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# DAILY *manna*

JANUARY – MARCH 2015

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GENERAL EDITOR

Rev Isaac Ong

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*Daily devotions for reading through the Bible*

Dear *Daily Manna* readers,

Blessed New Year.

If you are new to *Daily Manna*, we welcome you. For our regular readers, we are encouraged by your perseverance in reading and studying the Word of God.

This is the fifth two-year cycle of *Daily Manna*. Over the next two years, we will be studying our Lord Jesus Christ.

Using the harmony of the Gospels, we shall be going through the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus chronologically from His birth to His death and resurrection. Hopefully, this method of study will give us a new perspective of the Gospels, and urge us to walk in the steps of our Saviour.

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

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

*John 1:1–2*

### LESSON

#### **Christ was in the Beginning**

#### JOHN 1:1

*In the beginning was the  
Word, and the Word was  
with God, and the Word  
was God.*

The New Testament begins with four Gospels, each with its unique focus. Matthew, writing to the Jews, focuses on the kingship of Christ. Mark focuses on the servanthood of Christ, Luke on the humanity of Christ, and John on the deity of Christ. In his introduction of our Lord Jesus, John uses the expression “in the beginning” [John 1:1]. This phrase is also found in Genesis 1:1, and it means ‘before the world was made’ [Psalm 90:2]

By using this phrase, John is asserting that Christ is the Word [Logos] from eternity. He is the eternal Word, without beginning and without ending. John’s allusion is clear; the Word is also divine. Christ is not the created Word. He is the Creator Word. John adds that “the Word was with God,” and “the Word was God.” The former asserts the eternity of Christ; the latter, His co-equality with God. Believers must not be hoodwinked by false teachers into believing that the Word was ‘a god’ or that the Word was ‘like God.’

A word is the means by which a person communicates his will. And Christ is the Word because it is through Him that God made known His will [Hebrews 1:1–3]. Christ is also the perfect revelation of God. Before the incarnation of Christ, God revealed His will through the prophets. Their words were true insofar as God spoke through them. However, unlike the prophets who spoke as God revealed His will to them, our Lord Jesus spoke on His own authority [Matthew 5:21–22]. He was the Word, and He was God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS I  
ACTS I**

#### THOUGHT

**He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. –  
John 14:9b**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 1:3***LESSON****Christ is the Creator****JOHN 1:3**

*All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

John asserts again that Christ was, from eternity past, with God the Father. Before the world was, God is, and so is Christ, and so is the Spirit. The creation is the work of the Triune God. “All things” encompasses every aspect of the universe, from the minutest atom to the largest star. All things, without exception, came into existence by our Lord Jesus Christ [Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2; Revelation 4:11].

Here, John asserts the omnipotence of Christ to prove His deity. The eternity and co-equality of Christ [John 1:1–2] are abstract concepts. Creation, on the other hand, is a tangible work. Thus, we can say that there is no higher proof for deity than the work of creation. If God is not the creator, He is not the living and true God [Isaiah 40:18–28; Jeremiah 10:3–16]. If God does not have the power to create, He would be like the pagan idols, “the work of men’s hands” with mouths but speak not; eyes but see not; ears but hear not [Psalm 115:4–8]. If Christ is not the creator, He will be anything but God.

“Without Him was not any thing made that was made.” By repeating the truth negatively, John dispels all doubt concerning the Person and the work of Christ. Not a single thing came into being without the agency of Christ. By this, we can be assured that Christ is not only God but He also does the work of God.

And when His deity is doubted, our Lord Jesus invites His sceptics to apply the test of His works. “If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not” [John 10:37].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 2**  
**ACTS 2**

**THOUGHT**

**All things were created by Christ, and for Him ...that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. – Colossians 1:16–18**

## BIBLE LESSON

*John 1:4*

### LESSON

## Christ the Life Giver

JOHN 1:4

*In him was life; and the life  
was the light of men.*

Creation presupposes providence. The Psalmist writes that the Lord “laid the foundations of the earth” and He also “watereth the hills from His chambers ... He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that He may bring forth food out of the earth” [Psalm 104:5, 13–14].

Where there is life, there must be a Creator who sustains life. Creation and providence go hand in hand [Hebrews 1:1–3]. John has earlier asserted that all things are made by the Word, and creation includes the breathing into man the breath of life [Genesis 2:7]. Now he asserts that the Word is the very fountain of life. Paul says to the Greeks that it is “in [God] we live, and move, and have our being” [Acts 17:28a].

