid. The building was stable, resisting the winds of the wilderness.

The Apostle Paul alludes to this Tabernacle, with its pillars and sockets, when he calls the church the pillar and ground of the truth [1 Timothy 3:15]. The reason is that she defends and spreads it by her agency. The office of administering doctrine, which God had placed in her hands, is the only instrument of preserving the truth, so that it may not perish from the remembrance of men.

And it is the duty and privilege of the Church to regenerate men by the Word of God, edify and nourish them through their whole life, strengthen and bring them at length to spiritual maturity.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOB 14**

**I CORINTHIANS 2**

**THOUGHT**

**From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. – Ephesians 4:16**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 26:31–37*

**LESSON**

**The Holy of Holies**

**VERSE 33**

*And thou shalt hang up  
the vail under the taches,  
that thou mayest bring in  
thither within the vail the  
ark of the testimony: and  
the vail shall divide unto  
you between the holy place  
and the most holy.*

Two veils were now ordered to be made: one for a partition between the holy place and the most holy—called the Holy of Holies—and the other veil for the outer door of the Tabernacle [v. 36–37]. Through this first veil the priests, but not the people, went in every day to minister in the holy place. But for the Holy of Holies, only the high priest could enter, and only once a year. Thus the Tabernacle was divided into three distinct parts: the Holy of Holies, the holy place and the Court of the Tabernacle. Each of these had the same materials adorning them, “blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen”.

In the Jewish tabernacle, almost everything was placed out of sight of the people. The Holy of Holies was inaccessible, the testimony was hidden, so were the Mercy Seat and the Divine glory. The veil typified the separation between God and man, the awful barrier that sin has created, shutting us out from the enjoyment of God.

How abundantly has God brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel! The way to the holiest is made manifest, the veil is rent, and we have an entrance to the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way. The awful chasm has been abolished, the ministry of reconciliation is proclaimed, and the kingdom of heaven is opened to all believers.

Sinner, weary of thyself and thy transgressions, fainting under the load of thy iniquities, look to Jesus; He died for thee, and will save thee.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOB 15**

**I CORINTHIANS 3**

**THOUGHT**

**God who spent but six days in creating the universal frame of nature should spend no less than 40 in prescribing the little frame of the Tabernacle.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 27:1–8***LESSON****The brazen altar****VERSE 1**

*And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits.*

Today's passage details the instructions for the altar of burnt offerings with its dimensions. Accordingly, though constructed of wood, it was to be overlaid with brass. The altar was four-square and it had four horns. The animals offered in sacrifice were horned animals, and were doubtlessly bound by their horns to the horns of the altar, and then slain [Psalm 118:27]. It occupied the prime position in the Court of the Tabernacle. It evidently stood somewhere near the grand entrance, being by far the most important thing that fell upon the eyes of worshippers entering the court.

To this altar came the sinner with his sin offering. Here he stood before God, and his sins were confessed and transferred or imputed to the unblemished and innocent animal, which then had to suffer and die for sin, but not for its own sin. The innocent died for the guilty.

Christ is our Altar, our Sacrifice, and our Priest. He offers Himself for us. Having met most fully all of God's claims, He now meets and supplies all the penitent and believing sinner's needs [Hebrews 9:24–26]. Here we stand with our hand of faith on His head. As our sin offering, Jesus suffered for our sin, and put it away. Our life was forfeited but Christ Who loved us and gave Himself for us has sacrificed His own life to save us from eternal death.

"O sinner, if under the accusations of guilt and sin, fly as the malefactor did to the horns of the altar, and then ye shall be safe" [G. Rodgers].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOB 16–17****I CORINTHIANS 4****HYMN**

**We love Thine altar, Lord;  
Oh, what on earth so dear?  
For there, in faith adored  
We find Thy presence near.**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Exodus 27:9–19*

**LESSON**  
**The Court of the  
 Tabernacle**

**VERSE 9**

*And thou shalt make the  
 court of the tabernacle: for  
 the south side southward  
 there shall be hangings for  
 the court of fine twined  
 linen of an hundred cubits  
 long for one side:*

The Tabernacle, when formed, was to be surrounded by a kind of open rectangular court that was to be circumscribed by hangings of plain fine linen and supported by pillars in sockets of brass. But the hanging for the gate of the court was to be made of the same embroidered material as the inmost covering of the Tabernacle. This courtyard was about 174 feet long and appeared to be just half as broad as it was long. It was about 9 feet high, which was nearly half the height of the Tabernacle [Exodus 26:16]. The gate or entrance was to be 30 feet wide [v. 16].

The court was primarily a precinct inclosing the sacred structure, preserving it from contact with the roughness of the rude world without. It formed a sort of vestibule to the tent-temple, which awoke solemn thoughts, giving men time to put away secular considerations and attuning their minds to the divine harmonies before entering the house itself, which contained the manifestation of the divine presence. God must be approached with humble preparation.

These were the courts David longed for and coveted to reside in [Psalm 84:2, 10], and into which the people of God entered with praise and thanksgiving [Psalm 100:4]. Howbeit this court would have a few worshippers. Thanks be to God that now, under the Gospel, the enclosure is taken down.

God's will is that men pray everywhere and there is room for all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
 IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 18**  
**I CORINTHIANS 5**

**HYMN**

**We love the place, O God,  
 Wherein Thine honour dwells;  
 The joy of Thine abode  
 All earthly joy excels.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 27:20–21*

**LESSON**

**Keeping the lamps  
burning**

**VERSE 20**

*And thou shalt command  
the children of Israel, that  
they bring thee pure oil olive  
beaten for the light, to cause  
the lamp to burn always.*

It is difficult to understand from the various passages, whether the lamps (candlesticks) in the Tabernacle of congregation burned both day and night, or only during the night [1 Samuel 3:3].

W. Brown put it this way: “From these texts it would appear that the lamps burned only during the night. If they were not intended to teach that, the meaning must be that the lamps were dressed in the morning, probably one after another, not necessitating more than one being extinguished at a time, and after being dressed and lighted, burned during the day, the lamps receiving such further attention in the evening as admitted of their burning till the morning. As there were no windows in the Tabernacle, and the priests had duties to perform during the day in the holy place, it is almost certain that the lamps burned always.”

The priests were to take every care that a pure light was constantly maintained regularly so that the house of God was never dark, or even obscure. The lighted lamp is a testimony that the Church continues ever on the watch, striving ever to be ‘the light of the world,’ like the wise virgins who ‘kept its lamp burning.’

This is the duty of leaders and members at all times. The Christian ministry must take care that the light of the Church shines pure and bright continually and that nothing dims it. Believers must continually bring a due supply of oil, of loving, faithful service otherwise the Church must suffer, and its light be dimmed.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 19**  
**I CORINTHIANS 6**

**THOUGHT**

**Believers must be burning inwardly, and shining outwardly!**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 28:1–5*

**LESSON**

**Holy garments for glory  
and for beauty**

**VERSE 2**

*And thou shalt make holy  
garments for Aaron thy  
brother for glory and for  
beauty.*

The Lord instructed Moses concerning the priesthood that was to preside over Israel's religious life. The priesthood is a divine calling. "And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons ... that he may minister unto me in the priest's office" [v. 1]. Not Moses but Aaron, the inferior brother who "also is compassed with infirmity" [Hebrews 5:2], was chosen for this ministry. Aaron, who led in the idolatrous worship of the golden calf, was chosen because of God's marvellous grace. Aaron and his four sons, from the tribe of Levi, together formed one priesthood.

