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# DAILY *manna*

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GENERAL EDITOR

Rev Isaac Ong

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*Daily devotions for reading through the Bible*

Dear *Daily Manna* readers,

The beginnings of the nation of Israel—their deliverance from slavery, their wanderings in the wilderness and their march to the Promised Land—in some ways parallel the Christian’s spiritual walk. Along the way, the children of Israel celebrated victories and suffered defeats. So it is in our lives. The trials and triumphs are part of life, and we deal with them by the grace of God. The overriding theme of the experiences of the Israelites is that God is with them. And God is with us so that we can rejoice in our victories and press on in our defeats.

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

### ***A note to new Daily Manna readers***

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

### ***A step-by-step approach***

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

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

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Numbers 1:1–46*

**LESSON**

**Taking into account and  
being ready**

**VERSE 2**

*Take ye the sum of all the  
congregation of the children  
of Israel, after their families,  
by the house of their fathers,  
with the number of their  
names, every male by their  
polls;*

**N**umbers is so named because of the two recorded numberings (censuses) of the Israelites recorded in the book. It is the English translation of the Latin ‘*nummeri*’ and Greek ‘*arithmoi*’. In the Hebrew Bible, the book of Numbers is called ‘*bemidbar*’ [in the wilderness], the fourth word in the Hebrew text. The censuses showed accurately that the Israelites who left Egypt were eventually not the same people who crossed the Jordan River into Canaan.

Israel emerged from Egypt as slave, basically unsuited for the Promised Land, but God had used 40 years to raise up another generation. Exodus covered a year in Israel’s history and Leviticus, only a month. The book of Numbers encompasses more than 38 years. It tells us what happened to the Israelites during their 38 years in the wilderness.

The wilderness was never meant to be Israel’s destination. God’s intention was to bring them into the Promised Land of Canaan. The wilderness was intended as a temporary place—a place to move through, not to live in.

God commanded Moses to take a census of the children of Israel but only counting all who were able to go to war in Israel. This was predominately a military census to see who could fight on Israel’s behalf in the battles and conflicts to come. This could be seen as the first step of the long route to the Promised Land. As the count was made, every family would know preparation was being made for war. They would receive the Promised Land from the hand of God. Nevertheless, they still had to fight for it.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH I**  
**MATTHEW I**

**THOUGHT**

**We may fail in spiritual battles because we do not take an honest inventory about where we are spiritually.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 1:47–54***LESSON****Obedient to God's Word****VERSE 54**

*And the children of Israel  
did according to all that the  
LORD commanded Moses,  
so did they.*

The foregoing exercise was a census of potential soldiers but the tribe of Levi was not to be counted. They alone, among the tribes, did not go to war because they had a special responsibility to God: the priestly duties of Israel.

Taking inventory is an essential step in organisation and moving forward. In preparing to enter the Promised Land, Israel had to be organised, and God had to prepare them. Therefore it was essential for Israel to take inventory and know where they were and what they had. Yet, as in the case of Levi, there were some things that could not, and should not, be counted. Israel had to appreciate that some of the most important things must be set aside. No inventory is totally complete, and God always works mightily through things that cannot be counted.

We need to distinguish from the rest of the tribes from the tribe of Levi. It is the honour of the Levites that they are made guardians of spiritual things. To them is committed the care of the Tabernacle and the treasures thereof.

When the Levites moved, they were to take down the Tabernacle, carry it together with all that belonged to it, and set it up again in the place appointed. It is for the honour of the holy things that no one should be permitted to see them, or touch them, but only those who are called of God to the service.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 2**  
**MATTHEW 2**

**THOUGHT**

**Those who minister about holy things should neither entangle themselves, nor be entangled, in secular affairs. The ministry is itself work enough for a whole man.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Numbers 2*

LESSON

**Getting into formation  
for the spiritual battle**

VERSE 34

*And the children of Israel  
did according to all that the  
LORD commanded Moses:  
so they pitched by their  
standards, and so they set  
forward, every one after  
their families, according to  
the house of their fathers.*

Israel had been on this Exodus journey for more than a year, and had assembled just about any way they had pleased. But now, they had to take the next step in organisation, namely, ordering themselves. At the centre of this order was the Tabernacle itself. The tribes would arrange themselves to the east, south, west and north in relation to it. Since the Tabernacle was symbolically the presence of God with them, this meant all order in Israel began being centred around God Himself [v. 1–2].

There is an order in the layout of the camp of Israel depicting that God is a God of order and He requires His people to be orderly, too. Nothing is accomplished in God's kingdom without order. Order is progress in the Christian life, becoming more like the Lord.

While it may not seem so to us, God is moving with utmost order and organisation behind the scenes, though we cannot see it. God orders things according to His wisdom, not ours. Our resistance to God's organisation is almost always the product of selfishness—wanting to do things our own way, instead of following the Lord's.

The church also ought to be compact, according to the Scriptural model, with every member knowing and keeping his place, and then all who wish well to the church shall rejoice, beholding her order.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 3**  
**MATTHEW 3**

THOUGHT

**The church is also called the camp of saints.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 3:1–4***LESSON****Strange fire****VERSE 4**

*And Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the sight of Aaron their father.*

Aaron's four sons were the foundation of Israel's priesthood; they stood in God's presence and served Him on behalf of the people. They were appointed to lead the people and serve the Lord as ministers in the Tabernacle and as guardians of God's covenant with His people. The deaths of Nadab and Abihu highlighted the importance of guarding the holiness of the sanctuary and of strict obedience to God's instruction.

The layout of the tribes around the Tabernacle— at rest or in motion—are ordered by God. Likewise, there is an order of worship that is prescribed by God. The 'strange fire' offered by Nadab and Abihu, are 'strange' because it was not what God commanded [Leviticus 10:1].

Similarly, there is an appropriate way to worship God and a wrong way, that is, not God's appointed way: (a) Illegitimate zeal: Christ rebuked His disciples because they wanted to silence others who did not belong to their group [Mark 9:38–40]. On another occasion, John and James were rebuked for wanting to put unbelievers to death [Luke 9:51–56]. For this also, Christ reprimanded them, for a spirit of bigotry and persecution is directly contrary to the spirit of Christ and Christianity. (b) Unauthorised services: Such are the 'voluntary humility' and 'neglecting of the body' condemned in Colossians 2:18–23, and all similar austerities.

All such 'strange fire' tends to the injury, and even the destruction, of the offerers [John 4:24]. The fire that God approves must be presented by accepted worshippers and in an appointed way.

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
JEREMIAH 4  
MATTHEW 4**

**THOUGHT**

**To worship God in truth, we must ourselves be 'accepted in the beloved,' enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and must present spiritual sacrifices kindled by his own celestial fire of love.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 3:5–39***LESSON****Professional ministry****VERSE 10**

*And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.*

The entire tribe of Levi was given to serve the needs of Aaron and the priests, the needs of the congregation at large, and the needs of the Tabernacle itself.

God has an order and organisation. The Levites were under the direction of Aaron. They were not to do what they wished but to assist Aaron in His service and ministry. Nothing in the holy things of God should be left to chance or improvisation. None of the sacred persons who ministered in His presence is to be unprepared or untaught.

In some ways, being a priest was far more visible and perhaps 'glamorous' than being a Levite. But the service of the Levites made the work of the priests possible, and was seen by God as having equal value. The Levites were to minister to the priests in their ministrations to the Lord [v. 6] and to keep Aaron's charge [v. 7], as the deacons to the elders in the evangelical constitution, serving at tables, while the elders waited on their ministry.

The Levites killed the sacrifices, and then the priests needed only to sprinkle the blood and burn the fat. The Levites were to keep not only Aaron's charge but also the charge of the whole congregation. Note that it is a great trust that is reposed in ministers, not only for the glory of Christ but also for the good of His church. They must not only keep the charge of the great high priest but also be faithful to the souls of men.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 5**  
**MATTHEW 5**

**THOUGHT**

**There are no big or small ministries, just effective or ineffective ones.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 3:40–51***LESSON****Redeemed****VERSE 41**

*And thou shalt take the Levites for me (I am the LORD) instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel; and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel.*

The firstborn—which is considered to be the best and the favoured—always belongs to God. Thus, instead of giving the firstborn of Israel to God in sacrifice, the tribe of Levi is ‘given’ to God in place of each of the firstborn sons of Israel. However, there were then 22,273 firstborn sons in Israel but only 22,000 Levite males [Numbers 3:39]. The extra 273 were thus given a monetary value and the total amount of money collected was offered to the Tabernacle as redemption money.

The Apostle Peter takes this Old Testament method of redemption and contrasts it with that in the new covenant. He adopts the word ‘redeem’, taking it over from the old economy, to bring home his point: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” [1 Peter 1:18–19].

The difference between the Old Testament and New is that while the first-born Israelite is relieved of holy service which might have been claimed of him by Jehovah, Christians are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ for sacred service, “to be a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices” to Him.

Christians are redeemed and the result is not exemption, but consecration. The difference is indeed great, and it shows how much the two covenants are in contrast with each other.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JEREMIAH 6**  
**MATTHEW 6**

**THOUGHT**

**Our redemption is not to enable us to escape any of the duties or obligations of life. It is to make us fit for those duties, to purify us so that we may serve God with our bodies and spirits that are His.**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Numbers 4:1–20*

**LESSON**  
**Respect for God's  
 holiness**

**VERSE 15**

*And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation.*

Only the Levites were allowed to transport the Tabernacle from campsite to campsite. The specifics and details involved in the tearing down and erecting of the Tabernacle at the new campsites needed to be assigned to a mature Levite. Moses and Aaron had to take a census to determine the number of mature Levites aged 30 to 50 years old. Every Levite needed to know his job and do it well.

The primary care of the holy things was placed into the hands of the Kohathites [v. 4]. Only the priests themselves were allowed to look upon and handle everything. The priests were responsible for covering and wrapping all the holy furnishings of the Tabernacle. God gave very clear instructions on how the Kohathites were to treat the holy things of God. They must never be allowed to approach these things alone. They were to be led into the sanctuary and assigned their work by the priests. They were not allowed to touch the holy things, nor were they allowed to even look upon them; else they would be stricken dead.

The declaration and warning of God is clear: He is holy and the things of God are holy. He demands that we respect and revere His holiness and the things committed to His service.

As Christians, your physical body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and you are to glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's [1 Corinthians 6:19–20].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
 IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 7**  
**MATTHEW 7**

**THOUGHT**

**God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. – Psalm 89:7**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 4:21–33***LESSON****Willingness to do general work for the Lord****VERSE 25**

*And they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle of the congregation, his covering, and the covering of the badgers' skins that is above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,*

While the Kohathite workers were responsible for transporting the holy furnishings of the Tabernacle, the Gershonite and Merarite workers were called to do the general work. The Gershonites were to pack, unpack and transport the outer walls or curtains [v. 24–26]. The Merarites were to pack, unpack and transport the frame of the Tabernacle, including the crossbars, post and bases, tent pegs and ropes, and other equipment [v. 31–33]. The importance of the general work was stressed in that they were carried out under the supervision of the priests.

Every worker was given a specific task to carry out. The work had to be done, every single task, in order for the worship and ministry of God to be carried out. Nothing should be lost or mishandled.

Today, the willingness to do any task is also desperately needed in the church. Every believer has a duty, a role of responsibility to God. Christians need to step forth and do the general work in their service for the church. No matter what the work is, it is important to God, and it has to be done. Are you willing to step forward?

To the work! To the work! We are servants of God,  
Let us follow the path that our Master has trod;  
With the balm of His council our strength to renew,  
Let us do with our might what our hands find to do.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 8**  
**MATTHEW 8**

**QUESTION**

What will your response be when Jesus calls out, “My child, step forth! Carry this tent peg for Me! For My church! For My people who need your help!”?

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 4:34–49***LESSON****Obedience to God's  
commandment****VERSE 49**

*According to the  
commandment of the  
LORD they were numbered  
by the hand of Moses,  
every one according to his  
service, and according to  
his burden: thus were they  
numbered of him, as the  
LORD commanded Moses.*

According to the commandment of the Lord [v. 37, 41, 45, 49], the numbering and result of the Levite workers of age 30 to 50 years old were recorded: the Kohathites 2,750; the Gershonites 2,630, and the Merarites 3,200, making a total of 8,580. This number represents a proportion (39%) of all the males of the Levites from a month old and upward, which was 22,273 [Numbers 3:43].

It is interesting to note that the number of Merarite workers bore an unusually large proportion (52%) to the total number of males in that family clan, which was 6,200 [Numbers 3:34]. The Merarites' tasks to pack, unpack and transport the heavy boards, pillars, crossbars and other equipment of the Tabernacle were the most arduous. But God so ordered that though they were fewest in number, they had the most able men among them.

Here we see the wisdom and hands of God at work—for whatever service God calls men to, He will prepare them for it, and give strength in proportion to the work. And if He summons you to difficult tasks, He will increase your wisdom and strength.

The church is in a state of desperate need for workers. The harvest is ripe and ready to be gathered, but the labourers are few. Few are stepping forth to serve in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Few are willing to see to the crying needs of the world. When God calls, are you willing to step forth?

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
JEREMIAH 9  
MATTHEW 9**

**REMINDER**

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

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 5:1–4***LESSON****Putting out the unclean****VERSE 2**

*Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead.*

The overall objective of God's people is to reach the Promised Land. As soldiers of God marching towards the Promised Land, God expects His people to be united and living pure and clean lives before Him. God is holy, and therefore He expects His people to be holy.

God commanded that the unclean be removed from the camp. A person with leprosy or a contagious skin disease or discharge as well as a person who came in contact with the dead were considered unclean. The purpose of removing the unclean person from the camp was twofold: (a) to prevent the spread of disease within the camp and (b) as a picture of spiritual separation, to be totally set apart from the sin and shame of this world.

God Himself dwelt within the camp. His presence dwelt within the Tabernacle. God had to teach His people that He is holy and that they must live holy, pure and clean lives before Him. Therefore all uncleanness was to be removed from Him and from His people, lest they become contaminated by uncleanness and impurity.

As believers, God has called us to spiritual separation from the world. We too are to live pure and clean lives. Our conduct and behaviour are to be moral, lawful and peaceful, not following the sin and darkness of this world. "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares" [Luke 21:34].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JEREMIAH 10**  
**MATTHEW 10**

**THOUGHT**

**Flee from sin. Every sinful act tends to kill some element of the spiritual life. Sin is deadly in its character and influence.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 5:5–10***LESSON****Remedy for wrong deeds****VERSE 7**

*Then they shall confess  
their sin which they  
have done: and he shall  
recompense his trespass  
with the principal thereof,  
and add unto it the fifth  
part thereof, and give it  
unto him against whom he  
hath trespassed.*

God gave the law that controlled the doing of any wrong against another person. Among God's people, doing wrong against another person, such as fraud, violence and injury, is a terrible trespass. Here God gives the most stunning charge: If a person wrongs another, it is counted as being unfaithful to the Lord and that person stands guilty before God.

As God's people marched to the Promised Land, He could not allow them to trespass against one another and create social disorder that would destroy God's people. The remedy to such wrong doings involved three steps: (a) The offender must confess his sin to God. (b) Full restitution plus one fifth had to be paid for whatever wrong had been done. (c) The offender must approach God for the atonement through the guilt offering to seek reconciliation with God and the offended party.

For us, the one offering that Jesus Christ made on the cross perfected all others. As believers, if you have wronged others, you too have to make confession and restitution for your wrong doings. You are to come with faith in the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ; and full forgiveness will be yours.

“And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the LORD; Behold, LORD, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus saith unto him, This day is salvation come to this house” [Luke 19:8–9a].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH II**  
**MATTHEW II**

**THOUGHT**

**Whoever sins against man, sins against God.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 5:11–31***LESSON****Law governing sexual unfaithfulness****VERSE 15**

*Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.*

Sexual unfaithfulness is a destructive sin. It cuts deep, ripping and tearing at the heart of the spouse. Sexual unfaithfulness damages and often destroys lives and families. God has established the family to be the foundation of society. If the family is destroyed, society is destroyed too.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery” [Exodus 20:14] is one of the major commandments. God gave this commandment to preserve our lives, to preserve the great qualities that bring love, joy, peace, trust and loyalty to the lives of all of us as well as society itself. This is the reason why God gave this law controlling the suspicions and jealousy of sexual unfaithfulness.