He “giveth life unto the world” [John 6:33b]. He is the “Word of life” [1 John 1:1c]. He “is our life” [Colossians 3:4; John 11:25; 1 John 5:11, 20]. Christ is life in a second sense. In Him is life everlasting. In Him is also the life of a new creation—the regenerated life. Just as surely as Christ is the source of life to the human being, so is He also the fountain of new life to the soul who is dead in trespasses and sins.

This also means that salvation presupposes preservation. In His creation, the Lord sustains. In His salvation, He preserves. So that we who have experienced the new birth and new life by grace through faith in Christ are not left to our own devices to live this new life. Every believer is a new creature with a new direction and purpose in life.

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

### THOUGHT

**We are saved for the glory of God. Is the glory of God the chief end of your life?**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*John 1:5*

**LESSON**

**Christ is the Light**

**JOHN 1:5**

*And the light shineth in  
darkness; and the darkness  
comprehended it not.*

Christ is the life, and this life is the light of men. Light makes sight possible. And the life that Christ has given us enables us to know the Creator who has given and sustained our lives. The purpose is we may know Him; that we may be enlightened to our duties; and that we may be delivered from the darkness of ignorance and the evils of sins. The tragedy is that man chooses to live in stubborn blindness. John makes the contrast between Christ who is the light, and the darkness of sin that has engulfed the souls of sinful man.

The sinner is trapped in spiritual darkness and blind to the work of God, to the reality of sin, and to its terrible consequences. The irony is that man was created with knowledge of God and His truth. But Adam sinned against the expressed word of God. As a result, he was evicted from Eden and the presence of God, and plunged into darkness.

Ever since, the “god of this world hath blinded the minds of (sinners) which believe not” [2 Corinthians 4:4]. The whole creation is still full of God’s glory. It is not that there is no truth or no light. But just as the blind man cannot see the beauty of God’s handiwork, so the spiritually blind man, being sucked into the dark hole of sin, cannot comprehend the significance of the light.

And there must be another light—a new and perfect revelation from God—that will penetrate the darkened hearts of sinners. That light is Christ, and that He represents—His saving grace, His tender mercies, and His Gospel.

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

**THOUGHT**

**Ye are the light of the world ... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**  
– Matthew 5:14–16

**BIBLE LESSON***Matthew 1:1–17*

## LESSON

**Christ's Genealogy in  
Matthew**

## MATTHEW 1:1

*The book of the generation  
of Jesus Christ, the son of  
David, the son of Abraham.*

**M**atthew's Gospel presents Christ as king, and thus His genealogy was traced back to David and Abraham. Jesus is also known by the royal title: the Son of David. The genealogy of Christ in Matthew's Gospel has several unique features.

First, Matthew presents the ancestry of Christ in three periods of 14 generations each: the patriarchal period from Abraham to David [v. 1–6], the monarchical period from Solomon to the Babylonian captivity [v. 7–11], and the post-exilic period from the return of the Jews to Joseph, the husband of Mary [v. 12–17]. Second, there are three women who were mentioned by name—Thamar or Tamar [v. 3; Genesis 38], Rachab or Rahab [v. 5; Joshua 2], Ruth [v. 5, Ruth 1–4]. Reference was also made of Bathsheba, the wife of Urias [v. 6; 2 Samuel 11]. All four women were Gentiles. Third, Matthew's genealogy also mentions Jeconiah [v. 11], the king of Judah upon whom God had pronounced a curse [Jeremiah 22:20–30]. Jeconiah would have no son to succeed him.

God judged Jeconiah for two reasons: his father had burnt the Word of God in defiance [Jeremiah 36:25] and he himself rejected God's prophet, Jeremiah [Jeremiah 28:4, 15; 52:31–34]. With no son to succeed him, the messianic line would end at Jeconiah. How then was Jesus Christ the Son of David? The answer is found in the miracle of the virgin birth. Her seed—the promised Messiah—dealt a fatal blow to the head of the serpent [Genesis 3:15].

That is the redemptive work of Christ. By His sacrifice, we are adopted as sons of the living God. Are you a child of God?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 5**  
**ACTS 5**

## THOUGHT

**For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. – Romans 8:15**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 3:23–38***LESSON****Christ's Genealogy in  
Luke****LUKE 3:23**

*And Jesus himself began to  
be about thirty years of age,  
being (as was supposed) the  
son of Joseph, which was the  
son of Heli,*

The genealogy of Christ is found only in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The Gospel of Luke is addressed to the Greeks, and Jesus is presented as the perfect man. Unlike Matthew's genealogy, Luke traces the ancestry of Jesus all the way to Adam. There is, however, a major difference between the two genealogies. In Matthew's genealogy, after David is Solomon. In Luke's genealogy, after David is Nathan. Both Solomon and Nathan were sons of David [2 Samuel 5:14; 12:24].