A description is given of the various garments they were to wear [Exodus 28]. The vestments of the high priests were detailed and then those of Aaron's sons. They gave dignity and honour to his person, being suitable apparel for his position. The holy garments of separation peculiar to the high priest were made by skilled craftsmen whom the Lord had "filled with the spirit of wisdom". They should use gold, blue, purple, scarlet and fine linen [v. 5]. The six holy garments were a breastplate, an ephod with its 'curious girdle', a robe, a brodered coat and a mitre.

In addition to the six articles mentioned here is the 'plate of pure gold' on which was engraved the words 'HOLINESS TO THE LORD' [v. 36]. These garments (mentioned in Leviticus 16:4) were what the high priest wore on the annual Day of Atonement.

Let us be sure that we are clothed with righteousness because that is what will distinguish us as followers of Christ.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 20**  
**I CORINTHIANS 7**

**THOUGHT**

**For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. – Hebrews 5:1**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 28:6–14***LESSON****The mediatory work of  
the High Priest****VERSE 6**

*And they shall make the  
ephod of gold, of blue, and  
of purple, of scarlet, and  
fine twined linen, with  
cunning work.*

The instructions for making the ephod were given by the Lord. The ephod with its ‘curious girdle’ and onyx stones upon its shoulder pieces were the distinctive priestly garments. This was the outer robe of the high priest. The robe of the ephod was blue, with golden bells and pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet hanging from the hem [Exodus 28:31–34].

The ephod served to support the breastplate, the materials of which were made “of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work” [v. 6]. Only the high priest was allowed to enter into the immediate presence of the Ark of Testimony to communicate with the invisible King. In the high priesthood led by Aaron, all Israel was brought to the Holy One. Christ brings us into the heavenly place.

“And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel” [v. 9]. Six of their names were engraved on one stone and the other six names on the other, according to their order of birth [v. 10]. The whole of the tribes of Israel was brought before God. Christ the great High Priest represents the whole race, not Israel but all nations. He pleads with the Father. Do not hesitate to come before God with your sins and sorrows.

When Christ bears us upon His shoulders before God, this is a joy to God. When God looks at Christ, He looks at all His redeemed people who have become transformed into ‘onyx stones’ set in golden-plated settings. This is a memorial before God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 21**  
**I CORINTHIANS 8**

**THOUGHT**

**Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. – Hebrews 7:25**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 28:15–29***LESSON****The breastplate****VERSE 29**

*And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgement upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually.*

The breastplate upon Aaron's heart was a kind of book of remembrance of the people whom he had to pray for. It was the chief and most costly of the high priest's vestments. It was inseparably linked to the ephod and it was called the 'breastplate of judgement'. Its importance is first mentioned in verse 4. It was made of fine twined linen with cunning work and richly embroidered with colours "of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet" [v. 15].

Twelve different precious stones were set in it, one for each tribe of Israel, set in four rows of three each. All of them were gems in the sight of God. They were each set in gold and they rested equally upon the heart of Aaron when he ministered before the Lord. The high priest thus carried with him the body corporate of Israel "unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually" [v. 29].

Did the great High Priest of our confession, Jesus, wear a breastplate of the Aaronic model or something similar to it? Christ's intercession was a capacious breastplate upon a universal heart full of tenderness and sympathy, sustaining and presenting to God His blood-bought people.

Jesus regarded each separate stone and the whole breastplate as the Father's gift to Him. When God looks upon the great High Priest, He beholds His people upon His heart as well as upon His shoulders, adorned with all the beauty of the One Whom His eye ever rests with perfect delight.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 22**  
**I CORINTHIANS 9**

**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.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 28:30***LESSON****Urim and Thummim****VERSE 30**

*And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgement the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgement of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually.*

Aaron had his breastplate on when he went into the Holy of Holies to contact God. The breastplate contained 12 precious stones, each with the name of one of the 12 tribes inscribed on it. Christ has us on His breastplate. We are His people. He is always interceding for us.

The breastplate was folded double to form a pocket in which the Urim and the Thummim were placed. They were hidden under the breastplate of the high priest. The stones representing the Church that were borne upon the high priest's breast and the high priest's shoulders connect themselves with the Urim and the Thummim. A great mystery hangs over these words; the Urim and the Thummim are commonly translated 'light and perfection'. What these stones looked like and how they were used is not known. According to Arthur W. Pink, "By means of Urim or 'light' in the breastplate of the high priest, counsel or prophetic guidance was obtained from God". The Urim and the Thummim were used for communicating to the people a knowledge of God's mind and will concerning them.

"According to verses 29 and 30, the breastplate was not only a memorial before the Lord, but was also a plate of judgement. After the Urim and the Thummim were added into the breastplate, it became the breastplate of judgement" [Life Study of the Bible – Exodus].

God has given us the Urim and the Thummim in the Holy Scriptures and by the Holy Spirit to give us understanding in His truth, knowledge of His will, and to direct our steps according to His righteousness.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOB 23****I CORINTHIANS 10****THOUGHT**

**But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. – Deuteronomy 4:29**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 28:31–38***LESSON****Holiness to the Lord****VERSE 36**

*And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.*

This plate of pure gold was attached to a background of blue lace to the mitre or turban that was upon the forehead of the high priest Aaron. With the golden plate upon his head, he went in before God to present the inscription graven there like the engraving of a signet, 'HOLINESS TO THE LORD'.

The inscription signified that the high priest was devoted and dedicated exclusively to God. This engraving was a 'sacred diadem' or the holy crown, as the Lord commanded Moses [Leviticus 8:9]. The Israelites saw in their high priest the ideal of a true humanity. His life is always separated unto God for holy use. As representative of the people, Aaron bore the iniquity of the sacred things to the Lord to make those holy things, purged from their iniquity, acceptable before the Lord.

The golden signet on Aaron's forehead speaks of many great truths. "Be ye holy; for I am holy" [1 Peter 1:16b]. God has called every Christian to a holy life. This call to a holy life is based on the fact that God Himself is holy. According to John's vision of heaven, the four living creatures around God's throne never stop saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" [Revelation 4:8c]

The golden signet placed significantly upon Aaron's forehead shows that God's holiness should occupy our minds. All our thoughts should be channelled through the ideas of holiness. Holiness should be supreme and given priority in our lives.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOB 24****I CORINTHIANS 11****THOUGHT****We must live lives that are holy to the Lord.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 28:39–43***LESSON****The vestments of the  
priests****VERSE 40**

*And for Aaron's sons thou  
shalt make coats, and thou  
shalt make for them girdles,  
and bonnets shalt thou  
make for them, for glory  
and for beauty.*

Aaron was the high priest. His sons were ordinary priests. Not only were Aaron's garments 'holy' [v. 2], the garments for his sons were also called 'holy' [v. 4]. The garments of the priests in several parts indicated that he was entirely clothed in holiness. The priests officiating in the Holy Place wore these garments—a long tunic (the embroidered coat), girdles and bonnets of fine linen. The various garments worn by the high priest pointed to the inherent, essential and personal excellence of our great High Priest. Those worn by Aaron's sons were the graces with which Christ's people are endowed by virtue of their association with Christ.

The 'fine linen' speaks of the spotless purity and holiness of Christ. These linen coats of the priests set forth the righteousness with which the saints are clothed. While "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" [Isaiah 64:6], these have been removed and in their place the 'best robe' of Christ's righteousness has been placed. Their girdles were made of fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet of needlework [Exodus 39:29].

It is a tool for service. Their linen breeches (underclothing) were to cover their nakedness (modesty and purity). God's anger and judgement are invoked against immodesty and immorality [v. 43]. Their bonnets were probably rolls of fine linen folded like a turban round the head for glory and beauty.

All believers are made "kings and priests unto God" [Revelation 1:6]. We are "an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" [1 Peter 2:5b].