Here, a man’s wife went astray and was unfaithful. The man was suspicious but had no witness. The whole procedure on how the man and wife were to seek the counsel of the priest and come before God was detailed in this passage. Note how descriptive the bitter suffering of the defiled wife was pictured: her abdomen would swell and her thigh would rot away. If she was innocent and pure, she would be vindicated of all charges and be able to bear children.

When a man or a woman goes astray, suspicions, jealousy, strife, accusations and threats occur. Often a broken relationship results and the couple is ripped apart. God knows every secret sin of man. “For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” [Ecclesiastes 12:14].

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
JEREMIAH 12  
MATTHEW 12**

**REMINDER**

**God demands faithfulness between husband and wife.**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Numbers 6:1–21*

LESSON  
**Set apart for God**

VERSE 8

*All the days of his  
separation he is holy unto  
the LORD.*

The law concerning the Nazarites is the focus of this chapter. As God's chosen people, the sanctity of the nation is very much emphasised. Towards that end then, any man or woman had the option to pursue the life of a Nazarite. A religious, holy lifestyle was laid out for such a person then. Abstinence from strong drink, no shaving of hair and dissociation from anything unclean must be strictly observed for a minimal period of 30 days.

This brings to mind at least three people who were Nazarites for life: Samson [Judges 13:5], John the Baptist [Luke 1:15] and even the prophet Samuel [1 Samuel 1:11]. Both Samson and John the Baptist became Nazarites by divine appointment, whereas Samuel was consecrated as a result of his mother's prayer. These are examples of people in the Bible that are set apart for the Lord.

To be a Nazarite is to be separated unto the Lord. Today's reading refers to either a male or female who voluntarily offers to be sanctified for the Lord's use. The person must be willing to observe the law of the Nazarite.

When it comes to separation from the world, the best example is still our Lord Jesus Christ. He led a very exemplary life for 33 short years. Though He was in the world, He was not of the world. Jesus lived in absolute surrender to God's divine will. All believers must emulate His life of separation to be 'Nazarites', set apart for God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 13**  
**MATTHEW 13**

CHALLENGE

Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. – 1 Peter 1:16

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Numbers 6:22–27*

LESSON  
**The Aaronic benediction**

VERSE 27

*And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.*

This priestly benediction by Aaron is a stem of God's love for His people. The three-fold blessing here reveals the triune God. The word 'doctrine' is not found in the Bible. However, its implication is taught right from Genesis through to Revelation. Though the priests administered the outward form of blessing, its inward reality was of God and from God alone.

"The LORD bless thee, and keep thee" [v. 24] shows the love of God the Father blessing His people in His keeping watch over them. All believers are preserved and spared the second death of eternal separation from God because of our position in Christ.

"The LORD make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee" [v. 25] reveals the love of God the Son in His condescending grace upon His children. It is both fitting and comforting that Jesus Christ, the Sun of righteousness, is the One to shine upon His children. Communion with Him gives spiritual light and knowledge of His Word.

"The LORD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" [v. 26] indicates the love of God the Holy Ghost granting us peace through the fellowship of the Spirit. This three-fold blessing is ours for the asking when we dare appropriate it for ourselves. Christ our Great High Priest has made it possible at the cross of Calvary. Do not delay but come and be blessed. With Christ Jesus as your Saviour, you can also bask in the love of God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
 IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 14**  
**MATTHEW 14**

BLESSING

**The LORD bless thee, and keep thee; The LORD make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; The LORD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. – Numbers 6:24–26**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 7:1–10***LESSON****Anointed for offering****VERSE 1**

*And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them;*

It is evident by now the Tabernacle had been erected. The priests had also been properly consecrated. The Levites were appointed to their holy services. Everything was put in place for the services in the sanctuary. Yet before the princes came for their voluntary offerings, the instruments had to be anointed. The details of this process were prescribed by divine authority to Moses [Exodus 30:22–28].

‘To anoint’ refers to the act of consecration. Since these instruments are for the purpose of worship, they have to be properly set aside for holy use [Leviticus 8:10]. The practice of anointing with perfumed oil was common among the Hebrews. The act of anointing was significant of consecration to a holy or sacred use. This thus applies to the anointing of the high priest [Exodus 29:29; Leviticus 4:3] and of the sacred vessels as well [Exodus 30:26].

Notably, the high priest and the king were called ‘the anointed’ [Leviticus 4:3, 5, 16; 6:20; Psalm 132:10]. Anointing a king was equivalent to crowning him [1 Samuel 16:13; 2 Samuel 2:4]. Prophets were also anointed [1 Kings 19:16; 1 Chronicles 16:22; Psalm 105:15]. This anointing of sacred persons and objects signified their being set apart and consecrated to the service of God; the costly and fragrant mixture appointed for this purpose was forbidden for all others.

Do you realise the honour and privilege that God has placed on each of us, that we have been truly anointed unto God as kings and priests [Revelation 1:6; 5:10]? Let us then seek to consecrate ourselves daily to His holy service.

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
JEREMIAH 15  
MATTHEW 15**

**PRAYER**

**Holy Father, we come into Thy holy presence through the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon us.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 7:11–84***LESSON****Gifts for the Tabernacle****VERSE 84**

*This was the dedication of the altar, in the day when it was anointed, by the princes of Israel: twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold.*

Through the Lord's mercy to Israel, He set up His dwelling among them. This called for an expression of gratitude. And accordingly the chiefs of the several tribes, acting as representatives of the whole congregation, testified of their appreciation to the LORD by contributing towards the worship of Him. In so doing, they acknowledged that "every beast of the forest is mine (the Lord's), and the cattle upon a thousand hills" [Psalm 50:10]. "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts" [Haggai 2:8].

The princes who hold the most honourable position in all the tribes of Israel are here most prominent in their contributions to the service of the Tabernacle. They stood out as outstanding examples worthy of those who hold high positions and with their riches help to forward the work of the Lord. This is as Jesus has mentioned, "for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" [Luke 12:48].

Although these princes were not set apart for religious duties, yet they offered so as to assist the anointed Levites in the discharge of their sacred duties. Now with the gifts of their wagons and oxen, their workloads will be greatly eased. Thus, in their wisdom they gave such things as are most useful in the service of the Tabernacle.

There are many ways one can help in the ministry of the church. It is the duty and privilege of every Christian to be engaged in some works for the good of others. These likewise lighten the loads of the servants of the Lord, which otherwise are arduous and continuous.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 16**  
**MATTHEW 16**

**PRAYER**

**Holy Father, we desire to give back to Thee what Thou in Thy generosity hast bestowed upon us.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 7:85–88***LESSON****The offerings of God****VERSE 87**

*All the oxen for the burnt offering were twelve bullocks, the rams twelve, the lambs of the first year twelve, with their meat offering: and the kids of the goats for sin offering twelve.*

It is to be noted that the repetition of the offerings in the 12 successive days was peculiarly impressive. Every tribe as represented by its princes presented the same kinds of offerings and also in the same quantity. It was to be an expression of their equal indebtedness to Jehovah.

By the strong hand of the Lord, the Israelites were delivered from their slavery and bondage in Egypt. They had all experienced the protection and provision of the Lord along the way through the wilderness. And soon they will arrive in a new land. Thus, they are all equally obligated to Him for each mercy and grace.

Evidently, they brought a “kid of the goats for a sin-offering”. This offering expressed the consciousness of one who offers of the need for forgiveness and atonement with God. It was obtained only through the sacrifice of this victim. Next, “one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering”. This offering, to be burnt on the altar entirely, represents the entire devotion of the offerer to God. Next, they also brought “for a sacrifice of peace offerings”. These were to be expressions of gratitude to God by the worshippers.

We should feel deeply indebted for all that the Lord has done for us—in that He has saved us from the tyranny of Satan and will surely bring us safely over to where we will spend eternity with Him. And while we are here on earth, we should constantly seek His forgiveness and then daily dedicate ourselves to do His will.

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
JEREMIAH 17  
MATTHEW 17**

**PRAYER**

**Holy Father, we are thankful that Thou hast delivered us and will continue to do so till we see Thee face to face.**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Numbers 7:89*

LESSON

**The meeting with God**

VERSE 89

*And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him.*

The Lord had earlier promised that He would meet Moses at the mercy seat [Exodus 25:22]. Now comes the fulfilment of that promise. Evidently, the Lord had accepted the sacrifices of the princes and was then pleased to reveal Himself to Moses in the Holy of holies. Moses was the privileged person to be able to speak face to face with God. He was the mediator between God and Israel in the desert.

Moses met God at the Mercy Seat, where the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled. It was the spot where the God of the covenant met with Israel. Though Moses saw no likeness of God but only heard a voice, yet he was fully assured of the presence of the Almighty. This voice that answered is called the 'oracle,' or speaking place.

This mercy-seat well represented our blessed Redeemer, "who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" [Hebrews 1:1-2a]. Hence the incarnated Christ is the true 'oracle,' in and by Whom God speaks unto man.

The Lord invites us through the sacrifice of the Lamb of God that we come and commune with Him at the throne of grace where we can find help in time of need. Whether in time of grief or gladness, in doubt or in dread, we are welcomed to speak freely with Him through our Mediator, Christ Jesus.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 18**  
**MATTHEW 18**

PRAYER

**O mighty God, we cannot approach Thee in our own righteousness but only through Thy Beloved, Jesus Christ.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 8:1–4***LESSON****Living lamps****VERSE 2**

*Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick.*

The candlestick or lampstand was made of one solid massive piece of pure gold hammered into shape. It consisted of a central stand with three branches on either side. It was fed by pure olive oil and “kept burning continually”. The full description of the candlestick is also given in the Bible [Exodus 25:31–40; 37:17–24]. It was placed on the south side of the Holy Place and was the only light, as there were no windows.

Aaron, the people’s representative of God, lighted the lamps. He lighted the middle lamp from the fire of the altar and then the rest of the lamps one from another. The lamps cast their light forward, illuminating the Table of the Shewbread. Upon this table were laid 12 loaves of bread representing the 12 tribes of Israel and their offerings that stood against the north wall. This was the ‘Bread of Presence.’ It signified that God was the Sustainer of His people’s lives, the Giver of the ‘bread of life’ [John 6:35]. God used one of His servants to give light to the loaves and to the Altar of Incense.

God is the Source of light. The Bible is to us as a “light that shineth in a dark place” [2 Peter 1:19]. Jesus is “the light of the world” and because of this, His believers in turn become “the light of the world” as they witness for Christ [Matthew 5:14; John 8:12].

Is your life luminous in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ to the surrounding people and nations of the world?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 19**  
**MATTHEW 19**

**PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, may my life be a life of obedience. Thank You, Lord, for being with me to lead, guide and protect even as Thou was with Israel.

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 8:5–26***LESSON****Consecrating the Levites****VERSE 6**

*Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them.*

The Levites were set apart by God Himself as substitutes for all the firstborn sons in Israel. They were set apart to be assistants to the priests and did the work needed at the Tabernacle. Before they could do God's service, they needed a special call and consecration including atoning sacrifices [v. 5–12]. They had to be ceremonially and spiritually cleansed or purified from sin. They were sprinkled with purified water, and had to shave off their body hair and wash their own clothes.

The Levites were consecrated to the service of the Lord in the presence of the whole congregation who had assembled at the front of the Tabernacle. The people were to identify with the Levites by laying hands on them. Aaron then offered them as a wave offering before the Lord. The Levites were offered to God as a sacrifice for the nation of Israel. They were living substitutes for the firstborn of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Then, by divine direction, two young bullocks were presented to God as a sin offering (purification) and a burnt offering (atonement) for the Levites. The Levites were set apart and declared by the Lord to be His. The ceremony was carried out in perfect obedience and according to the command of God. The Levites were to serve the Lord between the ages of 25 and 50 years. After 50, they could assist the young men and assume lighter duties.

No servant of God is permanently retired.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 20**  
**MATTHEW 20**

**PRAYER**

**Loving Father, I confess that we are sinners. Only through Your grace and mercy do we have hope of redemption.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 9:1–14***LESSON****Keeping the Passover****VERSE 5**

*And they kept the passover  
on the fourteenth day of  
the first month at even in  
the wilderness of Sinai:  
according to all that the  
LORD commanded Moses,  
so did the children of Israel.*

The Passover is one of the most important national celebrations of the Israelites, the memorial of their deliverance and the beginning of their independence as a nation. God instituted the Passover just before He brought the Jews out of Egyptian slavery [Exodus 12:3–13]. God had commanded His people to celebrate the memorial of the Passover annually on the fourteenth of every first month [v. 1–5].

Some men who had come in contact with a dead body told Moses and Aaron that they could not celebrate the festival because they had become ceremonially unclean. They were told by God, through Moses, to keep the Passover on the second month instead of the first, just as a man away on a journey must do. A stranger who lived among them and desired to keep the Passover had to follow all the rules of the Jewish religion including circumcision (male only) [Exodus 12:48]. Any Israelite who was clean, eligible and available to take part in the festival but refused to do so would be cut off from his people. To be ‘cut off’ was to suffer sudden judgement at God’s hand, even death.

God commanded His people, the Israelites, to acknowledge His deliverance by celebrating the Passover. God commands us to acknowledge His great deliverance through Jesus Christ by observing the Lord’s Supper. God extends an invitation to every person to observe the Holy Communion.

The Lord’s Supper is of critical importance to Him: a person must not partake of the Lord’s Supper in an unworthy manner. If he does, he brings judgement upon himself. Read 1 Corinthians 11:29–30.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 21**  
**MATTHEW 21**

**PRAYER**

**Heavenly Father, bless me with the wisdom to understand the difference between religious rites and faith in the Lord.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 9:15–23***LESSON****The pillar of cloud and fire****VERSE 23**

*At the commandment of the LORD they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept the charge of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.*

From the day that the Tabernacle was dedicated, God covered it during the day by a pillar of cloud and during the night by a pillar of fire. The invisible God first manifested His presence with Israel in the cloud and fiery pillar by protecting, guiding, instructing and inspiring His people. When the pillar of cloud was taken up from the Tabernacle [v. 17], it was time for the Israelites to break camp and move on towards the Promised Land. When it lifted, the camp marched; when it glided down and lay motionless, the march was stopped and the tents were pitched. They were not to move or stop at will, but had to follow the Lord's command.

Sometimes the cloud decided to remain upon the Tabernacle many days, sometimes a night only. Whether it were two days or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the Tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents and journeyed not; but when it was taken up, they journeyed [v. 22].

They were entirely dependent upon the will of God in these matters and believing that the divine presence was in the cloud, they trusted God, waited and watched for its movements as for His orders.

We, too, are dependent upon God in our pilgrimage on this earth. Let us therefore trust in Him and watch the movement of His providence. We do not have a guiding cloud now but God guides us by His Word, His Spirit and by His Son, Jesus, in Whom is the fire and around Whom is the cloud.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JEREMIAH 22**  
**MATTHEW 22**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, help me to obey Your commandments and teach me to serve You with gladness.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 10:1–10***LESSON****A clear call: the silver trumpets****VERSE 2**

*Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps.*

In addition to the visible movement of the cloud, revelation was given to Moses by the Lord to make two trumpets of hammered silver. The two trumpets were to be made in one complete piece, “for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps” [v. 2]. The trumpets were to be blown by the priests, the sons of Aaron. They were to be blown in accordance with clear and well-understood instructions.