This minute detail is important because it fulfils the prophecy of Genesis 3:15, when God said that He would put enmity between [the serpent] and Eve. The seed of the serpent would bruise the heel of the seed of the woman and her seed would crush the serpent's head.

This prophecy would also circumvent the Jeconiah curse. It explains the differences in the name of Joseph's predecessor. In Luke 3:23, we read that Joseph was the son of Heli, but in Matthew 1:16, we read that he was the son of Jacob. The explanation for this so-called discrepancy is that Jacob was the father of Joseph, whereas Heli was the father of Mary, and Joseph's father-in-law.

Matthew's genealogy traces Jesus through Joseph and Solomon to the line of David. Luke's genealogy traces Jesus through Mary and Nathan to the line of David. The promises of God holds true. Jesus would come from the line of David, and He would be the seed of the woman. The details of the lineage of Christ are vital to His person and His ministry.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 6****ACTS 6****THOUGHT**

**We can be sons of God only because Christ was willing to humble Himself and be a son of man.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 1:5–10***LESSON****A Good Example****LUKE 1:6**

*And they were both  
righteous before God,  
walking in all the  
commandments and  
ordinances of the Lord  
blameless.*

At the beginning of Luke's gospel, we are introduced to an old couple, the priest Zachariah and his wife Elisabeth. Both were from the priestly tribe in accordance with God's Levitical law [Leviticus 21:14, 2 Corinthians 6:14]. They lived holy lives and walked in all the commandments of the Lord. Such were their lives that no accusation could be justly brought against them by an often accusing world. Though not sinless, they were blameless in the eyes of men, and righteous in the sight of God.

However, they were childless, for Elisabeth was barren and to the Jews, a woman's infertility was often regarded as a sign of divine reproach. Yet unknown to them, the higher plan of the sovereign God was about to unfold. Zachariah, in the meanwhile, continued faithfully in his service, for according to the lot taken, he had been selected for the rare and high honour of burning incense at the tabernacle altar. An encounter was about to take place there that would set in motion the greatest event in the history of mankind.

Let us emulate the example of this couple. Let us obey and observe all of God's prescription without prevarication. Through faith in Christ, we will attain righteousness in God's sight. But let us prove our faith true, by our obedience to His Word, being blameless in conduct and faithful in service, availing ourselves to God and trusting Him. We do not know how He will use us or when. An encounter may be about to take place in our lives too.

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

**THOUGHT**

**God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform. – W. Cowper**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 1:11–13*

**LESSON**

**A Supernatural  
Encounter**

**LUKE 1:11**

*And there appeared unto  
him an angel of the Lord  
standing on the right side of  
the altar of incense.*

As the people prayed outside, Zachariah was burning incense within the tabernacle. In the solitude and dimness of the sanctuary, Zachariah was startled by an angelic being materialising beside the altar of incense, and he was gripped with fear.

Such would be the natural response of man, for we are unaccustomed to seeing the invisible. Angels are God’s emissaries executing His orders, and surely as they existed in Zachariah’s day, they exist today in the service of the heavenly monarch. They are still His ministering spirits, for the good of His people, the heirs of salvation [Hebrews 1:14].

Zachariah was greatly privileged with a visible visitation of the angel carrying a marvellous message from God to His faithful aged servant. But every Christian today owns the privilege of ministration from God’s servant spirits too. That they are invisible to us alters not the fact of their presence with us, doing the Lord’s will. If only God would open our eyes, as He did the eyes of Elisha’s servant, we would likewise see around us the “horses and chariots of fire”. We would see the holy angels ascending and descending the heavenly ladder, executing God’s purposes for the good of His people. This being so, let us like Zachariah continue faithfully to greater heights of service for our Lord, for in so doing we are assured of His divine help.

Zachariah’s priestly prayer for the salvation of Israel was heard. And in God’s great inscrutable plan, Zachariah’s prayer for a son would also be miraculously answered.

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

**PRAYER**

**We give thanks that You are God with us, through the Holy Spirit’s indwelling and Your angels whom You send to help us in our times of need.**

## BIBLE LESSON

*Luke 1:14–17*

### LESSON

#### The Forerunner Foretold

#### LUKE 1:17

*And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

Zachariah and Elisabeth would be blessed with a son in their old age, and he was to be called John (meaning “the grace of God”). He was born for a special purpose. He would lead a life of abstinence and self-denial, and being filled with the Holy Spirit from conception, he would be consecrated for holy service to usher in the good news of God’s grace, preparing the way for the earthly ministry of the incarnate Son of God.