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
JOB 25–26  
I CORINTHIANS 12**

**THOUGHT**

**I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. – Isaiah 61:10a**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 29:1–28*

**LESSON**

**Consecration of the  
priests**

**VERSE 1**

*And this is the thing that  
thou shalt do unto them to  
hallow them, to minister  
unto me in the priest's  
office: Take one young  
bullock, and two rams  
without blemish,*

God places great importance on the leadership of His people. In both the Old and New Testaments, He sets out clearly His requirements for the appointment of such leaders. In this chapter, He dictates to His servant Moses how he should go about to consecrate the priests whom He—God—had appointed to lead the Israelites in worship.

Though the form of the ceremony greatly differs from our time, the principles behind the detailed instructions found here remain unchanged. For example, the priests are to be washed [v. 4], symbolising spiritual cleansing. Aaron is to be clothed with holy vestments [v. 5–6], which symbolised the clothing of righteousness—meaning that he must put on Christ and be born again. He must also be anointed with oil [v. 7], which symbolised the Holy Spirit. His sons are to be clothed and girded [v. 8–9], symbolising the permanence and security of the priesthood. They are to offer a bullock for a sin offering [v. 10–14], symbolising judicial cleansing whereby their sins were atoned by the shed blood of the sacrifice.

Likewise, the other offerings, such as the burnt offerings of the two rams, the wave offering and the heave offering, symbolised the consecrating and commitment of service, and the commitment to give God the best.

These same principles must guide the way we approach and worship God today. We must exercise great care in identifying and selecting godly leaders for the church.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOB 27**

**I CORINTHIANS 13**

**REMINDER**

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

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 29:29–37***LESSON****Consecration of the  
priests****VERSE 35**

*And thus shalt thou do  
unto Aaron, and to his  
sons, according to all things  
which I have commanded  
thee: seven days shalt thou  
consecrate them.*

Though all the ceremonies were performed on the first day, the consecration of Aaron and his sons was not complete until the end of seven days. Meantime, Moses was to sacrifice a bull every day as a sin offering to God. He also had to purify and anoint the altar for seven days in order to make it holy; and it would make whatever touched it holy. There was also to be a passing down of the ordination clothes of the high priest. They were to be worn by the succeeding son for seven days.

The daily repetition of the sin offering was a reminder to the priests that though atonement was made, they must still keep up a penitent sense of sin, and often repeat the confession of it because those daily sacrifices could not make them perfect, for then they would have ceased to be offered [Hebrews 10:1–2].

They were only a shadow of good things to come. When the fullness of the time was come, God would send forth His Son, Jesus Christ, to be our great high priest. He would offer Himself once as the perfect sacrifice “to bear the sins of many” [Hebrews 9:28].

As believers, we are told that we are spiritual priests, and we are to “offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” [1 Peter 2:5b]. As we do not sacrifice animals anymore, we are to present our own bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service [Romans 12:1].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 28**  
**I CORINTHIANS 14**

**REMINDER**

**Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.  
– Hebrews 9:12**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 29:38–42*

**LESSON**

**Morning and evening sacrifices**

**VERSE 42**

*This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee.*

The final charge in this chapter contains the daily offerings, which were the morning and evening sacrifices that set the tone for worship for God’s people.

The priests were to offer the first lamb with two quarts of flour mixed with one quart of olive oil and wine. It was a drink offering. The second lamb was to be offered in a similar manner in the evening. This was to be observed throughout all generations as a perpetual reminder to the Israelites of their duty in respect of prayer.

The heroes of the faith in the Bible obeyed this command. David confessed thus: “Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice” [Psalm 55:17]. Daniel prayed three times a day, with his window open towards Jerusalem, regardless of the situation [Daniel 6:10]. And Paul exhorted his readers to “pray without ceasing”. Our Lord Himself showed us a good example during His earthly ministry: “And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” [Mark 1:35].

But, sadly, coldness and worldliness have caused many in today’s Christian churches to lead lives without prayer. May today’s reading serve as a reminder of God’s desire to meet with us and speak with us daily. May we repent and resolve to revive our spiritual lives and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, pray frequently and effectually and in a manner that is pleasing and acceptable to God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 29**  
**I CORINTHIANS 15**

**REMINDER**

**Prayerlessness is sin, and a prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian. – Rev Dr Jack Sin**

## 1 MARCH

### BIBLE LESSON

*Exodus 29:43–46*

### LESSON

### Precious promises

### VERSE 45

*And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.*

This chapter ends with a beautiful set of promises to God's people if they would obey His commandments. He would meet and speak with His people [v. 43]. He would sanctify the Tabernacle (place of worship) with His glory. The Lord would sanctify (set apart as holy) the Tabernacle, the altar, and the priests all to His service [v. 44]. Finally, He would dwell among His people and be their God; and the people would know that the Lord is the God Who delivered and set them free [v. 45–46].

As a fallen people, we deserve nothing but judgement at the hands of a holy God. And yet, He not only bears with us but also makes us gracious promises. He binds Himself to us beforehand by express engagements. He pledges His own sacred Word to bestow upon us diverse blessings. We can be confident that He will surely keep the promises He has made to us because time and again He has proven Himself to be a faithful God, "Who is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward".

How great are our shortcomings! How many are our sins of negligence and ignorance! Our acts of righteousness are but 'filthy rags' in His sight. When we do render our service to Him, we are but unprofitable servants who have done that which was our duty to do [Luke 17:10].

Apart from the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, we really have no claim upon our Maker.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 30**  
**I CORINTHIANS 16**

### REMINDER

**Our Lord says; "I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." – Revelation 2:23b**

### BIBLE LESSON

*Exodus 30:1–10*

#### LESSON

#### The altar of incense

#### VERSE 1

*And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it.*

This section describes the significance and purpose of the altar of incense. We see detailed instructions on the design and materials of the altar, including where it was to be positioned—at the far end of the holy place, immediately in front of the veil which partitioned off the most holy place [v. 1–6]. Upon this altar, the priest was to burn incense every morning and evening [v. 7–8]. Nothing but the sacred fire and the prescribed incense was ever placed upon it [v. 9–10].

What did the multitude do during this time? We learn that the whole multitude of the people was praying without at the time of incense [Luke 1:9–10]. Israel understood that this morning and evening ‘daily’ service was a call to prayer. The incense symbolised their prayers and the priest acted as mediator, or intercessor, between God and the people.

The one thing that God’s people are to seek above all else is to be near God, to fellowship and commune with Him in an unbroken sense of His presence. The inner curtain that once separated the Altar of Incense and the Ark of God’s presence was torn down upon the death of Jesus on the cross of Calvary. The way into God’s presence is now open. We are invited to come boldly and worship God at the Throne of Grace.

Jesus Christ has replaced the high priest as our Blessed Intercessor. What a blessed privilege Christians enjoy! Are you exercising that privilege?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 31**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 1**

#### REMINDER

**Prayerlessness is sin, and a prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian. – Rev Dr Jack Sin**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 30:11–16*

**LESSON**

**The Tabernacle offering**

**VERSE 16**

*And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.*

The people were required to pay a ransom tax (as an offering) every time a census was taken. This was a constant reminder of God's redemption. Obedience in paying this tax would assure them of God's protection and erase any chance of God's judgement or plague. Each person counted under the census was to pay half a shekel (one fifth of an ounce of silver) as the tax or offering to the Lord. The offering was to be the same amount for both the rich and the poor because it was an offering to make atonement for one's life. Everyone is equal in God's eyes—everyone is a sinner. Everybody needs to be saved in the same way. Everyone needs to be redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

The purpose of the offering was twofold. Firstly, it had a material purpose, which was to take care of the needs of the Tabernacle. Secondly, the offering was to be a memorial pointing to the atonement being made for the believer. The offering was to remind God's people of the rewards for obeying God.