When two trumpets were blown together, the whole congregation had to gather at the entrance of the Tabernacle. They came in faith to honour God and departed in peace. When one trumpet was blown, the leaders were to gather to Moses. The same trumpets were used to signal to the tribes when to begin marching [v. 5–7]. One blast signalled the tribes on the east to march and another blast the tribes on the south to do so. Even after they entered Canaan, the Promised Land, they were to observe the trumpet alarms.

Israel “shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies” [v. 9b]. The Lord would fight for Israel and bring them victory. They were similarly to be used in the days of gladness, solemn days and for the solemnising of all their feasts and their sacrifices such as burnt offerings and peace offerings.

The significance of those different trumpet blasts is thus summed up: “They may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God” [v. 10b]

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 23**  
**MATTHEW 23**

**THOUGHT**

**And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. – Revelation 11:15**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 10:11–28***LESSON****The order of the march  
from Sinai****VERSE 13**

*And they first took their  
journey according to the  
commandment of the LORD  
by the hand of Moses.*

The cloud was taken up from off the Tabernacle of the testimony” [v. 11b]. The rising of the cloud was the divine signal for the Israelites to break camp and continue their march to the Promised Land. The trumpet had sounded.

The triumphant journey from Sinai began 13 months after leaving Egypt and 11 months after arriving at Sinai. The Israelites were disorganised, rebellious people when they arrived at Sinai. When they left, they were organised, obedient children of God, who marched orderly according to the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

The order of the march had been prescribed earlier by the Lord [Numbers 2:3–31]. The Judah division including Issachar and Zebulun led the way [v. 14–16]. Following their departure, the Gershonite and Merarite Levites dismantled the Tabernacle and set out after Judah. Next, the Reuben division accompanied by Simeon and Gad proceeded [v. 18–20], followed by Kohathites and Levites who carried the ark and other sacred furnishings of the Tabernacle. The Ephraim division from the west accompanied by Manasseh and Benjamin followed the Kohathites [v. 22–24]. Finally, the division of Dan from the north accompanied by Asher and Naphtali brought up the rear [v. 25–27].

This was the marching order for Israel. God called them ‘armies’ as they set forward. The true son of Judah, Jesus Christ, led the preparation. Israel had a mission towards the Promised Land. The Lord was in her midst and guiding them. All Israel needed to do was to obey every command of God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 24**  
**MATTHEW 24**

**THOUGHT**

**When God commanded Israel to break camp and set out for the Promised Land, they obeyed immediately. So it must be with us. As we march to the Promised Land of God, we must obey God.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 10:29–32***LESSON****An invitation to join  
God's people****VERSE 29**

*And Moses said unto  
Hobab, the son of Raguel  
the Midianite, Moses' father  
in law, We are journeying  
unto the place of which the  
LORD said, I will give it you:  
come thou with us, and we  
will do thee good: for the  
LORD hath spoken good  
concerning Israel.*

**B**efore embarking on the journey towards the Promised Land, Moses invited his father-in-law to join him. Here is a good example of one who remembers his kinfolks and does not miss the chance to reach out to them.

Although he may not know what lies ahead of him throughout the journey, Moses is confident that he and his people will be able to overcome any obstacles. His confidence lies in the promise that the Lord has given him. Moses knew what the Lord had promised. He will fulfil it for His name's sake.

And it is with this confidence that Moses is able to, in turn, promise his father-in-law that the Lord's goodness will also be showered upon him. Alas, his father-in-law refused the invitation [v. 30]. However, Moses did not give up, and entreated him a second time, with another reason, that his father-in-law can be Moses' eyes, as he knows the land and the wilderness well. Moses reminded him again that there would be rewards for him if he joined him.

How often have we attempted to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with our loved ones and friends, only to be met with much resistance. Learn a few lessons from Moses in today's passage. Firstly, God promises to bless, and there are great blessings in following Christ. Secondly, be not easily discouraged, but be persistent. Finally, God has a job for us: just as Hobab can be the eyes for Moses, our talents can be used for the good of God's work here on earth.

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
JEREMIAH 25  
MATTHEW 25**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, lead me to a soul that needs Your saving  
grace today.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 10:33–36***LESSON****Our great Leader and Guide****VERSE 33**

*And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.*

**T**ruly the Lord has blessed the Israelites in a special way. They are His chosen people and He has manifested Himself to them in a unique way as seen in today's passage. The Israelites were about to embark on an arduous journey through the wilderness. No one knew what danger lies ahead but they were assured of God's presence with them. They had the Ark of the Covenant, which went before them. They are confident that God will lead them to a secure resting place at the end of the day's journey.

The cloud of the Lord also led them by day, every day. At the start of every morning, Moses would say "Rise up, Lord" and at the end of the day, he would say, "Return, O Lord". That was how close a relationship Moses had with the Lord, Whom he could call upon the name of the Lord every day. It was also for the benefit of the people that Moses led, to show them daily Who was leading them on their journey.

It also indicates to the nations around them, that the Lord is their Leader, even though they may be a small group of people.

Today, we also have the same Guide to lead us every day. Our Lord Jesus has promised that He will be with us always, and that is the comfort of every believer. Let us, like Moses, look to the Lord, and call upon His name daily, at the start of each day, until the end of the day before we rest.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 26**  
**MATTHEW 26**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, be Thou my guide throughout this day, and every day, for the rest of my life.**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Numbers 11:1–3*

**LESSON**  
**Forgiveness and  
restoration**

**VERSE 2**

*And the people cried unto  
Moses; and when Moses  
prayed unto the LORD, the  
fire was quenched.*

The Israelites started to complain, and it caused the Lord to be displeased and His fire was kindled against them. The Lord's fire burned and consumed them. It was not clear at this juncture what the nature of the complaint was, but nevertheless, let us learn a lesson from today's reading: it displeases God if we become dissatisfied with our lot in life.

As Christians and children of God, we should trust that in everything, the LORD has the best for us in mind [Romans 8:28]. If we complain, we are saying that God is not in control and does not love us.

The people cried unto Moses, and Moses in turn prayed to the Lord, and the fire was quenched. Truly, Moses walked close to God and he had faith that the Lord would hear his prayers and would answer them. Here Moses exercised his office as a priest, and interceded for the people. The Lord heard Moses' prayers and His anger against the Israelites was quenched. Indeed the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much [James 5:16b].

Let us take heed of the lessons learned through today's reading. Godliness with contentment is great gain. Therefore, let us rejoice and praise God in whatever circumstances that God has placed us in, because we trust that we are safely kept in His love and care for us. If, and when, we do fail, let us quickly return to Him, for forgiveness and restoration. Then let us re-consecrate our life to serve Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 27**  
**MATTHEW 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***Numbers 11:4–9***LESSON****The lust of the flesh****VERSE 5**

*We remember the fish,  
which we did eat in Egypt  
freely; the cucumbers, and  
the melons, and the leeks,  
and the onions, and the  
garlick.*

**D**uring the journey through the wilderness, the children of Israel began to lust after the pleasures that they had in Egypt. Though they were slaves, they had enjoyed the fish, the cucumbers, the melons, leeks, onions and garlic; the recipe that was varied in taste, pleasant to the eyes, and fulfilling to the bellies.

In comparison, the manna seemed plain, and the taste was not as varied, even though it served its purpose, which was to fill their bellies and sustained them throughout their wilderness journey. In comparison, their souls seemed to have been dried up of all the pleasures of Egypt.

In a similar fashion, we who were once in and of this world, have enjoyed the multitudes of pleasures that this world has to offer. Looking at the menus of this life, from the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the various forms of entertainment and especially nowadays, the Internet, it is easy for a Christian to feel that their lives are also dried up without these.

Let us now awaken our souls from these distractions of the world, and see the reality of this sinful fallen world. The troubles and cares of this life weary our souls, and oftentimes, we turn to temporal pleasures that do not last. Let us return to God, and seek those things that have eternal values in His eyes. Only God can fill our souls with the lasting peace and rest that we really need. Let us find fulfilment in our service for the Lord.

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
JEREMIAH 28  
MATTHEW 28**

**MEDITATION**

**Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. – Matthew 11:28**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 11:10–30***LESSON****Bearing one another's burdens****VERSE 25**

*And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.*

Moses was a great leader and he had successfully led the Israelites out of Egypt. Even so, Moses felt keenly the responsibility of leadership, and the burden of leading all these people began to weigh down on him. He is human after all, and is prone to discouragement from the circumstances surrounding him. He poured out his heart before the LORD, and even entreated the Lord to end his life early. However, the Lord had better plans for Moses. He showed Moses how his burden could be borne by the elders of the Israelites. The Lord took the spirit that He laid upon Moses and gave it to the elders chosen by Moses.

In this life, we are burdened with various cares of this world. At times, like Moses, we also wish that the Lord would take us home early. Although we may not be leading hundreds of thousands of footmen like Moses, we are yet burdened with many cares: there are bills to pay monthly, deadlines at work, chores to do at home, examinations and studies, and burdens of family members.

Let us not forget that all these are circumstances that the Lord has placed us in, and that He has a purpose for all these experiences. Take time each day to commune with the Lord, read God's Word, and pray. Cast also all your cares upon Jesus, and wait upon Him. He has never failed us and we can testify from our past experiences.

Let us cling onto Him yet again, and He will see us through all the trials of this life.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JEREMIAH 29**  
**MARK I**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, guide me and comfort me through the trials of this life.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 11:31–35***LESSON****Lust, sin and death****VERSE 33**

*And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague.*

The Lord had promised to give the Israelites flesh to eat [Numbers 11:18], and now He fulfils that promise by sending quails from the sea. The amount was so great that “he that gathered the least gathered ten homers” or ten ass-loads [Matthew Henry]. The harvest continued for more than a day, so much so that the flesh gathered was sufficient for a month. However, the bounty came with a deadly price: while the flesh was yet in the mouth of those who lusted after them, the LORD smote them with a very great plague, and these people died.

The people died not because they ate the flesh that the Lord had blessed them with, but rather, they died because they had lusted after the flesh: “They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat was yet in their mouths, The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel” [Psalm 78:30–31]. Their hearts were not right with God.

As we live in this world, various temptations and lusts abound. Let us be wary and keep ourselves away from these. Search your hearts and be discerning between needs and lusts. The Lord may grant us our desires, but if they become objects of our lust, then let us be warned that if we cling to lust, then the end of it is death.

Let us examine our lives and ask only for those that we need. Abandon the lusts of this world, and set our hearts aright with God.

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
JEREMIAH 30–31  
MARK 2**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, give me this day meat sufficient for my needs.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 12:1–9***LESSON****Meekness****VERSE 2**

*And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it.*

As if the murmurs from the people were not enough, Moses had to face challenges even from within his own family. His sister Miriam and brother Aaron were not happy with his marrying an Ethiopian, and from thereon, were questioning whether he was the only one whom God had appointed as His spokesman to His people. We do not know much about this Ethiopian woman but apparently this marriage had made the siblings doubt Moses' judgement and thus authority as the only messenger of God. The fact that they are family probably played a part, too, as familiarity so often breeds contempt.

However, from the flow of this text, the main reason why the siblings were so audacious was because of the very character of Moses. Verse 3 tells us that Moses was the meekest man upon the face of the earth. How could a man so lowly and mild possibly protest against a challenge from his siblings who knew him too well? The siblings might be thinking that God had probably chosen someone at random to speak for Him. In that case, they could very well be the spokespeople as well.

Not surprisingly, Moses did not protest. However, God spoke up for him. How about that? God singled the three out and gave Miriam and Aaron a chiding. A punishment is at hand and we shall read more about this tomorrow.

When challenged by others, are you quick in defending yourself? Take a lesson from meek Moses. God hears you.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JEREMIAH 32**  
**MARK 3**

**THOUGHT**

**Meekness is choosing not to assert your rights although you have every right to do so.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 12:10–16***LESSON****Spitting in her face****VERSE 14**

*And the LORD said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again.*

The punishment for the siblings' challenge against God's appointed leader was humiliating. Miriam was struck with leprosy for seven days. This is harsh in the sense that Miriam, when leprous, would be considered unclean and shunned by everyone.

Yet this chiding was the most apt for her. For her to question Moses' authority, she must have been very confident of herself. She was probably enjoying high esteem among the people then. Her popularity must have caused her to think she could replace her meek brother Moses as the leader of God's people. To this, God gave her a wake-up call. Once God departed from the tabernacle, Miriam was struck with a disease that would make her lose all her esteem and naturally, her supporters. This would cause her to think again. Man may put you high up on a pedestal, but God can bring you down instantaneously and reduce you to someone whom man shuns. So much for the esteem of man.

The reason why Miriam was the only one punished was probably because she had failed to serve as a good example for her younger brother, Aaron. In any case, the message God intended to deliver had definitely left a lasting impression on Aaron as well [v. 10].

In this episode, we also see the graciousness of Moses as he interceded for his sibling [v. 13]. Anyway, God only intended for Miriam to learn a lesson. This 'spit on her face' will certainly make her remember who she was in front of an all-wise God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 33**  
**MARK 4**

**PRAYER**

**Father, save me from myself lest I fall into pride and think of myself better than what I truly am.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Numbers 13:1–25*

**LESSON**

**Finally!**

**VERSE 2**

*Send thou men, that they  
may search the land of  
Canaan, which I give unto  
the children of Israel: of  
every tribe of their fathers  
shall ye send a man, every  
one a ruler among them.*

The children of God had reasons to celebrate. They had persevered in their journey to the Promised Land. Though they did murmur and God did chastise them along the way, God had been faithful to His promises. Through numerous miracles and the leadership of His chosen servant, they were finally at the doors of the land of milk and honey.

As all wise leaders would do, Moses then sent a few men to spy out the land. This should not be seen as a lack of faith. Although we trust in God to provide, man should do his due diligence to tread carefully in this world, especially when one is responsible for the lives of so many men, women and children.

As such, one man from each tribe was chosen to spy out the land, the selection of which the Book of Numbers recorded for us at length. God has promised the land to the 12 tribes and at this significant juncture, it is just natural that each tribe should present a representative.

And the spies did find the wonderful produce of the land: grapes, together with pomegranates and figs. This is indeed a blessed land! If the Israelites had entered the land, manna would cease and these would be the foretaste of the fruits they would enjoy from now onwards. Moses, together with all the Israelites who crossed the Red Sea would step into the Promised Land and claim the inheritance God has left for them. The history of Israel would have been very different.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 34**  
**MARK 5**

**THOUGHT**

**Alas! How many souls have seen yet forsook the Promised Land!**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 13:26–33***LESSON****Nevertheless and but****VERSE 31**

*But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.*

All seemed ready for the Israelites to claim the Promised Land. The spies had returned from Kadesh with the fruit of the land. The initial assessment seemed good. When asked of what they saw, the spies confessed, “surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it” [v. 27]. This is exciting indeed.

However, notice how verse 28 starts with ‘Nevertheless.’ The people there were strong and the walls of their cities were very great. There were so many of them: Amalekites, Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Canaanites, and also the giants of Anak.

There was great unrest and Caleb tried to still the crowd, “God has promised so we should go up at once and conquer it.” Caleb saw clearly that they were “well able to overcome it” with God on their side. Yet, notice how verse 31 starts with ‘But.’ “We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.” Ten of the 12 spies presented an unfavourable report, “There is no way we can defeat the people there—compared to those giants, we are like grasshoppers.”

What did Caleb (and Joshua) see that the other 10 spies failed to notice? What made Caleb so confident that they, the grasshoppers, would surely overcome the giants of Canaan? What is your Canaan in life? What is stopping you from living a victorious Christian life? In God’s strength, learn to see beyond the giants of your challenges.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 35**  
**MARK 6**

**PRAYER**

**Father, open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth Thou hast for me; place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 14:1–10***LESSON****Blind****VERSE 4**

*And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.*

**D**espite the call of Joshua and Caleb [v. 7] to go into the Promised Land, the Israelites heeded the warnings of the 10 spies. Having come so far only to be denied an entrance into a permanent place of dwelling, they cried the whole night and murmured against their God-appointed leaders. Why would God bring us all the way here only to die at the hands of our enemies in the wilderness [v. 2–3]? They actually wanted to select another leader to bring them back to the bondage in Egypt [v. 4].