We are told he did no miracles, but had proclaimed only Jesus [John 10:41]. And in like spirit and power with Elijah, he would preach repentance to the rejoicing of many, as foretold by the prophet Malachi [Malachi 4:5–6].

Christians, let us realise the Lord is coming again. And in God’s divine economy, we are called to the office of a lesser John, for like his namesake, we are who we are only by God’s grace; He has a special purpose in saving us. We are to magnify Christ, deny ourselves, take up the cross daily and follow Him.

We are to be filled with the Spirit and to manifest the fruit of it in abundance. We are to live consecrated and holy lives because our Lord is holy. And we are charged with carrying out the great commission of preaching the gospel and preparing the world for the return of Christ as King and Judge. In so doing, we shall like John, be great in the sight of the Lord, and a good and faithful servant.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 9**  
**ACTS 9**

#### PRAYER

**Lord, give us the spirit of John. Help us to realise we are saved for a purpose. We are Your witnesses in this world and Your messengers to the lost, all by the enabling of the Holy Spirit.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 1:18–25*

**LESSON**

**Zachariah's Unbelief**

**LUKE 1:18**

*And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.*

Zachariah believed what his eyes saw, for he discerned the angel of God and was fearful, but in his heart, he harboured doubt about the message that was delivered. He sought a sign to prove the veracity of God's word, and thus he received—both the sign and the censure for his unbelief. Zachariah was struck dumb and deaf instantaneously by Gabriel [Luke 1:62], a chastening that would last till the naming of the promised child.

Notwithstanding his affliction, Zachariah completed his service for the week of his chosen allotment and returned home. True to God's word, Elisabeth conceived.

The seeking of a sign is a weakness of the faithless. The scribes and the Pharisees sought a sign. Thomas needed to touch and feel his Lord's wounds before he would believe. The world in every age craves for a sign that Jesus is the incarnate Son of God, who came to save the lost. "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonas." And we now have that sign, for the Scriptures testify that Christ died and rose again the third day.

Let us beware of faithlessness. What the God of truth has revealed, let us believe, for without faith it is impossible to please Him. Indeed, "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Learn from Zachariah's experience. If only we would by faith believe the message from God, it would be to us glad tidings, and not chastisement.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 10**  
**ACTS 10**

**THOUGHT**

**With man, seeing is believing, but with God, believing is seeing.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 1:26–30*

**LESSON**

**Another Angelic  
Visitation**

**LUKE 1:30**

*And the angel said unto  
her, Fear not, Mary: for  
thou hast found favour with  
God.*

Six months after Elisabeth conceived, Gabriel was sent to deliver another message—this time to Mary, Elisabeth’s cousin, and a virgin girl engaged to Joseph of Nazareth. In Jewish custom, such engagements were binding commitments lasting about a year before formal marriage and consummation could take place.

Like Zachariah, Mary was frightened by this unexpected herald from heaven. She was greatly perplexed by the message. It was a salutation of joy and favour from the God of heaven to a young country maiden on earth, but she was not able to make sense of it.

“Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee.” Mary is indeed favoured in being the chosen earthly mother of the incarnate God, but identical words (in the Greek meaning, ‘make accepted by grace’) are used for all who have been made acceptable to God by the grace of Jesus Christ [Ephesians 1:6].

Mary found favour with God according to His sovereign divine purposes, and she was blessed among women. All will similarly find high favour with God, who by faith believe in Christ, confess Him to be their personal Saviour and obey Him as the Lord of their lives. And they will be blessed too, for “blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin” [Romans 4:8]. The grace of God that favoured Mary in history, is the same grace that is calling us to come out of darkness into God’s marvellous light, according to His will and for His glory. All praise be to Him!

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 11  
ACTS 11**

**THOUGHT**

**Have I found favour with God? Is Christ my Lord and Saviour, so that in God’s eyes I am made acceptable to be with Him for all eternity?**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 1:31–33*

**LESSON**

**A Name Above Every  
Name**

**LUKE 1:31**

*And, behold, thou shalt  
conceive in thy womb, and  
bring forth a son, and shalt  
call his name JESUS.*

In John the Baptist, we see the prophecy of Malachi fulfilled [Malachi 4:5–6]. In the conception of Christ, we have the fulfilment of the first gospel [Genesis 3:15]. It is as if the New Testament is opening with an affirmation of the Old, and saying, “Look, listen, What God has said before, He is now doing mightily.”