When we say 'yes' to Jesus Christ, we are redeemed by His blood. Therefore, we are to give all we are and have to Him. This includes our material possessions, our time and talents, our hopes and dreams—our very lives.

Have you been withholding any of the above from your Lord and Saviour? Isn't it about time you do a stock take?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 32**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 2**

**THOUGHT**

**Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid, your heart does the Spirit control? – Elisha A Hoffman**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 30:17–21*

**LESSON**

**The Laver**

**VERSE 20**

*When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water; that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD.*

The second major piece of furniture in the courtyard of the Tabernacle was the Laver. Standing between the Tabernacle and the Altar of Burnt Offering, this bronze basin held water for the priests to wash themselves. They had to do this before they offered sacrifices at the altar and before they entered the holy place.

The warning was stark and blunt: the priests must wash or die [v. 21]. God is holy and He will not allow any person to bring sin into His presence. God was very serious. A person had to be washed and cleansed before approaching Him and before serving.

The need to be cleansed from defilement was not a problem only for Aaron and his sons. Every believer in every generation, in every culture, must be washed and cleansed from the defilement of sin. Godly believers like David understood this. That's why he asked God to "wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin ... Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" [Psalm 51: 2, 7].

Like David, we have to recognise that water by itself cannot wash away our sins. It is merely a picture. Only the precious blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ can wash us of our sins. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" [Hebrews 9:14].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 33**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 3**

**REMINDER**

**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. – 1 John 1:9**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 30:22–33***LESSON****The holy anointing oil****VERSE 25**

*And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil.*

The anointing oil symbolised the special call and appointment of God and the Holy Spirit, His equipping of a person for the service of God. Moses was to collect choice spices, mixing and blending them into a holy anointing oil that would be used to anoint the Tabernacle and the priests. The purpose was to sanctify them for God's use. The oil is solely for God's use, and cannot be misused by pouring it on an ordinary person, someone not chosen and appointed by God. It was never to be misused by making it for one's own use. The anointing oil belonged to God and it was to be used for His purpose alone.

The Bible records for us how important men like David and Solomon were anointed with oil for service [1 Samuel 16:13, 1 Kings 1:39]. In a similar manner, the early missionaries like Paul and Barnabas were 'anointed' through the laying of hands before they were "sent forth by the Holy Ghost" [Acts 13:4]. However, simple folks like us too can be called—and anointed—by God to serve Him in simple tasks that He graciously calls us to perform, such as ushering, distributing tracts and teaching in Sunday school.

Have you heard God's call to serve him in the local church? When Moses was first called by God to return to Egypt to bring the children of Israel out, he gave many excuses and "the anger of the Lord was kindled against him" [Exodus 4:14].

Are you responding like Moses?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 34**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 4**

**THOUGHT**

**God uses all kinds of people for His work.**

### BIBLE LESSON

*Exodus 30:34–38*

#### LESSON

**The sweet incense**

#### VERSE 37

*And as for the perfume  
which thou shalt make, ye  
shall not make to yourselves  
according to the composition  
thereof: it shall be unto thee  
holy for the LORD.*

The sweet incense was prepared for worshipping God and for no other purpose. The incense was to be burned on the Altar of Incense and was to fill the Tabernacle with the most pleasing aroma that can be imagined.

The incense symbolised the prayers of God's people. The incense was to be counted most holy. It was to be distinctive, and be made exclusively for the Lord and to be treated as holy. God was pleased to accept their prayers.

In the Bible, there are numerous examples of how God heard and answered His people's prayers. For example, Abraham's servant, who was sent to his country to look for a bride for Isaac, prayed by the well for God to reveal the lady to him. "Before he had done speaking", Rebekah came to the well [Genesis 24:15]. In the Bible, we also find many passages where God promises to answer the prayers of His children. For example, our Lord promised that "if ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" [John 15:7].

Our duty, as Christians, is to search the Scriptures diligently and thoroughly familiarise ourselves with these precious gems so that we are encouraged to come boldly before the throne of grace and present our petitions to the God of the Universe, both in our personal quiet time as well as during weekly church prayer meetings.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 35**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 5**

REMINDER

**Men ought always to pray, and not to faint. –  
Luke 18:1b**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 31:1–11***LESSON****God remembers your  
name****VERSE 2***See, I have called by name  
Bezaleel the son of Uri, the  
son of Hur, of the tribe of  
Judah.*

**B**ezaleel and Aholiab were ‘nobody’s’, yet God chose to fill them with wisdom and understanding. He blessed them with skills: Bezaleel in carpentry, jewellery and metal works, and Aholiab in tailoring. Bezaleel and Aholiab made good use of their gifts in the building of the Tabernacle, the Ark of Testimony and all the other furniture including garments for Aaron the priest [v. 7–10].

All gifts are from God, including your individual talents and skills. He knows each of our names and has given us wisdom [v. 6]. With wisdom, we are blessed with gifts of music, painting, architecture, science and skills in other areas.

As it were, God blesses us with diverse talents so that we can work as a team for His glory [1 Corinthians 12]. We ought to dedicate to God all our gifts that He has given us for His glory. Not all work for God is glamorous. Some tasks may be common and humble but we carry them out in the spirit of prayer.

All that we do must be for the glory of God since He is the source of our blessings. By His grace, God gives us the freedom to use our talents. If we use it for our self-glory or if we hide our talents, we will not have joy and internal peace. Be forewarned that God can withdraw the talents that He has given us if we abuse them for our own benefits only.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 36**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 6**

**THOUGHT**

**Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. – Ecclesiastes 9:10**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 31:12–15***LESSON****Keeping the Sabbath day  
holy****VERSE 14**

*Ye shall keep the sabbath  
therefore; for it is holy unto  
you: every one that defileth  
it shall surely be put to  
death: for whosoever doeth  
any work therein, that soul  
shall be cut off from among  
his people.*

The principle of the Sabbath was set forth as an example when God created the world. He could have created everything on one day or even in one minute but He chose to complete the process in six days and ‘rest’ on the seventh. This is the cycle of the week that is now universally accepted.

The Sabbath was to be the sign of the perpetual covenant and also a sacramental bond between Israel and Yahweh—between man and God, the Creator. While God is faithful, man is not. We have very short memories and need a sign as a reminder. There are three signs of covenant that God has made with man. The first is the Sabbath. It is to be kept throughout the generations [v. 13]. Second, God created the rainbow to let us know that He will not destroy the world again by water. The third is circumcision, which reminds the Jews that they are the children of God, and their obligation to obey and serve Him.

There are no further signs given until the New Testament times. Then two other sacraments were instituted. The first is baptism, which is to be taught the same truth as circumcision. In partaking of the baptism, we are to put away impurity. Next, the Lord instituted the Lord’s Supper. The new truth is to remind us of the reconciliation with God through the atoning blood of Christ.

There is no other way of salvation except through our Redeemer and Mediator, the one and only Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 37**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 7**

**THOUGHT**

**And He said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath. – Mark 2:27–28**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 31:16–18***LESSON****The Sabbath is part of the  
Ten Commandments****VERSE 18**

*And he gave unto Moses,  
when he had made an end  
of communing with him  
upon mount Sinai, two  
tables of testimony, tables  
of stone, written with the  
finger of God.*

The Sabbath is so important that God wrote it down in the Ten Commandments. Our Creator certainly knows our needs. We are to set aside a day—the Sabbath—to worship and to remember God. It is a ‘renewal’ of our commitment to God each time we observe the Sabbath. We need to be reminded of our obligation because we can be forgetful or easily distracted. We need physical rest, too. Studies have shown that man is most efficient after a rest at the end of six days’ work. We need to be ‘re-charged’. God will definitely keep His side of the bargain in the covenant. Thank God that He never slumbers nor sleeps.