The two spies who could see God's wonderful plan for them besought the people to be trusting. If it is God's will, surely He will provide. Rebel not against the Lord. Neither should we be afraid, for the Lord is with us.

However, all that encouragement fell on deaf ears. The people were so intimidated by their challenge ahead that they saw Joshua and Caleb's advice as foolish ideas that might lead them to their death. Their fear led to anger and instead of directing their courage to face their common enemies, they threw their frustration on the two spies, hurling stones at them.

Who could be blinder than those people? This reminds us of the senseless mob that stoned Stephen and the confused crowd that chose Barabbas over Jesus. Salvation is in front of them and yet they chose not to believe. And as if in a bid to be correct, they found blind strength in a blind crowd to kill the bearer of light and truth.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 36**  
**MARK 7**

**QUESTION**

**Who would you choose to believe if you were one of the Israelites then?**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 14:11–39***LESSON****For our admonition****VERSE 33**

*And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness.*

**I**t was when the Israelites started stoning the faithful ones that the Lord appeared in the tabernacle before them. The stubbornness and faithlessness of the people had provoked the wrath of God, to the extent that He had wanted to send a pestilence to kill all of them, and raise another nation that is mightier [v. 12], if not for the intercession of Moses.

The Israelites were thus spared an instant death. Instead, the longsuffering God had passed the blessings meant for those people to their children. That present generation would not get to enter the Promised Land. Except for Joshua and Caleb, all of them would die wandering in the wilderness. When forty years were up and the last of that generation was dead, their children would get to enter Canaan.

Though a sad outcome, it was a just one. The reason why those people were rejected was because they had doubted God despite witnessing His signs and wonders. They had seen God's glory and miracles (crossing of the Red Sea, pillars of cloud and fire, the provision of manna, etc.) and yet remained faithless.

“But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness ... Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” [1 Corinthians 10:5, 11–12]. May the Lord help us to be faithful.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 37**  
**MARK 8**

**REMINDER**

**Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**  
– **Philippians 3:13–14**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 14:40–45***LESSON****Too late****VERSE 42**

*Go not up, for the LORD  
is not among you; that ye  
be not smitten before your  
enemies.*

When Moses told the people about God's judgement against them, they mourned greatly. Some were sorry for their sins. More were lamenting for their loss. They rose up early in the morning, mustered all courage, went up a mountain, and proclaimed their wish to go into the land.

However, God's decision was final. The time for them to enter Canaan had come and passed. They were offered a victorious entry into the Promised Land but they had doubted and refused to believe. Now any attempt to take the land would cost them their lives. The reason was simple. The Lord was not with them any more. With the Lord as their banner, they could accomplish anything; without the Lord as their vanguard, they could do nothing.

Again (and ironically, considering their initial unwillingness to go into the land), they refused to heed Moses' advice. They went ahead without the blessings of the Lord and Moses. They were totally defeated.

Just like the Israelites who first refused to rid Canaan of their enemies, we often hold on to our sins and are reluctant to overcome them. Our depraved nature is such that we want to even go back to the bondage of our past sins. Do we need to see God with our eyes and hear His judgement on us with our ears before we are willing to repent of our sins? More importantly, would it be too late by then? Our Lord Jesus is coming again. What if it were today?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 38**  
**MARK 9**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, I don't want to wander in the wilderness of sin anymore, help me enter into Your promised land of peace and rest before it is too late.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Numbers 15:1–16*

**LESSON**

**Be equipped with best preparation**

**VERSE 3**

*And will make an offering by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, or a sacrifice in performing a vow, or in a freewill offering, or in your solemn feasts, to make a sweet savour unto the LORD, of the herd, or of the flock.*

God spoke directly to Moses on the details of the offerings to Him. The content for each item for sacrifice and the reason was clearly explained. The quantity was specified too. The people need to put in effort diligently in preparing for the offerings, and to acquire all the needed stuff.

This process would force the people to think about their sins and reflect upon God's grace in anticipation of forgiveness. Though it seems like a physical exercise, it is also a spiritual one. When we prepare our tithes and offerings each week, we too need think on the spiritual implication. Tithing is not just simply a physical action.

Thank God that our sins are paid for through the blood of Jesus. His sacrifice is enough and the offering is completely accepted by God. For this reason, today we do not need to prepare all these lambs, flour and wine. We do not need to pay for our sacrifice but it is not free, in that it cost the life and blood of Jesus.

For this reason, we should come to God in gratitude with our offerings which include a proportion of not only our money but also our talent and time. Our service must be well thought of, with God as the leader and centre of our plan. Our first step is to pray and let God take control. Next we have to be trained. We need training in whatever capacity that we serve just like any other secular jobs. Our time should be prioritised so that our service for God comes first.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 39**  
**MARK 10**

**THOUGHT**

**Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. – 1 Corinthians 10:31**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Numbers 15:17–21*

**LESSON**

**Giving God your best**

**VERSE 20**

*Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough for an heave offering: as ye do the heave offering of the threshingfloor, so shall ye heave it.*

We are to give of our best. God has given us an opportunity to return our gratitude and it is as not a form of tax which some in the world may think of. What and how have your offerings been? The Bible instructs us to apportion ten percent of our earnings to be given as tithes.

Often, when we have just started work, this seems manageable. However, as time goes, our commitment increases. Our tithes may seem more in absolute terms. We should indeed thank God for the increase. We have to first set aside God's portion for our tithes. Giving to the Lord is not a burden but a privilege. Consider this: we keep the larger portion (90 percent) for ourselves. This is more than a fair deal. God owns everything including our souls and bodies. The church has been running long before us and will continue to do so if the Lord tarries long after we are no longer on this earth.

We have to give from our hearts with love expressing our gratitude for His blessings. Our earnings will be reduced to zero when our health and mental stability deteriorate.

Money alone is not what the Lord wants from us. We are to serve Him with our time and talents. Serving when there's 'free time' is not good enough. We are to set aside our time schedule so that God's work takes priority. We should excel in our work for the Lord as we have done in the secular world.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 40**  
**MARK 11**

**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***Numbers 15:22–31***LESSON****Sin offering****VERSE 28**

*And the priest shall make  
an atonement for the soul  
that sinneth ignorantly,  
when he sinneth by  
ignorance before the LORD,  
to make an atonement for  
him; and it shall be forgiven  
him.*

The Lord is fair in that He speaks clearly, and understands that we often times sin out of ignorance. We try to be obedient but inevitably we would fall. However, God has prescribed a way out so that we can be forgiven regardless if we have sinned out of ignorance. The offering is clearly spelt out and the way to offer is very specific.

The priest (who is a sinner himself) has to perform the atonement for the sinner. This process of offering has to be done continuously as we continually fall into sin. There would be endless practice of offering to the Lord. In preparing and in observing the process of the offering, the sinner and the priest are reminded that they ought to keep God's law all the time. They also would need to reflect upon their sinful deeds and to repent.

God knows our difficulty and He knows we would be busy thinking of our offerings when we sin. When would this stop? It can only stop when we die (at which time we cannot sin anymore). Would this be tiring and occupy a large part of our time? Yet there is no way out for God to forgive us.

By His grace, our Lord Jesus died for us. His offering for our sins is final and after His death, no other offering is required. All sinners will be forgiven when they accept Jesus as their Saviour. However, the believer ought to remember that this salvation plan costs the life of Jesus. He loves us so much that He is willing to die for us.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 41**  
**MARK 12**

**THOUGHT**

**Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. – Romans 5:20**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Numbers 15:32–36*

**LESSON**

**Obedience**

**VERSE 32**

*And while the children  
of Israel were in the  
wilderness, they found a  
man that gathered sticks  
upon the sabbath day.*

The Lord has just finished giving His warning: “Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him” [v. 31] Yet immediately, there was a man who disobeyed. God instructed Moses to bring that man into the camp to be stoned to death. This may sound unfair. Someone killed for gathering sticks on a Sabbath day?

Yes, if you look from God’s perspective it appears to be unfair. If He were fair all of us would be dead (including the writer of this article). We all have sinned. This man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath was in clear defiance of God’s commandment which was given just a short while ago.

In fact, the punishment is not uncommon in the Bible. We see other occurrences of immediate death judgement in God’s Word. See for examples, the cases of Achan [Joshua 7]; Uzzah [2 Samuel 6]; Ananias and Sapphira [Acts 5].

God could have struck any one of us dead immediately when we sin. It is only by His grace that He does not and that He gives us time to reflect and to repent. Do not take God’s kindness as His weakness. He could still cause immediate judgement if He chooses to. God did not give the angels another chance but He gave man many chances to repent. Thank God for His grace and mercy. Obey God’s Word at all times.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 42**  
**MARK 13**

**THOUGHT**

**For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgement. – 2 Peter 2:4**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Numbers 15:37–41*

**LESSON**

**Remembrance in  
gratitude**

**VERSE 40**

*That ye may remember,  
and do all my  
commandments, and be  
holy unto your God.*

**D**ue to their forgetfulness of God's commandments, the people are to sew on fringes on their clothing. They would be reminded of God's Word each time they looked at those fringes.

Today, some people would wear a cross to remind themselves. However, the cross has also been used commonly as fashion apparel. It is the heart that matters. We can put on an outward show to fool everyone including ourselves but God knows as He looks at our hearts. We soon take any physical reminder for granted and forget what the purpose is.

Thank God that one thing for sure is that regardless how far we stray from God, He has never departed from our presence. By the grace of God, we have the Holy Spirit Who lives in our hearts. He prompts us when we are about to sin. In order to listen to His voice we have to draw near to Him through constant fellowship with much prayer and reading of God's Word. It is better that we do not sin than to sin and ask for forgiveness after having fallen.

The Israelites are to remember that God is the One Who brought them out of the bondage of Egypt. Similarly before we receive our salvation, we were slaves to sin. We were superstitious and our belief was based on fear. Now God has set us free. We worship God out of love, gratitude and reverence; not out of fear or the unknown. Thank God for His grace.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 43**  
**MARK 14**

**THOUGHT**

**But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. – Romans 6:22**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 16:1–35***LESSON****Faithful under reproach****VERSE 2**

*And they rose up before  
Moses, with certain of  
the children of Israel, two  
hundred and fifty princes  
of the assembly, famous in  
the congregation, men of  
renown.*

The Lord had given Korah and his followers special places of authority. Korah was in charge of the Holy of holies and the Ark. But he was not content with what the Lord had called him. He questioned the Lord's will. He and his followers thought they could dictate the will of God. He accused Moses of pride and exclusionary leadership. They rebelled against God's instituted authority in Moses and Aaron.

God is sovereign and we cannot thwart or deny His plan. Korah and his followers had decided to set policy themselves, and in doing so, made themselves enemies of God.

Moses was not intimidated; he took the matter to the Lord and let Him be the Judge. The same attitude should be among God's people today. They should stay away from divisive, argumentative and contentious people in the body of Christ. You do not want to be close to them if God is dealing with them. A divisive, contentious man will influence you, and you do not want to be consumed in his sins.

The message here is this: We are responsible for what is in our censer. We are responsible for the spirit in which we approach God. God does not accept people that approach Him in a way that He has not prescribed. Like completing a dot-to-dot in a children's activity book, we have to go step by step doing what God has asked of us instead of lining up our 250's to move on to something else.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 44**  
**MARK 15**

**THOUGHT**

**But godliness with contentment is great gain. – 1 Timothy 6:6.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 16:36–40***LESSON****That others may fear****VERSE 38**

*The censers of these sinners  
against their own souls,  
let them make them broad  
plates for a covering of the  
altar: for they offered them  
before the LORD, therefore  
they are hallowed: and they  
shall be a sign unto the  
children of Israel.*

After swallowing up the rebels of Korah in the earth and then consuming them with fire, the Lord instructed Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, through Moses, about the censers these sinners used for offering incense. These censers were not to be used again. Together with the coals on them for kindling the incense, these censers should not be used to offer anything before the Lord any more.

Yet, on the other hand, they could neither fittingly be employed for common purposes. The censers therefore had to be beaten into plates for the altar; the coals were to be cast out and scattered far away, as a token of the rejection of the services of the rebels. The making of the censers into brass plates would have been a great visual reminder to all worshipers coming to the altar that the sin of rebellion will be severely judged by God, and that, a vessel useless for God is also useless for everything else.

The rebellion of Korah and his associates demonstrated the consequences of usurping the authority of God. Their wickedness is obvious, but we can easily overlook the same attitudes in our own hearts. Christ is our High Priest.

Do we maintain a spirit of thankful humility for His work on our behalf? Do we entertain thoughts of achieving holiness by our own good works? Do we relish the privilege to serve Him? Do we seize control of your life, trusting in your own wisdom? We should humbly offer ourselves, and all that we have, before the Lord.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 45–46**  
**MARK 16**

**THOUGHT****Open rebuke for sin will keep others away from it.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 16:41–50***LESSON****The beauty of  
intercession****VERSE 46**

*And Moses said unto  
Aaron, Take a censer, and  
put fire therein from off the  
altar, and put on incense,  
and go quickly unto the  
congregation, and make  
an atonement for them:  
for there is wrath gone out  
from the LORD; the plague  
is begun.*

It appears that Aaron is now going to take that same censer he used previously in the contest against Korah, to offer up incense to God. Offering incense indicates that prayer is being made, for offering itself is communication with God. As such, it is a serious matter. And what difference this one little censer could make compared to what devastation that 250 did in the wrong hands.

Today, prayers are reduced to nothing more than memorised words and rituals. The damage that people can do when they play-act their 'religion' is devastating. Not only are their utterances useless, they can even be an abomination in the sight of God.

It is not so with real prayer that comes from the heart. When you see trouble coming, pray. When you are out of trouble, give thanks. This sounds obvious, but many a time the last thing we think about when we are in trouble is to pray. The more so when we are happy and complacent when we are enjoying the good things in life. We must learn to take things to the Lord in prayer in everything we do every day.

Israel was then in great trouble. The plague was spreading among the people and they began to fall in waves. Aaron rushed out with his incense and stood in front of the wave of death. This offering is the physical representation of the spiritual exercise of prayer. It has a beautiful fragrance. It ascended up into heaven. There are dying people out there that need life in Jesus, facing God's judgement. Take out your incense now.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JEREMIAH 47**  
**LUKE 1:1–38**

**THOUGHT**

**The only thing we come armed with is prayer.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 17***LESSON****Your spiritual condition****VERSE 2**

*Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod according to the house of their fathers, of all their princes according to the house of their fathers twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod.*

The Hebrew word for 'rod' is also translated 'tribe'. The idea is that a tribe is a 'branch' of the nation's family tree. And so, appropriately, each tribe is to provide its own 'rod' or 'branch' to place before the Lord to see whose will sprout. It is important that God actually asked each of the tribes to provide their own rods. They could not go back to Moses and Aaron later and say that they had given them bad rods, or that they had somehow rigged a trick.

After witnessing miracle after miracle, and experiencing the presence of God, the different rods of Israel still complained and rebelled against their God-appointed leaders. But God, having demonstrated more than sufficient evidence to the murmuring Jews, would no longer regard their seeming grievances. Indeed, He would judge them for their lack of faith and patience.

It is a hard thing to hear from someone who is unhappy about you and the things you do. We can thus imagine the troubles Aaron and Moses were going through. But if God is truly leading you, the bottom line is that they are not grumbling at you, but at God. If God is on your side, do not fear the words of man. Take your stand and do the things that are right in God's eyes.