Mary conceived despite being a virgin—impossible but for a supernatural act of God, and necessarily so, for it was the seed of woman [not man] who would bruise the serpent’s head. An act of immeasurable love, that God the Son, should leave heaven’s glory to descend into this dark world to save sinners like me.

His name is Jesus, ‘Jehovah Saviour,’ great in all His ways and works, the Almighty Son of God, Who for a season humbled Himself as a servant, suffered the death of the cross, the atonement for man’s sin, but rose again from the dead and forevermore rules over His kingdom which has no end. He will return again and on that fateful day, everyone, both saint and sinner, dead and alive, will recognise Him and His name which is above every name. Every knee will bow, either in the joy of worship or in the woe of judgement, and every tongue will then confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

On that appointed day, when you meet Christ, can you call Him, “My Lord and my God, my Saviour” or will He be your Judge?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 12**  
**ACTS 12**

**PRAYER**

**Lord Jesus I long to be perfectly whole. I want  
Thee forever to live in my soul. Break down every  
idol, cast out every foe; Now wash me and I shall  
be whiter than snow.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 1:34–38*

**LESSON**

**How Can It Be?**

**LUKE 1:34**

*Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?*

Mary was puzzled over the words of the angel. How can it be that she is able to conceive without a contact with man? Humanly and scientifically speaking, this is impossible. But God is Lord over all human constraints and scientific explanations. “For with God nothing shall be impossible” [v. 37].

The angel affirmed the mystery of the virgin birth. Mary will conceive when the power of the Highest comes upon her through the Holy Spirit. A seeming impossibility had also happened to her cousin Elisabeth. She was once barren but was now in the sixth month of pregnancy. This is the convincing evidence that God is working. The silent years of the Bible are going to be over soon. The only difference between the conception of Mary and that of Elisabeth is that Mary is carrying the Son of God, Who has come to this earth as the Messiah.

The doctrine of virgin birth is central in, and unique to, the Christian faith. Christ the perfect Man Who knew no sin was made to be sin for us, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him [2 Corinthians 5:21].

Who was the first one to believe in this truth of God? It was Mary. She submitted herself to the will of God and asked God to use her, a handmaid of the Lord, as a tool in God’s divine plan. Pray that we would trust God in the same way and allow Him to show us great and mighty things through our faith in Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 13**  
**ACTS 13**

**THOUGHT**

**There are no limits to God’s strength, just limits to our perception.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 1:39–45*

**LESSON**

**Mary Visits Elizabeth**

**LUKE 1:45**

*And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.*

Having heard the blessed promise of God from the angel, Mary could not hold her joy. She went with haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth. We can understand her excitement and elation. Mary visited Elizabeth not only because she was a close relative, but also for the fact that Elizabeth had also experienced the wonderful grace of God. She was able to conceive at an old age.

What we see in these few verses is a beautiful picture. When Mary entered the house of Elizabeth, the baby in the womb of Elizabeth, the very forerunner of Christ, leapt in joy, and the mother was filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth broke out in blessings and even a confession of her own unworthiness before God's amazing grace.

There is not a single tinge of jealousy here. They are truly happy for each other. Instead, the whole account is one of gratitude, praise and thanksgiving. Elizabeth and Mary recognised each other as recipient of God's wondrous and impossible grace. They shared the same feeling of anticipation and hope. They stood together on the promises of God. As such, they were able to encourage each other in the faith.

Just as verse 45 has told us, blessed indeed is she that believed. Because both of these women believed in the promise of God, they were able to look beyond themselves and see each other as blessed people in the Lord. And truly, God is always faithful to His promise, if only you would believe.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 14**  
**ACTS 14**

**REMINDER**

**See one another as but unworthy yet blessed sinners in the Lord. Fill our heart, mind and tongue with words of praise.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 1:46–56*

**LESSON**

**Song of Mary**

**LUKE 1:46**

*And Mary said, My soul  
doth magnify the Lord,*

The song of Mary, also known as “Mary’s Magnificat”, is a recital of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord Almighty. These words came from a sincere and grateful heart to the Lord Who is willing and able to show mercy to His children, doing great things for all and through all who fear Him.

A central thread that runs through the main content of this song is how God has lifted up the humble and abased and has brought down the proud. The use of contrasts in this psalm has always been drawn parallel to the song of Hannah in 1 Samuel. Yet the song of Mary is unique in the sense that it focuses less on the person who is being delivered. Instead it points its reader towards the One who saves and shows mercy.