Though the Sabbath day is good for us, God also gives us an incentive if we observe it. He promises blessings upon those who honour Him [Isaiah 58:13–14]. Our character and faith is shown in the way we spend our Sabbath. It tells how much respect we have for God, Whom we claim to be our Creator, Redeemer and Provider.

After God had finished speaking [to Moses], He gave two stones tables to him. God wrote on these tables with His finger. The Sabbath was written as the fourth law. Stone was the material used by the Egyptians for important documents. During that time, most writings were on walls or natural rock. Inscriptions upon slabs of stone were rare, especially during Moses’ time. Moreover, these were not cut by human hand.

How important do you think such instruction is for us? How sincere are you in observing the Sabbath?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOB 38**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 8**

**THOUGHT**

**Read and think about Isaiah 58:13–14a.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 32:1–6***LESSON****The idolatry of the golden calf****VERSE 4**

*And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*

The build-up to God's delivery of the Jews out of Egypt was dramatic: the 10 plagues (including the death of Egypt's firstborn), followed by the parting of the Red Sea and the pillars of cloud and fire. Yet Moses was away for only 40 days on Mount Sinai and the people wanted to worship a golden calf. Had they forgotten that this was an abominable practice condemned by God? The influence of an atheist is not as bad as we can easily identify his unbelief. Those who betray their own confession of faith are worse off.

Aaron, after being approached, thought of the evil idea of asking for the contribution of gold earrings and other apparels. Very promptly and efficiently they made a golden calf. What a heresy! Aaron proclaimed that the golden calf was the god of the Israelites and that it [the calf] delivered them from Egypt. God could have stricken Aaron and the multitude dead in a moment.

Like little children, the people probably could not sleep well thinking of their golden calf! Anything or anybody that we substitute for God in our heart is an idol and is abominable. Early the next morning they got up and made offerings. The people sat down to eat and to drink, and play. Play? Yes, the Bible records for us this word 'play'. The Jews played! God forbid.

When we worship God, we should do so in a very sober and reverential manner. Worshipping God is not play.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 39**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 9**

**THOUGHT**

**Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. – Exodus 20:3–4**

## BIBLE LESSON

*Exodus 32:7–14*

### LESSON

#### Ungrateful people

### VERSE 9

*And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people.*

God knew what was happening at the foot of Mount Sinai so He told Moses to see for himself what a shameful, sinful thing that God's people had done. As it were, the Lord 'disowned' the people [v. 7] in that He now mentioned the Jews as 'your' [Moses'] people. God was so disappointed that the Israelites had forgotten God's commandment in such a short time and had turned their attention to worship a golden calf.

Perhaps the excuse was that they really wanted to worship God but that they needed a visual aid and that in their eyes the golden calf was a representation of God. This should never be; there is no excuse. It is simply against God's law to worship graven images.

God knew everything and told Moses what was happening at the base of Mount Sinai. Based on the information from God, Moses pleaded for mercy. Moses did not argue or try to explain. He simply acknowledged that the people had transgressed God's commandments.

The first step towards repentance is to acknowledge that we have sinned. All of us have sinned and we can never find a way to be right with God on our own. All sins have to be dealt with and the wages of sin is death. However, Jesus has died in our place and paid for our sins. Moses pleaded with God for mercy but Jesus went one step further to pay for the wrong that we have committed.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 40**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 10**

### THOUGHT

**For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee. – Psalm 86:5**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 32:15–20***LESSON****The consequence of sin****VERSE 19**

*And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.*

Joshua, who was probably not a participant of this orgy, waited for Moses at mid-mount. Moses realised what God had told him earlier upon hearing from Joshua and witnessing the atrocity for himself. Now Moses understood the fury of God. He was greatly provoked too. He was totally disappointed at the behaviour of the people and threw down the two tablets that were in his hands.

These were important slabs of stones that God had written with His finger. Perhaps Moses thought that the people did not deserve to have these tablets or that they might even worship the tablets instead of the Creator. The act was akin to the action of God in withdrawing light from the people who sin against the light.

Upon his return to the camp, Moses immediately terminated this brazen act of worshipping an idol. He restored order promptly. Moses humiliated the idolaters by burning the golden calf and grounding it to powder. He even compelled the Jews to drink of the concoction of this dust and ash with water. Strange diet it was! The instrument of our sins becomes the instrument of our punishment. In this case, it was a retribution for a great sin.

God can and will forgive our sins but we have to face the consequences of our disobedience. This is not the bitterest taste yet. Worse evil will come upon the provocateurs. The drinking of the dust had its sequel in the slaughter and plagues to follow [v. 27, 35].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JOB 41****2 CORINTHIANS 11****THOUGHT**

**For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. – 2 Corinthians 5:10**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 32:21–29***LESSON****Which side are you on?****VERSE 26**

*Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? Let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.*

It was obvious that Moses wanted the most senior person (Aaron) to be answerable for leading the Israelites away from God. In response, Aaron asked Moses not to be so angry and even addressed his brother as 'my lord'. He drummed up an excuse for himself in that the idea of making a golden calf indeed came from the people and they set mischief upon themselves. It is recorded clearly in that Aaron was the initiator of this idol [v. 2].

We all try to find excuses for ourselves when we are in trouble as a result of our sin. In the Garden of Eden, Adam blamed Eve and she in turn blamed the serpent. As though this was not bad enough, Aaron further added to his excuse that he merely threw the gold into the fire and out came a golden calf [v. 24]. Did this really happen? The golden calf was hand-made [v. 4].

Moses gave an opportunity for the people to repent. He asked the final question: "Who is on the Lord's side?" Unfortunately only the Levites and perhaps a few others came forward. Time's up! All 3,000 of those who did not repent were killed.

Redeem the time, for the days are evil. Noah took 120 years to build his ark. During this time, he preached and invited people to come into the ark. Yet when the flood came, only Noah and his family of eight were in the ark.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JOB 42**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 12**

**THOUGHT**

**(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) – 2 Corinthians 6:2**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 32:30–35*

**LESSON**

**Only Jesus saves**

**VERSE 33**

*And the LORD said unto  
Moses, Whosoever hath  
sinned against me, him will  
I blot out of my book.*

Moses indeed felt sad for his people and made a genuine plea on their behalf for God's forgiveness. He came before the Almighty God in truthfulness. He did not make any excuse or make light of the whole matter but simply admitted the people's sin. Moses viewed sin from God's perspective and could imagine God's wrath against it. Yet he was also willing to even die on the people's behalf. But that was not to be. God holds each individual accountable for his own sins.

Incidentally, Moses had the element of atonement in his mind. Yet while Moses was only a man, Jesus is both God and man. He is the only One Who is good enough to be the atonement for our sins. As much as we try to, we always fall short of the glory of God. Our sins can never be forgiven on our own merit, no matter how hard we beg or plead with God. We cannot even come near the Holy God, our Creator.

Before you judge the Israelites, look at yourself and see if you are in any way better. We may not have made or worshipped any physical golden calves but often times we set our hearts on idols. Anything or anyone that has priority over God in our heart is an idol.

God forgives our sins because Jesus has already received the punishment on our behalf. Only Jesus Christ can restore our name in the Book of Life.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 1**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 13**

**THOUGHT**

**For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. –  
Romans 6:23**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 33:1–6***LESSON****God's warning****VERSE 5**

*For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.*

God announced his great displeasure with the Israelites and threatened to withdraw His sacred presence from them. The stubborn Israelites had broken their covenant with God. They had committed sins, become corrupted and wilful, and refused to obey God's commandments. They had crooked minds and constantly failed to submit to God. This greatly angered God, and He warned them that He would consume them one day.