At the same time, we need to be careful not to find ourselves complaining against God. Has God guided and protected you all this while? Has He blessed you with all you need? How do you know that God is not controlling whatever situation you are unhappy about?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**JEREMIAH 48**  
**LUKE 1:39-80**

**THOUGHT**

**It is not wrong to complain to God, it is wrong to complain about God.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 18:1–24***LESSON****Priestly service****VERSE 7**

*Therefore thou and thy sons  
with thee shall keep your  
priest's office for every thing  
of the altar, and within the  
vail; and ye shall serve:  
I have given your priest's  
office unto you as a service  
of gift: and the stranger that  
cometh nigh shall be put to  
death.*

God came to Aaron to remind him of the burden that had been laid upon him: the duty required from him as a priest. He saw reasons not to be proud of his being preferred, and received the honour of his office with reverence and holy trembling. When considered how great the charge committed to him was, and how hard it would be for him to give a good account of it, he saw the gravity of the responsibility. Aaron's position as priest was a precious gift from God to him.

As a gift, it was not something Aaron had earned or worked hard to attain. Spiritual gifts are not abilities that a person is naturally endowed with; neither are they abilities that a person acquires from hard work. They are abilities that are supernaturally given to him or her from God. You can take no credit for the spiritual gifts God has given you. God takes your particular set of gifts and as you use them, form His ministry.

All Christians are priests—to offer sacrifices, alms and especially prayers to make God known to men. Our priesthood is a love gift from God. We should thus serve Him dutifully, diligently and cheerfully. And our priesthood is a love gift to God—to be done joyfully, giving ourselves back to Him.

Are you aware of your role in the priesthood? Do you feel privileged to have the opportunity to offer spiritual sacrifices and to proclaim the gospel by which the unsaved can be drawn near to God? Rejoice. This is no small task and there is no greater honour.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JEREMIAH 49****LUKE 2****THOUGHT****Giving God our best, not the rest.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 18:25–32***LESSON****Much is given, much is required****VERSE 26**

*Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe.*

Everyone needs to learn the blessings of giving. We are in a money-paranoid world. We have heard of people out to cheat or even fleece people, that we become wary of any talk about giving, especially money. But the fact is that if we have not learnt how to freely give of what God has given us, we are missing out on a wealth of spiritual blessings.

“He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully” [2 Corinthians 9:6]. Not that you will necessarily reap financial rewards for giving, but God will surely make grace abound to you, and take care of your needs. The Levites’ income was just as valid as that of the labourer. Yet as long as they were faithful to give a tenth back to the Lord, God will continue to use their brethren to provide for their needs.

We all need to learn how to be givers, because God is the ultimate Giver. If our question is, “How little can I give and still be pleasing to God?”, our heart is not in the right place at all. What is your best talent and choicest asset? Have you given your all cheerfully & heartily to the Lord? How much have you been blessed by God, be it spiritually, financially, and materially? How much of it have you used to further His Kingdom? How much of it have you shared with others? How much have you given away?

Consider John Wesley’s principle: “Gain all you can, save all you can, and give all you can.”

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
JEREMIAH 50  
LUKE 3**

**THOUGHT**

**Financial management is a spiritual issue, not just a monetary one. – Luke 16:11**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 19***LESSON****Purifying the unclean****VERSE 2**

*This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke.*

The rite of purification is listed in detail in this chapter. It is specifically mentioned here because of what happened concerning Korah in Numbers 16. The burnt ashes of a female cow [v. 1–10] are used to purify the unclean defiled by sin and death [v. 11–22]. Thus, during their wilderness wanderings, provision was made for the Israelites to be cleansed from their sins.

‘Red heifer’ is symbolic of the blood of Christ and His sacrifice. Furthermore, ‘without spot, wherein is no blemish’ is analogous of Christ’s perfection. The words ‘never came yoke’ speak of the symbolic freedom seen in the voluntary sacrifice of Christ. All types of defilement caused by the plague and the methods of cleansing are mentioned in this passage.

This constitution of the law is a foreshadow of the death of Christ on the cross of Calvary for the forgiveness of the sins of mankind. In God’s plan of redemption, He provided a way of escape for man’s sin through the substitutionary death of His Son. Hence, all our sins, past, present and future, have been cleansed at Calvary’s cross.

Beware the penalty of sin. God’s Word warns us that its wages is death. However, if you are still a non-believer, you can claim God’s promise of eternal life by acknowledging His Son, Jesus Christ, to be your Lord and Saviour. For believers, thank God for His enabling grace in our daily walk with the Lord. Life’s struggles will not be insurmountable with God’s divine help.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JEREMIAH 51**  
**LUKE 4**

**CHOICE**

**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***Numbers 20:1***LESSON****So near yet so far****VERSE 1**

*Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there.*

Between Numbers 19:22 and Numbers 20:1, a period of almost 38 years of the wandering of the children of Israel in the wilderness remains unrecorded. The Israelites had travelled for a very long time by now. A new generation, one after another, had arisen by that time. In this chapter, they were already in their fortieth year of wilderness wandering before entering the Promised Land. We read of Miriam being buried in Kadesh. She died on the final lap of her journey.

What a pity, we might say, that Miriam did not enter the Land of Promise. After all, she was no ordinary person. She was a prophetess. She led the women in the song of victory after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea [Exodus 15:20–21]. In fact, she was the elder sister of Aaron and Moses. If you recall, Miriam was watching by the bulrushes of River Nile when the princess of Egypt first laid eyes on baby Moses.

God was in absolute control over His chosen people. Miriam, Aaron and Moses died within a year of one another in the fortieth year of their wilderness wanderings. Except for Joshua and Caleb, those Jews who stopped short at the Promised Land the first time did not get to enter it.

Life and death are in God's sovereign control. While there is life, there is hope still. We do not know when we will breathe our last breath. Do not reject God's offer of salvation. Accept His gift of eternal life right now. Then you will not be left behind in our heavenly Promised Land.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**JEREMIAH 52**  
**LUKE 5**

**INVITATION**

**Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation – 2 Corinthians 6:2b**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 20:2–13***LESSON****Costly disobedience****VERSE 13**

*This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.*

Similar complaints, attitudes and reactions of the Israelites reflect the rebellious nature of their ancestors. The urgent need for water caused the people to rebel against Moses and Aaron. How Moses handled that situation displeased God. He did not acknowledge God's sovereign hand in it. As a result, both he and Aaron were not allowed to enter the Promised Land. Meribah, the place of strife, was so named because of the contention between Moses and the people over the lack of water.

In this incident of the lack of water, indeed the sins of the fathers were visited upon their children. Their gripe about leaving Egypt to die in the wilderness was repeated here. They were quick to pin the blame on Moses at the first sign of trouble.

"Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" shows Moses' pride and self-glory. His anger clouded his judgement. Besides calling the people rebels, he failed to acknowledge God's miraculous power in providing water for them. Moreover, Moses disobeyed God by smiting the rock twice. Yet God mercifully took care of their needs. Fetching water from the rock was proof of God's almighty power and faithful promise to His children.

As God's children, He expects absolute obedience from us. This is what an earthly parent would want, too. Moses the meek had been faithful and obedient to God all along. However, such an act of disobedience was too severe to go unpunished. Let this be a warning to us that no one is allowed to take God's glory away from Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**LAMENTATIONS I**  
**LUKE 6**

**PROMISE**

**If ye love Me, keep My commandments. – John 14:15**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 20:14–21***LESSON****On the victory side****VERSE 20**

*And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand.*

In this short passage we noticed the enmity between the Israelites and the Edomites. The king of Edom refused to allow the Jews to cut through the land of Edom as a shortcut to Canaan. Even when Moses offered to pay for its use, the answer was still the same. That flat refusal reflected the hatred of Esau for Jacob and all his descendants.

It is not surprising to read of the negative reply from the king of Edom. This can be traced back to the animosity between Jacob [Israel] and Esau [Edom], when rivalry had already occurred during the birth of the twin sons of Rebekah [Genesis 25:26]. This enmity continued on even till the present day. Fuelled by hatred, fear and jealousy, Edom, of the descendant of Esau, churlishly rejected Moses' request. Edom was even prepared to go to war against the Israelites. The unbelievers were reluctant to help God's people.

Ephesians 6 warns us of an ongoing spiritual warfare between God and Satan. As God's children, we cannot be friends with the world. Do not associate with them by participating in their worldly activities that are not honouring to God. Remember to heed the warning in James 4:4.

Though unable to use the shortcut, it is heartening to know that God protects His people. The Israelites had to take the longer route to Canaan without any retaliation of revenge. God's children must not harbour any hatred or malice towards others.

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
LAMENTATIONS 2  
LUKE 7**

**ASSURANCE**

**If God be for us, who can be against us? –  
Romans 8:31b**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 20:22–29***LESSON****Called home to glory****VERSE 25***Take Aaron and Eleazar  
his son, and bring them up  
unto mount Hor.*

Continuing safely on towards the Promised Land from Kadesh, Moses was instructed to head for Mount Hor. Only Moses and Eleazar were allowed up the mountain at the imminent death of Aaron. God was merciful in allowing Aaron to witness the transfer of power of the High Priest to his own son.

Aaron's death scene on Mount Hor depicts God's loving tenderness for His faithful servant. Indeed, "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" [Psalm 116:15]. "Aaron shall be gathered unto his people" [v. 24] is a picture of believers being united in the presence of God at the time of death. The same expression was made of Abraham earlier [Genesis 25:8].

The physical death of Aaron teaches the imperfection of the Aaronic priesthood. Though the priestly line is perpetual, the priest himself is only a mortal. The longest period of 30 days was allowed here. On the other hand, the perfection of the Priesthood of Christ is eternal, very assuring for all believers.

Death is no respecter of persons. It is an equaliser in its universality. Whoever we are, whatever our status here on earth, death levels everything. The question is, "Do you know where you are headed after death?" Do not ignore this ultimate choice of "After death, what?" Death holds no fear for believers who will enter into God's presence immediately. How ready are you to meet God your Maker face to face?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**LAMENTATIONS 3**  
**LUKE 8**

**ASSURANCE**

**We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. – 2 Corinthians 5:8**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Numbers 21:1–3*

**LESSON**  
**Utter destruction**

**VERSE 3**

*And the LORD hearkened  
to the voice of Israel,  
and delivered up the  
Canaanites; and they  
utterly destroyed them and  
their cities: and he called  
the name of the place  
Hormah.*

A commentator once named Chapter 21 of Numbers as ‘The Last March and First Campaign’. In it, we read of the final stretch in the Israelites’ 40 years of wandering. Once they got into Moab and Bashan, they would have assembled themselves east of the Jordan River.

At the same time, in the opening verses of this chapter, we also see the first of several victories the Israelites secured against the Canaanites, with the help of God, and hence their first campaign. The chapter begins, however, with the pre-emptive attack by a Canaanite king on the Israelites. King Arad was successful in this sudden assault and had taken some Israelites as prisoners. The Israelites were clearly provoked. They vowed unto the Lord, promising Him that they would utterly destroy King Arad’s cities if God would deliver the Canaanites into their hands.

And the Lord did hear them. Their conquests were successful and the Israelites lived up to their promise, destroying all the cities. As such, the place of destitute was called Hormah, which simply means ‘destruction’ or ‘devoted for destruction’.

This in turn marks the beginning of a call to totally destroy the Canaanites—a sinful people whose heinous heathen practices were an abomination in the sight of God. The consistent message to utterly cut away anything evil is apparent in the Bible. Sadly, the Israelites failed to follow through the purging in conquests to come, resulting in the Canaanites becoming a snare in the Israelites’ bid to keep holy and pure.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**LAMENTATIONS 4**  
**LUKE 9**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, help me to purge away sin and evil in my life. Keep me pure and holy in the remaining years of my sojourn on this earth.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 21:4–9***LESSON****The serpent of brass****VERSE 8**

*And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.*

The last march for the Israelites in the wilderness was not an easy task; and perhaps God's will is such that He used the inhabitants of the land to further test His people. Since the Edomites had denied them a through passage, the people of Israel had to go around the land of Edom [v. 4]. This was made worse by the fact that it was very hot and dry.

The Israelites started to murmur again, accusing Moses of bringing them out of Egypt only to die in the wilderness, and they actually expressed their loathing of the very manna that God had supplied them [v. 5]. As a result, God sent fiery serpents among the people and many died from snakebites [v. 6]. There are many speculations on what these fiery serpents are. Most believe that they are actually cobras that have bright-coloured skins; or that 'fiery' could refer to the stinging sensation of the snakebite.

Moses interceded for the people before God and God heard his prayers. He told Moses to make a brass serpent and set it upon a pole, so that anyone who looked at it with faith in Jehovah would be saved from certain death.

It is sad that the brass serpent later became a snare for God's people [2 Kings 18:4] as they foolishly worshipped God's tool for teaching instead of God Himself. God's message to the people is clear: Trust in Him and look upon Jesus for salvation. He is the One Who could save anyone from the sting of sin and death.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**LAMENTATIONS 5**  
**LUKE 10**

**THOUGHT**

**And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 21:10–20***LESSON****History in making****VERSE 14**

*Wherefore it is said in the  
book of the wars of the  
LORD, What he did in the  
Red sea, and in the brooks  
of Arnon,*

As the Israelites treaded through the wilderness, they probably did not realise that history was in the making. They would not expect their stories to be read in such detail thousands of years later by you and me. Rather, the poor people were occupied with their cravings and thirst, and probably with the aching of their legs, the heat of the day and cold in the night—the discomfort and trials in their lives.

Despite what their finite minds were thinking, God was writing biblical history by inspiring Moses through the events that came upon His people [v. 14–15]. The history of Israel bears witness to a faithful and holy God.

Yet the difference here is evident. The Word of God endures forever. One might be a great warlord who had fought great wars and secured glorious victories in history, but all of one's achievements could not endure the test of time. Instead, it is the record of God's covenant people that survived history.

Verse 17 puts things in good perspective. Nothing is more joyful than finding water in the desert. Similarly, nothing is comparable to drinking from the springs of life in the gospel of Truth. And God is indeed no respecter of people [v. 18]. When the living waters of everlasting life are found, even princes would have to dig with their sceptres and the noblemen their staves. We who have drunk of God's goodness, what kind of legacy would we leave for the generations after us?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL I**  
**LUKE II**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, grant me the grace to look upon You every day. Give me the joy and strength that could only be found in You and You alone.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 21:21–32***LESSON****The Lord provides****VERSE 29**

*Woe to thee, Moab! Thou art undone, O people of Chemosh: he hath given his sons that escaped, and his daughters, into captivity unto Sihon king of the Amorites.*

What we see in the engagement of the Israelites with the Amorites is actually in nature a combination of their encounters with the Edomites [Numbers 20:21] and the Canaanites [Numbers 21:1]. Like the Edomites, the Amorites denied Israel a through passage; and like the Canaanites, they initiated a battle with Israel. However, this time round, the Israelites won.

This victory is strategic because it opened up the area of Heshbon to the Israelites. They moved on and took all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, the capital city of Heshbon and all the villages thereof.

Israel celebrated. Heshbon used to belong to the Moabites but was captured by the Amorites. The Moabites were worshippers of Chemosh, which probably means ‘vanquisher’ or ‘master’. Little would they expect their god was not powerful enough to protect them from the Amorites. The name ‘Chemosh’ serves only to rub salt into their wounds as they grieved over their losses.

Yet it was the Israelites who had the last laugh. In conquering Heshbon, the Amorites had overextended themselves like butter spread on too much bread. This eventually led to the Israelites securing an easy victory in Heshbon. The God of Israel is the sovereign God Who could even make use of the wars between pagans to provide for His children. Even before the Israelites came, the land was already prepared for them. Sihon the king of the Amorites presented his lands, together with his conquered possessions, to Israel.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 2****LUKE 12****THOUGHT**

**Although God always thinks and acts in perfect harmony with His nature, His nature is infinitely complex. His personality is deep and rich and diverse and ultimately inexhaustible. Just when you’ve got Him figured out, He’ll surprise you (but always in a good way). – Sam Storms**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 21:33–35***LESSON****Again****VERSE 34**

*And the LORD said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.*

The last march of the Israelites had finally come to a landmark victory. The fall of Sihon king of the Amorites allowed them to secure a strategic foothold in the Transjordan area. From the east bank of river Jordan, and from the mountains of Moab's former territories, they could almost see the land that God has promised them. With this victory behind them and the Promised Land before them, Israel moved forward purposefully to take Bashan, a fruitful land of pasture famous for her oaks.