“My soul doth magnify the Lord.” How is Mary able to magnify the Lord? It is not as if God needs anything to add unto Him; God’s glory is magnified on this earth when creatures who have experienced His grace acknowledge everything in words and acts of praise. Fellow believers are encouraged and edified when we magnify the Lord. Non-believers are drawn nearer to wanting to know the Lord when we glorify Him.

This is the reason why God created us—to magnify and glorify Him. In this song, we see humility and gratitude, and more importantly, we see elation and enjoyment. Truly, this is the chief end of man.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 15**  
**ACTS 15**

**THOUGHT**

**If you cannot enjoy God now, how could you enjoy Him forever?**

**BIBLE LESSON***Matthew 1:18–21***LESSON****An Angel Visits Joseph in  
a Dream****MATTHEW 1:21**

*And she shall bring forth a  
son, and thou shalt call his  
name JESUS: for he shall  
save his people from their  
sins.*

Mary was espoused to Joseph. Mary had then conceived through the Holy Spirit. We were not told what was Joseph's reaction when he first heard this news. Did Mary tell him the truth? Most likely. Yet given that, in his heart, did he ever suspect Mary's testimony? According to the civil law then, Joseph could have found her no longer desirable and sign a bill of divorcement to put her away [Deuteronomy 24:1].

Yet if there were any doubts in the mind of Joseph, they were cleared immediately when the angel of the Lord appeared to him. The angel told him Mary shall bring forth a son, and he shall name him Jesus (which means "Jehovah is my salvation"). If this is not enough, the next revelation is startling—this child "shall save his people from their sins".

We know very little about Joseph in the Bible, other than the fact that he was mentioned in Jesus' genealogy and was a just man. Mary and Jesus' brothers were sometimes mentioned after Jesus began His public ministry, but it is not the case for Joseph. Yet this carpenter has definitely played his part in the bringing up of, and providing for Jesus in the years when He grew in knowledge and stature.

In the grand scheme of things, not even the work of the greatest man on earth is worth boasting, yet it is the small contributions of different humble men that help complete the beautiful tapestry of the redemption story.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 16**  
**ACTS 16**

**PRAYER**

**Insignificant and weak as I am, use me to do Your will, Lord.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Matthew 1:22–25*

**LESSON**

**Isaiah's Prophecy  
Fulfilled**

**MATTHEW 1:23**

*Behold, a virgin shall be  
with child, and shall bring  
forth a son, and they shall  
call his name Emmanuel,  
which being interpreted is,  
God with us.*

The virgin birth of Christ is the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecy found in Isaiah 7:14, where the prophet Isaiah explicitly said that God will give a sign—that a virgin will conceive and bear a Son whose name is Emmanuel.

There are two important lessons we can learn here. For one, the coming of Christ realised and fulfilled what was prophesied in the Old Testament. The Bible is an organic whole. It is not segregated to two parts—the Old Testament and the New. Every part binds together to give us the Bible, which is God's full revelation in our hands.

For another, we not only have God's Word with us, God Himself also dwells with us. This is fulfilled with the coming of Christ, and after Christ has ascended to heaven, we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. Christ will come again and bring us back to heaven to live with Him forever.

That said, if we were to flip through the pages of the Old Testament, it is not hard to find the good news of Emmanuel. God was with the Israelites when they were wandering in the wilderness. He was with His people when they were conquering Canaan. Through the records of kings and prophets, we see God's continuing presence. Our Lord is the God Who loves to have communion with His people; the only thing that separates us from God is sin. That is why Jesus is Emmanuel. He died on the cross so that sinners who believe in Him can be reconciled to God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 17**  
**ACTS 17**

**THOUGHT**

**Our privilege of 'Emmanuel' is bought for us with a great price, yet given to us free. What wondrous grace!**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 1:57–66***LESSON****Birth of John the Baptist****LUKE 1:66**

*And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.*

The birth of John the Baptist definitely raised some commotion. The neighbours and cousins marvelled at how God had shown mercy upon this old and barren couple. They were rejoicing for them and many could not wait to suggest names for the newborn on the eighth day when the circumcision rite was conducted.

The proposal to name the child after his father was rejected by Elizabeth who firmly insisted that the child should be named John. This raised some eyebrows because it was not a family name. The relatives then approached Zacharias who was then dumb and most probably deaf as well. To their surprise, the father wrote authoritatively these words—“His name is John.” There should be no more discussion. God named him and that settled it.

Immediately after Zacharias did what was required of him, he was able to speak again. Obedience is the very fruit of faith and with obedience comes an increase of faith. Filled with awe for the miraculous work of God, the first thing Zacharias did was to praise God. He probably told everyone what actually happened to him.