God told Moses to leave Mount Sinai and proceed to the Promised Land, a land that overflowed with milk and honey, as He had promised Abraham. However, due to the terrible sins committed and breaching of the covenant by His people, God would only send a guardian angel to guide them. He would no longer be present in the midst of the Israelites because He would not be able to withhold His holy and just wrath. The people began to mourn and repent. They stripped off their jewellery [a sign of worldliness] and asked for forgiveness.

Our Lord God is righteous. He is tolerating our filthy sins because of His mercy. If we continue living in sin and choose not to repent, refusing to reconcile with God, He will withdraw His presence from us. Sin makes us unclean and our iniquities separate us from God. It will be terrible if God hides His face from us.

Have you confessed your sins to God? Turn to the Lord in faith and plead for all your sins to be cleansed. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" [Acts 8:22].

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

**MEDITATION**

**Seek the Lord while He may be found, call on Him while He is near. "Turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul" [Deuteronomy 30:10b].**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 33:7–12***LESSON****The chastisement of God****VERSE 9**

*And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses.*

Moses took the Tabernacle and pitched it outside the camp. This symbolised God's presence withdrawing from the polluted camp of Israel. The pillar of cloud—the Lord's presence—which had earlier left the camp due to the great sin committed by the Israelites, now descended at Moses' tent and stayed at the entrance. God and Moses talked.

Moses had successfully built an intimate relationship with God. This was because he was obedient to God and hence found great favour with God. He relied wholeheartedly on God's direction and guidance.

Moses knew that God wanted to chastise the nation of Israel for their continued sinful rebellion. God was ready to destroy the whole nation but Moses pleaded with God for mercy [Exodus 32:9–14]. Again, God showed His mercy by forgiving His children. But God did not change His mind to discipline the nation. So God instructed Moses to pitch his tent away from the camps of the people as a sign of abandonment, something that God had forewarned the Israelites earlier. God wanted the Israelites to repent, to be restored and to commit faithfully to Him and Him alone.

We must allow God to chastise, discipline and correct us for it is better for God to teach us and mould us instead of abandoning us. God is our heavenly Father. He does not want to see us go down the wrong path. Therefore, we should be readily pruned by the Lord to bear more spiritual fruit. We should be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's guidance in all that we do.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**PROVERBS 3**  
**GALATIANS 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.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 33:13–16***LESSON****Intercession****VERSE 13**

*Now therefore, I pray thee,  
if I have found grace in  
thy sight, shew me now thy  
way, that I may know thee,  
that I may find grace in thy  
sight: and consider that this  
nation is thy people.*

Moses interceded boldly for Israel. He did not stop urging God for His personal presence with the people until God finally agreed to restore His promise in its entirety. Moses was demanding for God's presence, guidance and protection. He was seeking God's reassurance that He had found favour with him [v. 12]. He asked God to teach him His ways [v. 13], to know God better and to continue pleasing Him. Let us learn from Moses the way to pray, not for ourselves but for the discernment of God's will and that we can live our lives pleasing God.

Moses' insistent intercession for God's people moved God to agree to go with His people and to give them rest. As children of God, we have spiritual rest because of the assurance of God's protection and eternal salvation. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" [Matthew 11:28].

Today, through intercession of Christ, we have direct access to God at all times. We have the rich privilege of being God's beloved children. We may seek for His wisdom, protection, assurance and blessings. We should also pray and encourage one another in the Lord not to be tempted by Satan to stray. We should also not forget to pray earnestly as we need to communicate constantly with our heavenly Father. God wants us to get close and personal with Him.

We should hold on to our faith in the Lord unswervingly as He is everything we need. We can find joy and eternal blessings only through the Lord.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**PROVERBS 4**  
**GALATIANS 3**

**THOUGHT**

**If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. – John 15:7**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 33:17–23*

**LESSON**

**Craving for a bonded relationship with God**

**VERSE 19**

*And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.*

Moses requested God to show him His glory [v. 18]. He desired for a more intimate relationship with God and craved for a deeper experience of God’s glory. God was pleased with Moses and He was gracious to grant him the earnest request. He agreed to make all His goodness pass in front of Moses. The Lord told Moses to stand on a rock. When His glory passed by Moses, He placed Moses in a cleft [crack] in the rock and covered him with His hand as He passed by. He removed His hand and allowed Moses to see His back.

As believers, we must continue to grow spiritually, with an intense desire to pursue a deep and meaningful relationship with God. This means that we ought to have a desire to study God’s Word, communicate more often with our heavenly Father, have a deeper knowledge of God, and build a bonded, warmer relationship with God.

Today, we walk with God by faith. Our faith increases through more personal experiences with God. We should be bold, like Moses, to ask God to reveal Himself to us and change us. We have the assurance that if we seek and knock for God, we will find Him [Matthew 7:7].

As we walk in the Spirit, allowing the Lord to be our true Master, trust in the Lord and let Him control our lives. Once we have tasted the goodness of God, we will crave for more personal experiences with God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 5**  
**GALATIANS 4**

**MEDITATION**

**If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. – 2 Chronicles 7:14**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 34:1-4*

**LESSON**

**Renewing of God's  
covenant**

**VERSE 1**

*And the LORD said unto  
Moses, Hew thee two tables  
of stone like unto the first:  
and I will write upon these  
tables the words that were  
in the first tables, which  
thou brakest.*

Through fervent prayer and intercession, Moses managed to bring the people from the brink of God's judgement to receive pardon for their sinful ways. Moreover, he had also gained the special favour of the Lord to see Him, albeit the back part of God, which was unusual. Never had any man seen God in such a close encounter since the world began.

God has not forgotten the need to renew His covenant with His people and thus the necessity of the written commandments to govern His people with. This would be the main condition for their future blessing. He will only enter into a covenant with those who are willing to accept His law as their rule of life.

And with this, God required Moses to provide the stones to write the same 'ten words', since it was by his rash act that the earlier tablets were broken [Exodus 32:19]. Without hesitation, Moses reacted with readiness and obedience. It is clear that there is no alteration in the wordings on the tables of stone. God's words never change. Thus we are reminded of the words of Jesus, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" [Matthew 5:18].

While God is ready to forgive and forget, we likewise must respond to Him appropriately as well. Since we often break His commandments, we have to make amendment so as to show our most sincere repentance and seeking His help for protection.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**PROVERBS 6**  
**GALATIANS 5**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord, Thou hast received us most graciously.  
May we respond to Thee most affectionately.  
Amen!**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 34: 5–9***LESSON****The name of the Lord****VERSE 5**

*And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.*

As Moses obediently heeded God's instruction to go up to the mount early in the morning, God too kept His part of the promise. God fulfilled His promise to show Moses something of His glory, made at the end of Chapter 33. Here we are reminded of the words of James: "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you" [James 4:8a].

Something unusual happened at that meeting. God was seen as standing with Moses and then passed by him. These manifestations allowed Moses to see a glorious and transcendent vision of God Himself. It was a vision so bright and radiant, and yet so real and personal. Moreover, he heard God's proclamation of the name of the Lord.

This name of 'Jehovah' exhibits the divine character of God. It also connotes His moral attributes. It lays bare the very heart of God. It reveals His essence as well. It was remarked that "from God's own lips he gets an account of all that is deepest in the disposition and relations of God toward man". How reassuring and comforting for the people of God to know who God really is.