Og, king of Bashan, took them on with his army of giants and perhaps it is only natural for the Israelites to feel daunted by the sheer physical size of their enemies. But we also read of God's promise to them [v. 34,]. He told them not to be afraid for He had delivered Bashan to them, the same way He did Heshbon.

By God's grace and through His strength, the Israelites overcame their fears. It is perhaps interesting to note that the physical size of their enemies was exactly the reason why the Israelites doubted and failed to enter Canaan forty years ago [Numbers 13:33]. Now that most of the last generation had died in the wilderness, these younger ones were faced with the same predicament. Would they trust in God's promises?

They did. And the Israelites smote the giants—not only Og but also “his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land” [v. 35].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 3**  
**LUKE 13**

**THOUGHT**

**Trust in the Lord. Do not fail Him again.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 22:1–20***LESSON****Diluting of God's Word****VERSE 14**

*And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.*

The Israelites pitched in the plains of Moab. Balak, king of Moab, was greatly terrified and sent for Balaam, a diviner, to come and curse them. The elders of Moab took a reward and carried it to Balaam, who in turn inquired of the Lord, and was positively ordered not to go with them. He communicated this to the elders of Moab, and they returned to Balak with the information. Balak then sent some of his princes to Balaam with promises of great honour. Balaam consulted God again, and was permitted to go, on certain conditions.

God's commandment to Balaam was unmistakably lucid, "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed." Two negatives (enough for a confirmation), with an additional positive, is an undisputed truth and divine certainty.

However, Balaam told the princes less than what God had told him (the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you), and they related to Balak less than what Balaam had told them (Balaam refuseth to come with us). As such, when the answer came to the king of Moab, it was not the word of God but the word of man; it was simply, "Balaam refuseth to come, without ever intimating that God had forbidden him" (Ainsworth).

We live in an age where the gospel truth proclaimed is often diluted, which accounts for the superficiality and shallowness of spirituality among professed believers. It is another gospel. Ministers are charged to declare the whole counsel of God faithfully, and Christian hearers are commanded to adorn the doctrine of our Saviour in all things.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 4**  
**LUKE 14**

**THOUGHT**

**Nothing but the whole Bible makes a whole Christian. – Tozer**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 22:21–35***LESSON****Forbidden and  
forbearance of God****VERSE 32**

*And the angel of the LORD  
said unto him, Wherefore  
hast thou smitten thine ass  
these three times? Behold, I  
went out to withstand thee,  
because thy way is perverse  
before me.*

**B**alaam set off and was opposed by an angel of the Lord. The Lord miraculously opened the mouth of his ass to reprove him. Balaam saw the angel, and was in turn reproved by him. He humbled himself and offered to go back but was ordered to proceed, on the same conditions as before.

As the story unfolds, Balaam was seen attempting the impossible, endeavouring to force the hands of Providence, held as in a chain at every stage. Excited by the hope of gaining the rewards and enjoying the fame awaiting him in Moab, he was at the same time conscious of opposing the God of Israel. It was in a kind of madness that the diviner set out. He went in a mood of wilfulness, hoping and yet half doubting that his way would become clear, irritable therefore, ready to resent every hindrance until he was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with a man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet.

While God permitted Balaam to go, He became angry with him when he went with the intention of disobeying God. Balaam thus extorted from conscience, permission to go where he himself desired. Knowing it to be a wrong way, he went under the shadow of a haunting fear.

The messenger of justice (destroying angel) would have killed Balaam had not the mercy of God prevented the ass from proceeding. How often are the meanest animals, and the most trivial occurrences, instruments of the preservation of our lives, and of the salvation of our souls.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 5****LUKE 15****THOUGHT**

**Jehovah might be opening his way only to destruction. Balaam ventured too far, and could not draw back to safety. Such fears could hardly be avoided.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 22:36–41***LESSON****River of no return****VERSE 40**

*And Balak offered oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that were with him.*

The king of Moab went out to meet Balaam. He addressed him and heard Balaam's firm answer. Balak sacrificed and took Balaam to the high places of Baal so that he might see the whole of the Israelite camp.

Balak honoured Balaam by going to meet him, but chided him for his delay, still assuming that the delay was occasioned by Balaam's desire for greater rewards. Balaam explained that even though he had come, he would not be able to speak anything except that which God commanded. However, Balak did not for an instant believe him.

He proceeded to take the prophet up "into the high places of Baal". Now, Baal was one of the most detestable of pagan gods and what a place for the prophet of the true God to find himself. The sacrifice of the animals was a usual procedure for those invoking the aid of their gods. The food shared by Balaam and others afterwards was in the form of a 'fellowship meal' in the bond of paganism.

There is a point of no return in every departure from the will of God. What terror must fill the hearts of men who, launched upon an evil course, find that they have gone too far to turn back. Many a sinner would like to turn back when the fruits of his wickedness begin to appear, but there stands the angel of Jehovah, always, with the drawn sword, "Go with the men." When men make their bed with evil, God requires them to lie in it.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 6****LUKE 16****THOUGHT**

**It was so with Judas when the Lord said to him, "That thou doest, do quickly!" – John 13:27**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 23***LESSON****Balaam and the  
Balaamites****VERSE 16**

*And the LORD met Balaam,  
and put a word in his  
mouth, and said, Go again  
unto Balak, and say thus.*

**H**aving arrived at the high places of Baal, Balaam ordered Balak to build seven altars, and prepared oxen and rams for sacrifice. Balaam inquired of the Lord and received an answer, with which he returned to Balak. Balak, finding that this was a prediction of the prosperity of the Israelites, was greatly troubled. Balaam excused himself. He went to another place, where he could see only a part of Israel, and repeated his sacrifices. Balaam again consulted the Lord, returned with his answer, and again predicted the glory of Israel. Balak was angry, and Balaam again excused himself. Balak proposed another trial, took him to another place, and repeated the same sacrifices.

The most arresting element of the introductory section is in the words “God met Balaam” and “the LORD put a word in Balaam’s mouth” [v. 4–5]. Despite the unsavoury actions of this ungodly man, the Lord deigned to meet with him and to speak through him. This is utterly remarkable. We often say that God never uses an unclean vessel. On the contrary, God may use whatever vessel He wishes; the issue concerns what happens to an unclean vessel when God has finished using it for His purposes.

Balaamites, beware! We see here a surprising contrast between the covetous prophet and his sublime prophecies. This shows us that spiritual giftedness does not equal spiritual maturity.

God speaks through a donkey in the previous chapter and now He speaks through a ‘bigger donkey’. It is clearly possible to be the mouthpiece of truth and yet have neither part nor lot in it.

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
EZEKIEL 7  
LUKE 17**

**THOUGHT**

**He who desires to die the death of the righteous  
must live the life of the righteous. – Numbers  
23:10**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Numbers 24*

LESSON

**Balaam seeing Christ**

VERSE 17

*I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.*

**B**alaam, finding that God was determined to bless Israel, sought no longer for enchantments. The Spirit of God came upon him and he delivered an important prophetic parable. Balak's anger was kindled against him, and he commanded Balaam to depart to his own country. Balaam vindicated his conduct and delivered a prophecy relative to the future destruction of Moab by the Israelites, also of Edom, of the Amalekites, and of the Kenites. He predicted also the destruction of Asshur and Eber, by the naval power of Chittim, which should afterwards be also destroyed. Balaam and Balak went their separate ways.

The Spirit of God came upon him, not in his grace but in his gifts, not as a spirit of sanctification but as a spirit of prophecy. Balaam saw, in far distance of time, One who was no other than the Messiah. He saw Him, not spiritually with an eye of faith nor corporeally with his bodily eyes in his state of incarnation, but at the day of judgement. And now, indeed, he saw Him by a spirit of prophecy.

Balaam would have no nearness to Christ, or interest in Him. He would see Him at the last day, and that when He was come either into the world to save men, or to judgement.

We have heard Christ preached over the pulpit many times. We have read of Him and seen Him in the Scriptures. We have seen Him coming from the past, and coming from the future soon. What is your heart's response to Him?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 8**

**LUKE 18**

THOUGHT

**Men may have a great deal of light and knowledge in their heads, and yet not have true grace in their hearts.**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Numbers 25:1–5*

**LESSON**  
**The counsel of Balaam**

**VERSE 1**

*And Israel abode in  
 Shittim, and the people  
 began to commit whoredom  
 with the daughters of  
 Moab.*

While Israel abode in Shittim, the people committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab. They became idolaters. The anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and he commanded the ringleaders to be hanged. Moses appointed the judges to slay the transgressors.

Moses related that incident through the counsel of Balaam [Numbers 31:16]. The Midianite women caused the children of Israel to commit trespass against Jehovah in the matter of Peor. The statement is a link between Chapters 24 and 25. Balaam was a much sought-after renowned magician, who could marshal unseen forces into the battle by his incantations. He was a diviner of repute, credited with powers of blessing and cursing. He knew the only true God but loved the wages of unrighteousness and erred for reward [2 Peter 2:14–16].

He counselled the rulers of Midian to employ women of the basest sort, to seduce the men of Israel, in a deliberate plot to entangle the Israelites in heathen rites and heathen sins which would alienate from them the favour of God. The scheme was one that only the vilest craft could have conceived; and it showed us too plainly the real character of Balaam.

Christians, look out! Our foes are ever near us, around us and within us. “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
 IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 9**  
**LUKE 19**

**THOUGHT**

**Our adversary has no power against us, save through our own sins.**

## BIBLE LESSON

*Numbers 25:6–18*

### LESSON

#### **The curse of Balaam**

### VERSE 9

*And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.*

Zimri, one of the Israelite princes of the tribe of Simeon, brought a Midianitish princess named Cozbi into his tent while the people are deploring their iniquity before the Tabernacle. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, incensed by this insult to the laws and worship of God, ran after them and pierced them both with a javelin. Twenty-four thousand died of the plague, sent as a punishment for their iniquity.

The Lord granted Phinehas a covenant of peace and an everlasting priesthood. The names of the Israelite man and Midianitish woman are mentioned. God commanded the Israelites to vex and smite the Midianites, who had seduced them to the worship of Baal-peor.

Those who had not been defiled were weeping and mourning for the sins and abominations that had been committed among them before the presence of their invisible King; and for the punishment inflicted on many of them by the hand of the civil magistrate. They wept also, probably on account of the fierce anger of the Lord shown in a pestilence. The unholy matrimonial alliance of an Israelite prince and a Midianitish princess done in open defiance against the law of God aggravated the crime.

May we perceive how severe and terrible the punishment is, teaching us to beware of provoking God by fornication. As it is a monstrous thing that so great a multitude should have been infected by this foul and shameful sin, so God's fearful judgement against adulterers, fornicators and unholy matrimonial alliance, is set before us.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 10**

**LUKE 20**

### THOUGHT

**The judgement of a universal flood to destroy the ancient world has its root in this—that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. – Genesis 6:2**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Numbers 26:1–51*

**LESSON**

**Preparation for the  
march**

**VERSE 4**

*Take the sum of the people,  
from twenty years old  
and upward; as the LORD  
commanded Moses and  
the children of Israel, which  
went forth out of the land  
of Egypt.*

Some 38 years earlier, at the beginning of the Book of Numbers, while Israel was still camped at Mount Sinai, God commanded them to take a census. During those intervening years, many thousands had perished in the desert. An entire generation had passed away, and a truer and braver generation had risen.

And now, with the Promised Land in view, “in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho”, God again commanded His people to take a census. The purpose was the same: to count those able to fight on behalf of Israel. This accounting, done 38 years later, was again for military organisation.

Thirty-eight years earlier, Israel was organised and ready to go to war but the soldiers lacked the faith to trust in God. But God was about to begin a new work with this new generation. As we will learn in the Book of Joshua, this new generation did succeed eventually, with God’s help of course, to enter and conquer the land God promised to Abraham.

Each generation has each generation’s burden and responsibility. When it is our turn to fight, we have to also take stock of our resources and forge ahead. Pray for the Lord to grant us and our next generation the faith and courage to cross the Jordan into the war ahead of us. Pray that we will not be like the Israelites who felt they were grasshoppers going into battle against giants [Numbers 13:33].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 11**  
**LUKE 21**

**CHORUS**

**Joyfully enlisting, by Thy grace divine, We are on  
the Lord’s side, Saviour, we are Thine!**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Numbers 26:52–56*

**LESSON**

**Inheritance of the  
Promised Land**

**VERSE 53**

*Unto these the land shall be  
divided for an inheritance  
according to the number of  
names.*

The census had two purposes: to determine the size of the tribes for military purposes and to serve as the basis for dividing up the Promised Land. God further issued two rules for the distribution of the land. The inheritance of each tribe was to be based on the size of each tribe and the land was to be distributed by lot.

It seems that, first, lots were to be drawn for the determination of the general situation of the territory of each tribe, and then these territories were to be divided according to the number of persons in the respective tribes and families. This arrangement prevented dissatisfaction, jealousy and strife, as each tribe knew that their inheritance was appointed them by God Himself.

As believers, we can rest assured that we will receive an inheritance “incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” [1 Peter 1:4]. This glorious truth has been sealed by God once and for all: the person who truly believes and follows Jesus will live eternally with God. He will enter the promised land of heaven and serve God forever and ever.

In the meantime, as we sojourn on this earth, we must be contented and thankful for whatever the sovereign and all-wise God deems fit to bestow on us. Let us not compare and be envious of others. Let us make the best of what God gives us. Set your affections on the things above and store up treasures in heaven by serving the Lord with gratitude and joy.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 12**  
**LUKE 22**

**CHORUS**

**Lord, I would place my hand in Thine, Nor ever  
murmur nor repine; Content, whatever lot I see,  
Since ‘tis my God that leadeth me.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 26:57–65***LESSON****Numbering of the Levites****VERSE 57**

*And these are they that  
were numbered of the  
Levites after their families:  
of Gershon, the family of the  
Gershonites: of Kohath, the  
family of the Kohathites:  
of Merari, the family of the  
Merarites.*

A new census of the Levites was necessary to determine how many were available to serve in the ministry of the Lord. It was necessary to know this fact because the Levites were going to be scattered throughout the nation as ministers to the people. Forty-eight towns were going to be assigned to the Levites, a certain number within each tribe. This would put the ministers out among the people so they could better minister to them and help them in their moments of need [Numbers 35:1–8].

The minister of God is to be totally dedicated to God, totally dedicated to the call God has given him. His call is to minister to people. Oftentimes, it involves going into the missions field, far from the comfort of home and loved ones. How many of us are ready to respond to this call?

The chapter ends with a sad reminder of the judgement of God. Not a single person from the first generation of Israelites was allowed to enter the Promised Land. They had all died in the desert wilderness because of their sin and unbelief. They had all died except for Caleb and Joshua. Only these two had believed in the promises of God, that He would lead them into the Promised Land. Therefore, they had escaped the judgement of God and were to receive a glorious inheritance in the land God had promised them.

We are reminded of this sober warning from our Lord, “For many are called, but few are chosen” [Matthew 22:14].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 13****LUKE 23****CHORUS**

**Wherever He leads I'll go, Wherever He leads  
I'll go, I'll follow my Christ who loves me so,  
Wherever He leads I'll go.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 27:1–11***LESSON****The rights of women****VERSE 7**

*The daughters of  
Zelophehad speak right:  
thou shalt surely give  
them a possession of an  
inheritance among their  
father's brethren; and thou  
shalt cause the inheritance  
of their father to pass unto  
them.*

The story of Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah encapsulates the challenges that women faced and what they had to do in order to affirm their rights with dignity. During the census of the previous chapter, we read that Zelophehad had no sons, only daughters [v. 33].

As the census was concluded, God instructed Moses to divide the land “unto these” [v. 53], referring apparently to the males listed in the census. Hence, we can conclude that Zelophehad’s daughters were not counted in the census and also were not to receive any land as inheritance. If no inheritance was granted to them as heirs, then his name would cease from among his family.