The works of the Lord struck fear in the hearts of men who heard that story. They were speculating what was to come with this baby before them. Indeed this child had the very hand of the Lord with him. He was going to be the forerunner of Christ. The cries of this baby broke the 400 years of silence in the Bible. The call for repentance is clear. The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 18**  
**ACTS 18**

**THOUGHT**

**As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. – Luke 3:4**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 1:68–75*

**LESSON**

**Song of Zacharias**

**LUKE 1:68**

*Blessed be the Lord God of  
Israel; for he hath visited  
and redeemed his people,*

The Morning Hymn of the Gospel, The Benedictus [Blessed], like Mary’s Magnificat, is charged and surcharged with Old Testament allusions. It belongs to the old economy in its phraseology and tone, while it is filled with the Spirit of the new dispensation. Zacharias speaks at the outset as one of the old prophets, but his closing words might as well be an extract from an apostolic epistle.

The Messiah so long promised to the fathers has come. At last, after 400 dreary years, God has “visited” His people. To his prophetic glance, the Redeemer’s work is already accomplished. The Holy Ghost has raised this prophetic priest from his incredulity into the full assurance of faith; he sees in clear perspective the full development of the kingdom of grace.

The advent of Christ is that of God looking upon His creatures, visiting them to leave them no more, and redeeming them with a spiritual and eternal deliverance. He came in the person of His Son to abide with men, to be their Redeemer, to establish a new righteousness, to lift them into the freedom of a glad and willing obedience to the divine will, and so to turn all their sorrows into joy.

Zacharias, like the prophets, clearly discerns that the Messianic reign is to be founded on personal holiness, that only those who make righteousness their chief aim can enter the new kingdom, and freely serve God in all that they do, consenting to His rule as good, and rejoicing to do His will all the days of their lives.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 19**  
**ACTS 19**

**THOUGHT**

**But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. – 1 Corinthians 1:30**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 1:76–77***LESSON****John's Mission****LUKE 1:76**

*And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;*

Zacharias blesses his son's commission and in John he beholds "the prophet of the Highest". He proclaims the dignity and ministry of his son, as well as the ruin and recovery of the Jews and the Gentiles.

A prophet has two abilities—one is foretelling the future; and the other is forth-telling the word of God, both through divine revelation. His office is to herald the Light of the world, coming to pour the dayspring from on high on the nations sitting in darkness, and guide the feet of sinners into the way of peace—to announce deliverance from no other yoke than that of evil, "salvation by the remission of sins". In due time, that greater son will take up his father's prophecy and point to Israel's "Lamb of God" as taking away the "sin of the world".

Our Lord described him as the greatest prophet who had ever appeared in the world. He had the honour of being the last and clearest prophet of the old covenant, and the first of the new. He was the immediate forerunner of Jesus Christ, none being capable of succeeding him in his ministry but Christ Himself. He was to prepare the ways of turning hearts of multitudes of the Israelites to believe in and follow the Lord Jesus.

John the Baptist was the morning star of the gospel dispensation. "He was a burning and a shining light" but that morning star fades when the noonday Sun appears. "He must increase, but I must decrease," declared John, and let it be ours.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 20**  
**ACTS 20**

**THOUGHT**

**But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. – Luke 7:26**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 1:78–80*

**LESSON**

**John's Life**

**LUKE 1:80**

*And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.*

We have no details of the earlier years of John the Baptist, though miraculous circumstances were related to his birth. Zacharias and Elisabeth were aged persons when John was born. They probably lived only a short time after his birth.

John the Baptist's growing up strongly corroborated the prediction concerning him. His whole inward man kept pace with his outward growth. His soul was filled with uncommon wisdom, fortitude, and grace. He grew up a spiritually minded lad, a dedicated boy, a Nazarite from his youth. His development was to be amid the solitude of the desert down towards the Dead Sea. God was his Teacher. Like Moses and Elijah, John has his long season of solitude with God, and then he comes forth radiant for the work he has to do in Israel.

We should do well to be more "in the desert" to seek a solitary place where we can be alone with God. The world is too much with us—the hum of its activities, the rattle of its pleasures, the wails of its distress. Its perpetual noise is in our ears and we cannot hear the stiller and deeper Voice that speaks to us, Solitude, whether it be in the folds of the hill, or in the depth of the valley, or in our own chamber; we have a sense of God's nearness to us which we have not in the midst of the crowd.