Just as these characters of God revealed to Moses gave him so much confidence in all his future intercession on behalf of His people, we too should rest more completely on Him Who never changes with time. But knowing that there will be mercy for those who seek His mercy, He will deal with us kindly and gently when we approach Him sincerely and humbly.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 7**  
**GALATIANS 6**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord God, I praise Thee for Thine abundant mercies and loving kindnesses towards those who put their trust in Thee. Amen!**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 34:10–17***LESSON****The marvellous work of the Lord****VERSE 10**

*And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou shalt see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee.*

God has made it very plain and clear to Moses that He will do marvellous works on behalf of His people until they arrive in the Promised Land. Earlier, He confirmed the covenant but here He guaranteed the receipt of the inheritance. Whenever Yahweh is involved, He will create marvels such as the world has never known, and no nation has ever experienced. This is in view of what He had already done in Egypt. And what He will do with His people will truly be awesome and terrible, even more terrible than what He did in Egypt.

But on the part of Israel, they were to take care that they observed all that Yahweh had commanded them to do [v. 11–12]. This renewal of His promise to drive out the original occupiers—the Canaanites—was an assurance that their previous failure had been forgiven. This was partly due to the intercession of Moses on their behalf. Now they must beware that it did not happen again. They should not enter into any covenantal relationship with the people of the land, as these heathen nations were often followers of Baal [v. 12, 15]. Instead, they were commanded to destroy their idols [v. 13–14].

It has to dawn on us that though we are in the world, we are not of this world, which is often unfriendly towards God and His people. We have to be careful not to accept the belief system of the world, which is contrary to the teaching of God's Word.

Obedience to His Word will bring His blessings and protection.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**PROVERBS 8**  
**EPHESIANS 1**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord, grant me the courage to stand for the truth of Thy Word in this unbelieving and unfriendly world. Amen!**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 34:18–27***LESSON****No empty-handed  
worship****VERSE 20**

*But the firstling of an ass  
thou shalt redeem with a  
lamb: and if thou redeem  
him not, then shalt thou  
break his neck. All the  
firstborn of thy sons thou  
shalt redeem. And none shall  
appear before me empty.*

There were very clear commands for the people of God in preparation of their possession of the Promised Land, such as they should not be contaminated with the idolatries of the heathen around them. Besides all these negative commands, God also reminded them of their personal relationship with Him, which was far more important. Hence, God pronounced some reminders for them before their departure from Egypt.

Each year they had to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread at God's appointed time. They were to recognise that the firstborn male child was the Lord's. The firstborn of their livestock also belonged to the Lord, whether ox or sheep [v. 19]. There must be the keeping of the Sabbath [v. 21]. They must rest on that day, even in the busiest seasons of the year.

No one could appear in God's presence without something to present to Him. The law always required that man present something to God but it never provided the only sacrifice that God can possibly accept on man's behalf. It is the Lamb of God. When these festivals were observed, God would take care of their families; they and their land would be safe [v. 24].

Let us be reminded that we are forever indebted to Him Who has redeemed us from sin and its penalty. Therefore, it is only our obligation and honour to present before God our best each time we appear before God. God promised that if we honour Him, He will honour us in return, although we are undeserving of the least of His mercies and blessings.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**PROVERBS 9**  
**EPHESIANS 2**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord, I thank Thee for the righteousness which  
Thou hast clothed us in Thine dear Son, Jesus  
Christ. Amen!**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 34:28–35***LESSON****Moses' shining face****VERSE 29**

*And it came to pass, when  
Moses came down from  
mount Sinai with the two  
tables of testimony in  
Moses' hand, when he came  
down from the mount, that  
Moses wist not that the skin  
of his face shone while he  
talked with him.*

Moses had just spent 40 days and 40 nights in the immediate presence of God, beholding the glory of His face. And his face became lit up with a radiance, which was a reflection of God's divine glory. Yet he was not aware of the glory that shone on his face. This is a fine illustration of the power of unconscious influence. Moses was more conscious of God than himself. In fact, he forgot his hunger and thirst, and now this glorious effulgence, too.

This shine on Moses' face was so brilliant that even Aaron and the leaders were afraid to approach him [v. 30]. Neither would the children of Israel dare to come near to him. There was too much of God about him. In this position, he gave them as commands all that Yahweh had said to him on the mountain. This unearthly glow on his face brought home his words to them far better than his eloquence. This time the people were more ready to receive his words and not question his authority, for he bore his credentials on his very countenance.

Let us seek to be like Moses, or like Christ spending quiet time alone with God as it were 'in the mount'. And then we will come away with our light shining before men, in humility, in meekness, and in all instances of a heavenly life.

Thus will the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and all who see us may take knowledge that 'we have been with Jesus'.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**PROVERBS 10**  
**EPHESIANS 3**

**PRAYER**

**Gracious Father, I thank Thee for Christ Who is the Light of the world so that we too may reflect His light in this world. Amen!**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Exodus 35:1–3*

**LESSON**

**Keeping the Sabbath day  
holy**

**VERSE 2**

*Six days shall work be  
done, but on the seventh  
day there shall be to you  
an holy day, a sabbath of  
rest to the LORD: whosoever  
doeth work therein shall be  
put to death.*

The keeping of the Sabbath Day is one of the Ten Commandments given by God to Moses when he was on Mount Sinai. God made it compulsory for Israel to observe the seventh day of the week as a holy day on which no work was to be done by man or beast. Children and servants were to desist from all work. Even the stranger within the gates was required to keep the day holy.

The reason assigned was that God rested on the seventh day and blessed it and hallowed it. There was no hint that the restrictions were meant to guard against the wrath of a jealous and angry deity. The Sabbath was meant to be a blessing to man and not a burden. So it is as important as the other nine commandments.

Yet somehow we feel that with the coming of the New Covenant we are not obliged to keep the Sabbath. We can see that the modern world emphasising economics at the expense of all other activities in society is suffering from a burnout. Many shops and businesses are opened on a 24/7 basis.

However, in keeping the Sabbath in the New Covenant, Christians are not to do it. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in answering the Pharisees, laid down the principle on how we should view the Sabbath [Sunday] as a day of rest. “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath” [Mark 2:27–28].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 11**  
**EPHESIANS 4**

**THOUGHT**

**Think about Isaiah 58:13–14 and how it can apply to your life.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 35:4–19***LESSON****The principle of biblical giving****VERSE 5**

*Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass,*

That God allows us to offer to Him of His own, and accepts such offerings as free gifts, is one of His gracious condescension. Moses ordered preparations to be made for the setting up of the Tabernacle. Two things were to be done.

First, all who were able must contribute. The Tabernacle was to be dedicated to the honour of God and used in His service. Therefore, what was brought for the setting up and furnishing of that was an offering to the Lord. Our goodness extends not to God but what is laid out for the support of His kingdom. The rule was whosoever had a willing heart, let him bring. It was not to be a tax imposed upon them but a benevolence or voluntary contribution.

This implies that God has not made our yoke heavy. He is a prince Who does not burden His subjects with taxes or make them serve with an offering. He draws with the cords of a man and leaves it to us to judge what is right. This also shows that God loves a cheerful giver, and is pleased with a freewill offering [Psalm 110:3].

Second, all who were skilful must work. God dispenses His gifts variously and, as every man has received the gift, so he must minister [1 Peter 4:10]. Those who were rich must bring in materials to work on. Those who were talented must serve the Tabernacle with their skills. As they needed one another, so the Tabernacle needed them both.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**PROVERBS 12**  
**EPHESIANS 5**

**THOUGHT**

**But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit. – 1 Corinthians 12:7–8**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 35:20–29***LESSON****A willing congregation at work****VERSE 21**

*And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments.*

Moses dismissed the people but they soon returned, bringing their offerings with them. There was a general willingness. Men and women alike “brought bracelets and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold” and offered them to the Lord [v. 22]. They departed to their tents immediately to fetch their offering and did not desire time to consider of it, lest their zeal should be cooled by delay.