Displaying great faith and courage, the daughters of Zelophehad went to Moses and made a daring proposal. “Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father” [v. 4]. Sensing the deep faith and sincerity of these women, Moses did not react, but took the matter to the Lord.

God’s response demonstrated a wonderful fact. Contrary to the popular misconception of the Bible’s teachings with respect to the role of women, the love and grace of God are as open to women as they are to men. With God there is no partiality or favouritism, no discrimination whatsoever, even though He dictates different roles for men and women in the home as well as the church.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 14****LUKE 24****MEDITATION**

**Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? –  
Genesis 18:25b.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 27:12–23***LESSON****Preparing for death****VERSE 22**

*And Moses did as the  
LORD commanded him:  
and he took Joshua, and  
set him before Eleazar the  
priest, and before all the  
congregation.*

Moses had served the Lord faithfully for many years but in a moment of weakness, he sinned and rebelled against the Lord in the wilderness of Zin. Whatever the reason, he had failed God, and the Lord could not overlook the results of this sin, though He certainly forgave Moses. Because of his failure, he would not be able to lead the children of Israel into the land of Canaan.

Moses' reaction to God's discipline reflected the man he really was. Predictably, he was disappointed but he quickly accepted the Lord's decision and turned his eyes away from himself and focused his attention once again on God's people. He was concerned primarily for Israel's welfare. He immediately asked God to appoint someone to take his place. God told him to anoint Joshua as his successor. Moses was obviously pleased, "and did as the LORD commanded him".

Even though Moses was not allowed to lead Israel into the land, God partially answered his prayer [Deuteronomy 3:24–25] and allowed His servant to at least see the land. Most comforting of all, "the God of the spirits of all flesh" [v. 16] assured Moses that he "will be gathered to his people." He would leave this earth and go to live with God eternally.

What a glorious picture this paints of a believer's death. All of us, who have decided to take up the cross and follow Jesus, can look forward, without fear, to the day when we have to walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 15**  
**JOHN 1**

**THOUGHT**

**Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. – Psalm 116:15**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Numbers 28:1–2*

**LESSON**

**Worshipping God**

**VERSE 2**

*Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering, and my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, for a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season.*

When God first called Moses at the burning bush to return to Egypt to deliver His children from bondage, He said that He wanted to bring them to the Promised Land and that they can “sacrifice to the Lord our God” [Exodus 3:18]. Repeatedly, when Moses confronted Pharaoh, he said that was what God demanded: Pharaoh was to release His people so that they could serve Him, and sacrifice unto Him. Finally, at Mount Sinai, when God gave the people the Ten Commandments, he again instructed the people: “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” [Exodus 20:24b].

Here, at the entrance to the Promised Land, to a new generation of Israelites, God now repeated His instructions for how and when they are to worship Him. If they observed these instructions, their worship would be to Him as a sweet savour.

Today, Christians worship the same God. Although our form of worship is different, the attitude must be the same. Although our offerings and sacrifices are not ‘made by fire’, we must observe to offer them according to His instructions and ‘in their due season’, if they are to be ‘a sweet savour’ unto Him.

Sadly, many of today’s Christians choose to worship God in their own way, thinking that their worship is pleasing and honouring to Him; not realising that their worldly methods only cause God’s holy name to be profaned.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 16**  
**JOHN 2**

**THOUGHT**

**But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. – John 4:23.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Numbers 28:3–8*

**LESSON**

**The daily sacrifices**

**VERSE 3**

*And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the LORD; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt offering.*

The Israelites were told to sacrifice two lambs, each a year old and without defect, one in the morning and one in the evening. These instructions for the daily worship were a symbol of Christ's sacrifice that secured atonement or reconciliation for man. They are designed to express the entire devotion of the offerer himself to the Lord.

Even though we no longer offer burnt sacrifices in our worship, they nevertheless are instructive. They should direct us how and when to worship God. We must remember Him in the morning and in the evening. He must be in our thoughts first and last. We must begin the day and end the day with Him.

Firstly, we need to consecrate ourselves daily to God. Every morning we need to devote ourselves afresh to God, to seek His accepting and sanctifying grace. Secondly, we need to make daily atonement with God. Burnt offerings are said in the Scriptures to 'make atonement' for those by whom they were offered [Leviticus 1:4, 14:20]. As our daily imperfections and sins tend to separate us from God, we daily need the reconciling influences of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Thirdly, we need to pray daily to God. This is God's commandment in the New Testament. It was also the practice of the Apostles and all the faithful servants of God.

Let us present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service [Romans 12:1]. Let us every day offer to God our morning and evening sacrifices of prayer and praise.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 17**

**JOHN 3**

**REMINDER**

**Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. – 1 Peter 2:5**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Numbers 28:9–10*

**LESSON**

**The offering on the Sabbath**

**VERSE 9**

*And on the sabbath day  
two lambs of the first year  
without spot, and two  
tenths deals of flour for a  
meat offering, mingled with  
oil, and the drink offering  
thereof.*

We often have idea that the sacrifices and offerings are made only on certain feast days. In Chapter 28, we read that the offerings are made “day by day” [v. 3]. In other words, there was daily slaughtering of animals. The difference is that on the Sabbath, the offerings were doubled, the reason being the Sabbath was specially designated by God to be above the ordinary day.

The Sabbath was a day of rest. “Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work” [Exodus 20:9–10a]. Thus the Sabbath offerings represented what Israel had gained by the rest of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath was not a day of no activity. Rather, it was designated a day for the appropriate activity—the worship of God. And God deemed it fit that the most effectual way of providing for cessation of work is to do holy work.

The double offerings on the Sabbath mean that Christians must also pay special attention to what we do on the Lord’s Day. As Christians, we must be conscientious in using the day to please God by our worship and ministry. And this means that we should not be preoccupied with what we do in the other six days that we carry them over to the Lord’s Day. The problem is that instead of the Lord’s Day casting its brightness on the other six days of the week, we often find the weekdays casting a long dark shadow on the Lord’s Day.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 18**  
**JOHN 4:1–23**

**THOUGHT**

**The weekday is the world’s day; the Lord’s Day is the Lord’s.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 28:11–15***LESSON****The beginning of months****VERSE 11**

*And in the beginnings of  
your months ye shall offer  
a burnt offering unto the  
LORD; two young bullocks,  
and one ram, seven lambs  
of the first year without  
spot;*

The new moon offering is introduced here for the first time. The new moon celebration was only mentioned in passing earlier [Numbers 10:10]. This was a nature festival, which the heathens also observed. Rather than to leave it to the devices of the people, God stipulated offerings for the new moon so that the Israelites would not follow the heathen in worshipping the moon. And it seems that the feast of the new moon would become to the month exactly what the Sabbath was to the week—a day of rest and of worship [Isaiah 66:23; Ezekiel 46:1; Amos 8:5].

There is no religious significance to the new moon other than that the regularity of its recurrence marks God's sovereign control over His creation. God "appointed the moon for seasons" [Psalm 104:19a]. This is especially important for an agricultural community, as the moon marks the different seasons. It is important for city dwellers as well because it reminds us of the season of our lives, and teaches us to be mindful of our days.

There is a second lesson. While the moon waxes and wanes, we know that it remains the same; only its appearance changes because of its position in relationship to the sun. That in a sense is a picture of our relationship with God.

The faithfulness of God is the same as the sun, a constancy that never vacillates. When we seem like the waning moon, when God's mercy seems to have dimmed in our lives, it is a reminder that perhaps we have turned away from the Divine Light. The answer, of course, is to turn back to the Light.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 19**  
**JOHN 4:24–54**

**THOUGHT**

**Time is short. "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" [John 4:35].**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 28:16–25***LESSON****The Feast of Unleavened Bread****VERSE 17**

*And in the fifteenth day  
of this month is the feast:  
seven days shall unleavened  
bread be eaten.*

The week of unleavened bread was a period for joyous commemoration of the deliverance of the children of Israel from their enslavement in Egypt. Those leaving Egypt were not allowed to finish preparing their bread. The yeast was not allowed to rise. They were told to leave Egypt at a moment's notice. The order of eviction did not come from God. He did not send the angels to escort the Israelites out, as in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah. Ironically, it came from Pharaoh; the jailor had become the liberator.

By observing this feast, the Israelites recognised that the deliverance was entirely by the act of God. The people did nothing but walk out of the prison doors when they were opened. The unleavened bread is a reminder of the sudden and utter break between the Israelites and their enemies.

For Christians, our liberty is spiritual. Our liberty comes from Christ. His death frees us from our enslavement to sin. Liberty is an inestimable blessing and the key to all blessings. Because we have liberty in Christ, we are free to serve and to worship.

We cannot rejoice too much in the spiritual liberty that Christ has achieved for us. Like the Israelites, we are also bound to remember God for His deliverance. How? Not by observing a feast one week in a year but by a daily dying to self. There can be no right appreciation of the liberty we have in Christ that does not lead us to a full consecration of ourselves to God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 20**  
**JOHN 5**

**THOUGHT**

**If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. – John 8:36**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 28:26–31***LESSON****The Day of Firstfruits****VERSE 26**

*Also in the day of the firstfruits, when ye bring a new meat offering unto the LORD, after your weeks be out, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.*

The Day of the Firstfruits was the day for bringing “a new meat offering unto the Lord” [v. 26]. This meat offering was to consist of two wave loaves made of fine flour [Leviticus 23:17]. The Day of the Firstfruits was a reminder of God’s mercies in our lives. It was an annual feast of God’s daily mercies. The Israelites were called to praise God for His mercies year after year; mercies of which they saw day by day in the provision of their daily needs.

Our Lord Jesus teaches us to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread” [Matthew 6:11]. To the city-dweller, this statement seems rather inane because we fail to see that a single grain of rice is the product of human industry and crowned with the blessing of God.

There is a second and more important lesson for the Day of Firstfruits. It is also known as the Feast of Weeks [Exodus 34:22; Deuteronomy 16:10], and celebrated in the New Testament as the Pentecost [Acts 2:1]. There is a close connection between the Passover feast and the Pentecost feast. God chose the Passover season for the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ whereby He pays the debt of sinners, delivers them from sin, and gives them new life.

And God chose Pentecost for the downpouring of the Holy Spirit. The risen Saviour gives life to all who believe in Him, and then He gives the Holy Spirit so that the new life may not be fruitless.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 21**  
**JOHN 6:1–30**

**THOUGHT**

**For if these things [spiritual graces] be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. – 2 Peter 1:8**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 29:1–6***LESSON****The Feast of Trumpets****VERSE 1**

*And in the seventh month,  
on the first day of the  
month, ye shall have an  
holy convocation; ye shall  
do no servile work: it is a  
day of blowing the trumpets  
unto you.*

The Feast of Trumpets was observed on the first day of the seventh month. It also marks the start of the civil calendar. The seventh month *Tishri* (also known as the *ethanim* in 1 Kings 8:2) coincides with our September and October. It is the most important month to the Jews because this is the season of the high holidays: Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles), and a couple other Jewish festivals. One writer correctly points out that “we may therefore consider the seventh month as being, conspicuously, a month devoted in Israel to the service of God”.

The start of a new year means that an old year has just gone by. The last feast of the year is “the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field” [Exodus 23:16b].

Like us in the twenty-first century, the end of an old year and the start of a new one is a time of joyous celebration. It is natural for a man to rejoice who has finished his year’s work. The question is how and in what we rejoice. In the Feast of Trumpets, the celebration comes in the form of a “holy convocation” [v. 1].

What a shame it will be if our rejoicing consists of nothing but eating, drinking and making merry. A Christian’s greatest joy must be in our God [Psalm 16:11], and the expression of our joy must be to praise and worship Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 22**  
**JOHN 6:31–71**

**THOUGHT**

**Every good thing that comes to us must surely give us a sense of the presence and providence of God.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 29:7–11***LESSON****The Day of Atonement****VERSE 7**

*And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein.*

The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) falls on the tenth day of the seventh month (Tishri) [Leviticus 16:29; 23:27]. The Day of Atonement is probably the most important holiday of the Jewish year because it celebrates the expiation of the nation's sins. On that day, the high priest will "make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that* ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD" (Leviticus 16:30). It is on this day—once a year—that the high priest enters the Holy of holies.

Unlike the other Jewish holidays, the Yom Kippur is not a festive event. It is a day of national mourning and repentance. This is a Sabbath day observation, which means that no work could be done [Leviticus 23:26–32]. Anyone who does not observe this Sabbath is to be cut off from his people [Leviticus 23:29].

Besides the commandment to do no work, the Day of Atonement is a day when the people are to "afflict your souls" [Leviticus 16:31; 23:27; Numbers 29:7]. This affliction includes fasting. The Day of Atonement is the only religious holiday that is marked by mourning, fasting and repentance.

In the Old Testament, the Day of Atonement was observed yearly because it foreshadowed and anticipated a greater, permanent cleansing of God's people. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" [Hebrews 10:4]. Only the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ can wash away our sins.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 23**  
**JOHN 7**

**THOUGHT**

**What can wash away my sin?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
What can make me whole again?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 29:12–40***LESSON****The Feast of Tabernacles****VERSE 12**

*And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days.*

The seventh month of the Jewish calendar begins with the Feast of Trumpets on the first day. On the tenth day, they observe the Day of Atonement. On the fifteenth day, it is the Feast of Tabernacles [Leviticus 23:34–43]. The celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles lasts for seven days. It begins with a holy convocation when no servile work is to be done [v. 12], and ends with a solemn assembly [v. 35].

During this festival, the Israelites lived in tents or booths as a reminder that God led the Israelites out of bondage from Egypt into pilgrimage through the wilderness and finally to rest in the Promised Land [Leviticus 23:43].

The Feast of Tabernacles is a picture of the pilgrim spirit of every child of God. It serves to remind us of a few things. First, every Christian is, the Psalmist says, “a stranger with [God], and a sojourner, as all my fathers were” [Psalm 39:12]. The world ought to look and sound strange to us. If the world does not, it is because we are not living as near to God as we ought.

Second, tents are not permanent dwelling places. Our home is not on earth. Do not drive your stakes too deeply into it. We are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth” [Hebrews 11:13b], and so we are to “abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” [1 Peter 2:11]. Third, tented living is good only if we know that it is not permanent. Christians are not nomads on a perpetual pilgrimage. We are children returning home to a loving Father.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 24**  
**JOHN 8**

**THOUGHT**

**The closer we are to God, the more distant we will be from the world.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 30:1–16***LESSON****Vowing unto the Lord****VERSE 2**

*If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.*

Here it can be seen that the Lord desires to govern the vows and pledges of the children of Israel [v. 1–2]. Anything that concerns the Lord and His people is of utmost importance. God is keenly interested in every affair of His people. Hence, He puts up safeguards for both children and parents in these matters, so that none would suffer unnecessarily under difficult circumstances [v. 3–8].

However, a person who makes a vow or pledge must make sure he keeps it, failing which would make him a liar before God. His broken promise would certainly profane and defile the Name of the Lord. The holy God does not tolerate such behaviour. A hypocritical approach offends the Lord. There are blessings when one approaches Him with sincerity and truthfulness, but judgement is meted out to those who come in a false and wrong way [Galatians 6:9].

God takes our words that we utter in prayers privately or publicly, seriously. Thus we have to consider how we approach Him. We are reminded: “Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few” [Ecclesiastes 5:1–2].

While God does not mince His words of promises, we too ought to exercise carefulness and sincerity in the expression of our many words when we pray.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 25**  
**JOHN 9**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord, grant that we will come before Thee with much reverence and sincerity so that Thy Name may be magnified and not be profaned.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 31:1–18***LESSON****Dealing with sin****VERSE 16**

*Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.*

The Midianites, through the advice of Balaam, had seduced and caused the destruction of some of God's people in the days of their wandering in the wilderness. Since they were unable to defeat the Israelites in battle, they devised a devious scheme by sending immoral women to tempt them. In so doing, the Israelites were seduced and misled into false worship, resulting them forsaking God.

The Midianites had to be punished for tempting the Israelites into sinning against God, and causing 21,000 Israelites to be killed in a day [Numbers 25:1–9, 17–18]. God Himself gave the command for Israel to go to war against them [v. 3–6]. He had to deal decisively with sin and sinners who were beyond repentance and thus beyond hope or salvation.

While under the leadership of Moses, the Israelites were to execute the justice of God upon these dreadful enemies, who were to be conquered during Moses' administration [v. 1–2]. With God's help, the Israelites subdued them and came back triumphantly with spoils of their conquest. However, they spared the women and this caused Moses to be wrathful. These were the very ones who tempted the Israelites and therefore they must not be spared. All potential enemies had to be completely destroyed.

We are constantly surrounded by enemies in the world who are evil, seductive and immoral. They seek to destroy our walk with God and disrupt our fellowship with Him. If we don't stand on guard against these enemies, we may well be led down the path of unrighteousness against God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 26**  
**JOHN 10**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord, make us conscious of Thy holiness and hatred for sin so that we will fear Thee and eschew evil.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 31:19–24***LESSON****Purification before the Lord****VERSE 24**

*And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp.*

Although the Israelites had engaged in battle with the Midianites in obedience to the command of God, they had nevertheless become defiled by their contact with the dead. Their hands had now been filled with the blood of the slain though the war was a just and lawful one. They were thus rendered ceremonially unclean and unfit to come near the place of worship. With this, God reminded His people of His detestation of murder and the shedding of another human blood. King David, to quote another example, was forbidden to build the house of God for the same reason [1 Chronicles 28:3].

There is a process of purification that these Israelites had to undergo as required by the law [Leviticus 15:13; Numbers 19:9–12]. This purifying ceremony was extended even to clothes, houses, tents and everything on which a dead body had lain or touched by the bloodstained hands of the Israelite warriors [v. 19–20]. This became a standing ordinance for all time [Leviticus 6:28; 11:33; 15:12].

Moreover, items recovered from the Midianites as spoils were to be purified as well [v. 21–23]. It seems that anything used by these idolaters that is now possessed by the children of Israel should be sanctified to the service of this holy nation and to the honour of their holy God.

We should never forget the holiness of God whenever we are engaged in the work of the Lord or in our coming before His presence. He demands us to worship and serve Him with clean hands and pure hearts [James 4:8].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 27**  
**JOHN 11**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord, let me come before Thee in the righteousness of Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 31:25–54***LESSON****A tribute to the Lord****VERSE 37***And the LORD's tribute of the sheep was six hundred and threescore and fifteen.*

This long passage records the division of the spoils that were plundered from the defeated enemy. The captives and cattle are divided into two equal parts [v. 26–27]. One was given to the people at large and the other portion to the combatants. These soldiers had encountered the labours and perils of war. They had justly received the larger share. From both parts, a certain deduction was taken for the sanctuary as a thank offering to God for His preservation and for victory [v. 30].

In view of a miraculous deliverance of all the fighting men, they had not suffered any casualties and not a single soldier lost his life. A deep spirit of gratitude swelled up in their hearts for God's protection [v. 48–49]. All the men of war gave back the gold articles they had acquired. Their purpose was to make atonement before God, to pay Him for the lives that would have been lost in battle [v. 50].

It ought to be noted that their giving to God was voluntary; no one commanded them to do so. Their action was spontaneous and hearty. We should never forget to acknowledge God as the giver of all our mercies. As such, we should not hesitate to give a portion of all we earn to be devoted to His worship and service.

We are not to forget that we are unworthy even of the least of God's mercies. Yet He has so freely and abundantly bestowed every good and perfect gift and grace upon us. All acknowledgements are due to our Father.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 28**  
**JOHN 12**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord, put in me a sense of deep gratitude for every mercy that I receive through Jesus Christ, Thy Son.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 32:1–27***LESSON****The snare of the world****VERSE 6**

*And Moses said unto the  
children of Gad and to the  
children of Reuben, Shall  
your brethren go to war,  
and shall ye sit here?*

By now, the country to the east of the River Jordan had fallen into the hands of the Israelites. It was a country of some of the greatest kings in ancient times. Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, had ruled supremely in that vast land until they were subdued by a lesser nation, Israel [v. 33]. The land was particularly suited for pasturage “with shady forests and copious streams”. The tribes of Reuben and Gad, who abounded in cattle, asked for an allotment as their inheritance [v. 1–5].

This request immediately had Moses enraged [v. 6–15]. Had they actually considered their fellow brethren’s interests as well? They did not seem to care for the unity and prosperity of the whole nation but solely for themselves. Though the land looked lush and luxurious, it meant that they would be cut off from the rest of the nation by the river. They would then be exposed to the attacks of their enemies. It was not surprising to know that they became the first to be led into idolatry and, as a result, they were also the first to be carried into captivity [1 Chronicles 5:25–26].

It is easy to look at the material things of life and be attracted to them at the expense of the spiritual and eternal advantages.

How foolish it was of Lot to choose Sodom for its physical richness and ignore the spiritual evils that existed in it. God destroyed this wicked city from the face of the earth [Genesis 14:12; 19:15]!

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 29**  
**JOHN 13**

**PRAYER**

**Gracious Father, keep us from the evils of the world and set our sight on the things above.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 32:28–33***LESSON****No war, no reward****VERSE 32**

*We will pass over armed  
before the LORD into the  
land of Canaan, that  
the possession of our  
inheritance on this side  
Jordan may be ours.*

The arrangement that Moses made with the two tribes as to the division of the land was well documented and witnesses were present. The terms to which he assented were announced to the public authorities. The two tribes had their desire granted on condition that they would lend their aid to their brethren in the invasion of Canaan. However, if they refused or failed to perform their promise, those possessions should be forfeited. And they would be compelled to go across the Jordan and fight like the rest of their brethren.

Evidently, they were prepared to do what they had earlier promised Moses. Going to war with their brethren would mean that they would encourage their fellow comrades and not otherwise, as suggested by Moses in these words: “And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them?” [Numbers 32:7]. Furthermore, they were determined to engage in warfare with them until the whole land is subdued. “We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance.”

No one who sits by idly and does nothing is ever endowed with blessings. There is a price to pay and work to be done if we are to have victories and be rewarded. “Let them win it and wear it, get it and take it.”

The general principle is thus: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” [Galatians 6:7].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 30**  
**JOHN 14**

**PRAYER**

**Blessed Father, teach us Thy will to perform  
and Thy work to accomplish in this our earthly  
journey.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 32:34–42***LESSON****Work before honour****VERSE 39**

*And the children of Machir  
the son of Manasseh went  
to Gilead, and took it, and  
dispossessed the Amorite  
which was in it.*

**H**ere is the first mention of the half tribe of Manasseh coming in with the other two tribes for a share. They probably had not joined them in their earlier petition but as the land was being apportioned, it proved to be too much for them. This half tribe then had a lot among them not by their request but more likely was through the conquest of this country.

Not only had the children of Machir given proof of their valour in their generation, their posterity as well as their valiant blood was still running in their veins. Machir was recognised as a stout and warlike family [Joshua 17:1]. Moreover we should note that what they did was no small feat when they actually routed the giants in that land.

In a later record, Moses recounted what they did and thus are worthy of their rewards: “And the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants” [Deuteronomy 3:13].

There are spiritual battles to be fought for Christ in this world. Rewards and honours are for those who have overcome their enemies. They are not victims but victors through Christ who fights alongside them and thus the victory is sure. We are more than conquerors as we go in the name of the Lord of hosts against the forces of darkness and Satan.

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**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
EZEKIEL 31  
JOHN 15**

**PRAYER**

**Almighty God, Thou art our fortress and buckler,  
therefore Thy children can confidently defeat our  
foes.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 33:1–49***LESSON****A diary of journeyings****VERSE 1**

*These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

God had seemingly ordered Moses to keep a diary of the journey of the Israelites from start to finish [v. 1–2]. It was to include all the remarkable occurrences along their way. It would certainly prove to be a very satisfying experience when reviewing the events that unfolded before them. It is also a helpful instruction to others when it published the Lord's dealing with them.

These travels of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land of Canaan had been a matter of great importance, especially when they were filled with the many instances of God's miraculous power, divine wisdom, and the wonders of His Providence on behalf of His people. Thus this perfect preservation of the memory of so great a work of God would evidently encourage the next generation of believers to continue to put their trust in Jehovah alone.

A careful reading of this passage shows the reader some apparent discrepancies in it. However, it ought to be noted that these records are not detailed accounts of the events as narrated in the Book of Exodus. It is probable that this itinerary comprises a list of only the 'most important' stations in their journeys.

It may be good for us to preserve in writing an account of God's providence in our lives so as to constantly remember the many mercies we have experienced and enjoyed in Him. So often our memories fail us and we soon forget how our Saviour has led us all the way.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EZEKIEL 32**  
**JOHN 16**

**PRAYER**

**Holy Father, we are grateful for Thy abundant providence in our lives as we travel in our earthly pilgrimage.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 33:50–56***LESSON****Danger of pricks and thorns****VERSE 55**

*But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.*

God issued an expressed injunction for the Israelites to exterminate the Canaanites and to completely destroy their idols. They were strictly charged not only to drive out the inhabitants of the land so that they might possess their country entirely, but they must also deface all their idolatrous pictures and images as well [v. 50–52]. This action should show God’s abhorrence and detestation against idolatry, and also to prevent His people from being tempted to worship those images.

But if they made any league with them, even for the purpose of peace or a ceasefire, these unbelieving people would soon be pricks in their eyes and thorns in their sides. They would be upon them on all occasions to ensnare and eventually rob them of their powers and blessings. And as a result, there would be chaos and mischief for them in the long run. Therefore, the real test is if they were obedient, then their inheritance would be secure; but if they disobey, they would suffer that expulsion themselves, which should have been inflicted on the inhabitants.

We must expect troubles and afflictions whenever we indulge in sin. It is well said, “If we do not drive sin out, sin will drive us out; if we be not the death of our lusts, our lusts will be the death of our souls.”

The important lesson for us is to keep all temptations to sin at the furthest possible distance from us. Otherwise, it will be ruinous to our present peace and future rewards.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 33**  
**JOHN 17**

**PRAYER**

**Holy Father, I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 34:1–29***LESSON****Possession of the  
Promised Land****VERSE 29**

*These are they whom the  
LORD commanded to divide  
the inheritance unto the  
children of Israel in the  
land of Canaan.*

In anticipation of the approaching conquest and acquisition of Canaan, the boundaries of the land were described. The breadth of the country from the Jordan to the sea was no more than 50 miles and its length from Dan to Beersheba was about 180 miles. Small as this piece of land may be, it has witnessed momentous events in the history of the world. However, this narrow strip of land is well abundantly compensated by the extraordinary fruitfulness of the soil to sustain this great nation. Doubtless, this is God's Land for God's people. This is the land of Canaan.

Actually, there was a much larger possession promised them if they had been more obedient to the command of God. It would have reached even to the river Euphrates [Deuteronomy 11:24]. During the dominion of Israel under David and Solomon, it extended far and wide [2 Chronicles 9:26]. However, for now God directed Moses to settle here with Joshua and Eleazar assisting, and the cooperation of key men chosen from several tribes.

God displayed much wisdom and skill in the division that each tribe should be so situated as to dwell together as brethren in unity, for the mutual help and comfort of one another.

May we recognise that God's way is the best way. In all His arrangements for us in our earthly lives, there will always be fairness and kindness. Hence we can rejoice to know that He makes no mistakes and we can fully put our trust in Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 34**  
**JOHN 18**

**PRAYER**

**God of our fathers, Thou has proven Thyself to be faithful and trustworthy in all the promises of Thy Word.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 35:1–8***LESSON****Providing for God's servants****VERSE 8**

*And the cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel: from them that have many ye shall give many; but from them that have few ye shall give few: every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth.*

The tribe of Levi did not have any territorial lands allocated to them, unlike the other tribes on the conquest of the land of Canaan. There is a special care on the part of God for the provision of those who serve in the ministrations of the holy things in the Tabernacle. For all their labours, God would not forget to provide for them.

Each tribe will have to give to the Levites a portion of their inheritance, and what was given to them was accepted as given to the Lord [v. 2]. The Levites would be fed with the tithe of the increase of the other tribes. This was to be so that they might be able to more closely attend to the study of the laws of God for the purpose of teaching them to the people.

This arrangement allowed them to give themselves wholly to the business of their profession, so that they would not be entangled in other affairs of this life. Thus in this way, the light of God's Word would be diffused throughout all the lands of the country, and none would be left out to sit in the dark [Deuteronomy 33:10].

It is a great blessing when a country is replenished with faithful ministers who will teach and preach the precious Word of God. People will learn of the ways of the Lord and will not remain in their ignorance. Pray that more will be sent out by the Lord of the harvest to declare the Gospel of our Saviour.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 35**  
**JOHN 19**

**PRAYER**

**O Lord of the harvest, send forth Thy servants to all the earth so that Thy glory will be seen in the world!**

**BIBLE LESSON**  
*Numbers 35:9–34*

**LESSON**  
**Cities of refuge**

**VERSE 11**

*Then ye shall appoint you  
 cities to be cities of refuge  
 for you; that the slayer may  
 flee thither, which killeth  
 any person at unawares.*

God had given clear orders to Moses concerning the cities of refuge. These were to be all the Levites' cities. It was connected to the law of murder and manslaughter [v. 11–12]. Any wilful murder would be punished with death and these cities of refuge would not be sanctuary for them. Murder is defined as an act done to the victim out of hatred [v. 20], or in enmity [v. 21], or through provocation, no matter what instruments were used to commit the crime [v. 16–21].

In one of the earliest laws instituted, when a murder was committed, restitution had to be made [Genesis 9:6]. And since a murderer could not restore another's life, he had to pay it with his own. Only then could the law and justice be fully satisfied. Therefore there is no escape; God will pursue the murderer and not suffer him to escape His righteous judgements [v. 33].

However, if the homicide was not voluntary but accidental, the manslayer could flee to these cities of refuge that were appointed for the protection of this innocent person until proven guilty [v. 22–23]. There was no security provided for him should he abandon the limit of any of these cities; he might still be killed by those who seek his life.

Let us be reminded that we are constantly under the judgement of God for we are but sinners deserving of His punishment. None should base his security on good works. God, the Judge Himself has provided a way for us to escape, and that is through the refuge that we find in Christ [Hebrews 6:18].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
 IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 36**  
**JOHN 20**

**PRAYER**

**Our blessed Mediator, plead for us that we may find forgiveness before the judgement seat of the Holy God.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Numbers 36:1–13***LESSON****Marrying in the Lord****VERSE 6**

*This is the thing which the LORD doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry.*

It is admirable for the chief fathers of the family to come before Moses and seek his wisdom and advice pertaining to some urgent matters, and especially marriage. Here Moses determines through the knowledge of God that heiresses should marry in their own tribe. In this way no part of the ancient inheritance would be alienated from the original family. It was due to the prudence of these elders to foresee and to prevent evils in the families and save them from many disputes in the future.

Clearly, unrestricted marriages of daughters in such circumstances would seriously threaten the tenure of land in Israel. If their inheritance would go to their children by the father's side of another tribe, it would lead to the confusion of families in Israel. In the same vein, Christian women should only marry in the Lord, as the Scriptures are clear in this matter [1 Corinthians 7:39]. This prevents much contention and confusion in the family, so that the holy seed may be preserved [Malachi 2:15].

Christians should be careful in their relationship so that they do not dishonour the Lord, Who has every right in our lives. Let us seek to glorify Him by giving of ourselves entirely to Him so that we may please only Him who saved us from sins.

Pray that God will guide and lead you in your earthly sojourn and if He so wills, may He supply your need of a life partner who loves and fears the Lord.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EZEKIEL 37**  
**JOHN 21**

**PRAYER**

**Holy Father, I commit my life to Thee; help me to seek only those things that please Thee.**