Whatever duty that God convinces us of, or calls us to, we should set about speedily. No season will be more convenient than the present season.

Appeals are sometimes made for a building in which God is to be worshipped. The spirit in which such appeals are met varies. Occasionally, the appeal is met in a scoffing spirit: “What? Your God needs a house, and cannot build one for Himself?” At other times, the appeal met with a grudging spirit: “Why is so much required? What need is there for so large a building?” And there is the fussy spirit: “Let the matter be well considered, let meetings be held, let a committee be formed, and let our advice be taken.”

The spirit of the Israelites was different, and is held up here for our learning. Their response to the appeal made to them by Moses was devout. No one asked why a Tabernacle was wanted. Second, the response was ungrudging and spontaneous. Their “hearts stirred them up”, and their “spirits made them willing” [v. 21]. Third, the response was immediate. In one verse we read “they departed” [v. 20] and in the next “they came” [v. 21]. There was no delay.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**PROVERBS 13**  
**EPHESIANS 6**

**THOUGHT****God loves a cheerful giver.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 35:30–35***LESSON****Talents to do God's work****VERSE 30**

*And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah;*

Moses had made this communication before [Exodus 31:2–5]. But now that the collection had been made, the materials were contributed, and the operations of building about to be commenced, it was with the greatest importance he reminded the people that the individuals entrusted with the application of their gold and silver had been nominated to the work by God.

God chose Bezaleel and Aholiab [v. 34] to be the 'general contractors' for this building project. He equipped them with a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit to do the work. The leaders of the work of building the Tabernacle had a unique inspiration of the Holy Spirit to do this important and practical work. Since God wanted the work done according to a certain pattern [Exodus 25:9], it made sense that He specially inspired those who would do the work.

God to some extent took them for what they were by nature. He always looks at the natural basis on which He proposes to build up His divine work. But He did not leave them to their natural strength to carry out His designs. Instead, God abundantly endowed them with all that was necessary for the task.

We can learn from this that instead of straining to do work for God in our own strength and wisdom, which must result in failure, we ought to be as tools directed by the spirit and wisdom of God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 14**  
**PHILIPPIANS 1**

**THOUGHT**

**Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. – Psalm 127:1**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 36:1–7***LESSON****Super-abundant giving****VERSE 5**

*And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make.*

When God had qualified them for the work, they applied themselves to it. Observe the kind of people whom Moses called: Those in whose heart God had put wisdom for this purpose, beyond their natural capacity, and whose heart stirred them up to come to the work in good earnest. The materials that the people had contributed were delivered to the workmen by Moses [v. 3]. They could not create a Tabernacle out of nothing. There must be materials to work on. The people therefore brought the materials and Moses gave it to the workers.

The people continued to bring “free offerings every morning” [v. 3]. These people brought their freewill offerings to the Lord with a liberal spirit. Moses was obliged to make a proclamation to prevent them from bringing any more, as there was at present more than enough. Had Moses aimed to enrich himself, he might have allowed them to bring in their offerings and kept the remainder for himself when the work was finished, but he preferred the public before his own private interest, and was therefore a good example to all in public trusts.

Super-abundant giving shows a truly liberal spirit in those who give. The example of the Israelites should stir Christians to emulate them. While these poor wanderers in the desert were so generous, how is it that we are, for the most part, so niggardly?

Matthew Henry wrote: Ability and willingness (with resolution) are the two things to be regarded in the call of ministers. Has God given them not only knowledge, but wisdom? Let them come to it with full purpose of heart to go through with it.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 15**  
**PHILIPPIANS 2**

**THOUGHT**

**Give generously for the cause of God’s work.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 36:8–18***LESSON****An allegory of the church****VERSE 11**

*And he made loops of blue on the edge of one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling; likewise he made in the uttermost side of another curtain, in the coupling of the second.*

The first work they set about was the framing of the house, which must be done before the furniture was prepared. This house was not made of timber or stone but of curtains curiously embroidered and coupled together.

This served to typify the state of the church in this world, the palace of God's kingdom among men. Though it is upon the earth, its foundation is not in the earth, as that of a house is. Christ's kingdom is not of this world, nor founded in it. It is mean and mutable, and in a militant state. Shepherds dwell in tents, and God is the Shepherd of Israel. Soldiers dwell in tents (in those days), and the Lord is a man of war, and His church marches through an enemy's country. The kings of the earth enclose themselves in cedar [Jeremiah 22:15] but the ark of God is lodged only in curtains.

Yet there is a beauty in holiness. The curtains were embroidered, so is the church adorned with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, that raiment of needlework [Psalm 45:14]. The several societies of believers are united in one and, as here, all become one tabernacle, for there is one Lord, one faith and one baptism.

God has made known the mystery that the Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ and that the Church is the instrument by which God makes known His manifold wisdom.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 16**  
**PHILIPPIANS 3**

**THOUGHT****Read Ephesians 3.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Exodus 36:19–34***LESSON****An allegory regarding the  
unity of the church****VERSE 19***And he made a covering  
for the tent of rams' skins  
dyed red, and a covering of  
badgers' skins above that.*

The covering of rams' skins was like fine leather dyed red. The outer covering of badgers' skins was a durable and water-resistant outer covering. It was not particularly beautiful to look at but it was extremely comfortable. When these four layers of curtains were laid on one another, the result was a very dry and very dark tent. The only light came from the lampstand (described in the previous chapters).

The shelter and special protection that the church was under were signified by the curtains of hair-cloth, which were spread over the Tabernacle, and the covering of rams' skins and badgers' skins over them [Exodus 36:14–19].

God had provided for His people a shadow from the heat, and a covert from the storm and rain [Isaiah 4:6]. They were armed against all weather. The sun and the moon will not smite them, and they are protected from the storms of divine wrath, the hail that would sweep away the refuge of lies [Isaiah 28:17]. Those who dwell in God's house will find, be the tempest ever so violent or the dropping ever so continual, it does not rain inside.

The strength and stability of the church, though it was but a tabernacle, were signified by the boards and bars with which the curtains were borne up [Exodus 36:20–34]. The boards were coupled together and joined by the bars, which shot through them. For the union of the church and the hearty agreement of those who are its stays and supporters, contribute abundantly to its strength and establishment.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**PROVERBS 17**  
**PHILIPPIANS 4**

**THOUGHT****Read Ephesians 4.**

## BIBLE LESSON

*Exodus 36:35–38*

### LESSON

**Christ removes the veil**

### VERSE 35

*And he made a veil of blue,  
and purple, and scarlet,  
and fine twined linen: with  
cherubims made he it of  
cunning work.*

The veil, made of fine linen of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with artistic design of cherubim, hung on four pillars made of acacia wood overlaid with gold, set on silver sockets.

The veil was a divider between the holy place and the Most Holy. The veil separated the tent into two compartments. The first compartment was the holy place, which was the larger room. The second compartment was the Holy of Holies, a smaller room with the Ark of the Covenant. This veil was a barrier, and no priest, except the high priest, was allowed to go beyond the veil into this most holy place. The high priest could only enter once a year—on the Day of Atonement.

In dying for our sins, Jesus, with His own blood, entered the Holy of Holies once for all, having obtained eternal redemption [Hebrews 9:12]. The veil was torn from top to bottom at the death of Jesus [Matthew 27:51], showing that through His death, there is no longer a barrier to the most holy place. Now it is open to us. Have boldness to enter the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way that He has consecrated for you, through the veil, that is, His flesh [Hebrews 10:19–20].

The torn veil symbolises the broken body of Jesus through which we have access to the most holy place.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**PROVERBS 18**  
**COLOSSIANS 1**

### THOUGHT

**But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. – 2 Corinthians 3:14**