What an inestimable advantage it would be to us to let the consciousness of God's own presence often fill our soul, and then to hold sustained communion with Him!

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 21**  
**ACTS 21**

**THOUGHT**

**It may be safely said that no one has ever done much for God who has not been much alone with Him.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 2:1–7***LESSON****Birth of Jesus****LUKE 2:7**

*And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.*

In this passage, we have an account of the birth and infancy of our Lord Jesus. There is nothing to distinguish Him from the birth of other men except the poverty and hardship that marked His nativity. Not even a house can His mother find to shelter Him when the time came for His birth. The inn was full: no friendly roof afforded the comfort and hospitality of which she stood in need, and it was a stable that first covered His head, and a manger that formed His first cradle.

Jesus passed through the stage of helpless infancy. No preternatural glory shone about Him. It was marked by His wearing of the first childish swathings, hastily extemporised perhaps by His virgin mother, and by the rude fashion of His resting-place. It was the custom in the East to dress very young children merely in folds of linen and woollen, but He was “wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger”.

Such was His condition from His birth, because He had taken upon Him our flesh, that He might “empty Himself” [Philippians 2:5–7] on our account. When He was thrown into a stable and placed in a manger, and a lodging refused Him among men, it was that heaven might be opened to us, not as a temporary lodging, but as our eternal country and inheritance, and that angels might receive us into their abode. – Calvin.

See how low the King of glory stoops, and how gloriously He uplifts the lowly to share His glory!

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 22**  
**ACTS 22**

**THOUGHT**

**For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich. – 2 Corinthians 8:9**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 2:8–12*

**LESSON**

**Shepherds**

**LUKE 2:8**

*And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.*

This employment of tending sheep had been honoured in the earlier times of the Jewish people by its having been that in which Jacob, Moses, and David had been engaged. The prophets had often made use of it in figurative descriptions of the work of the Messiah; but now it was a calling that was looked upon by the Jews with contempt.

Notwithstanding, shepherds have always been a meditative class of men, accustomed to the sweet silences of nature, and, apart from the bustle and stir of cities, invited to quiet communion with their own hearts. It would seem that these shepherds were men of the spirit of Simeon, “waiting for the consolation of Israel”.

There they lie, nursed in devout and lonely thought. Then a moment of a pause, of a hush through nature, and lo! the angel of the Lord came on them. In an instant a presence, a glory, was around them; and first into their hearts was poured the gospel for all the ages. Struck with heavenly awe and holy fear, they immediately understood the message borne to them. Calmly and promptly, they responded at once, as if it were the intimation of that for which they had been waiting. “Let us go and see.”

God grants His divine favour to those who are conscientiously serving Him in their own proper sphere. Not to the idle dreamer, not to the man who will do nothing, but to him who does his best in the position in which God’s providence has placed him, will God come in gracious manifestation.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 23**

**ACTS 23**

**THOUGHT**

**God graciously visits those in whom He has first raised the expectation of Him, and manifests Himself to those that wait for Him. – Matthew Henry**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 2:13–14*

**LESSON**

**The Angelic Choir**

**LUKE 2:13**

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,*

The strangely elevating experience through which the shepherds of Bethlehem were passing had prepared them for a scene that was fitted to awaken still to greater surprise and spiritual excitement. For suddenly, myriads of angels appearing together, a multitude of the heavenly host began to make angelic music; strains of sweetest song filled the air, and the words of that celestial chant, so exquisitely sweet, so full of comfort and of hope, were fixed in the shepherds' minds.

It is of striking significance that the birth of Jesus Christ to our world should be accompanied by the ministry of angels. The history of mankind is the subject of deep interest to these holy intelligences of heaven. They inquire with a pure and heavenly curiosity into the relations of God with man [1 Peter 1:12]. They rejoice over sinners that repent [Luke 15:10]. They expend their powers in the accomplishment of God's will concerning them who shall be heirs of salvation [Hebrews 1:14].

Above all, our Saviour is One in Whom they have profound interest. Though they need not His redemption, He is their grand object of worship and celestial joy [Revelation 5:11–13]. And thus they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Note the shepherds were not enthralled by the grandeur of the angelic choir, nor captivated by their beautiful appearance, nor thrilled by their perfect harmony of voices, as to remain and marvel. Instead, the proclaimed gospel message led them to higher and holier wonder to be revealed—the birth of Christ, God incarnate!

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**GENESIS 24**  
**ACTS 24**

**THOUGHT**

**And again, when He bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him. – Hebrews 1:6**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 2:15–20***LESSON****The Shepherds Returned****LUKE 2:20**

*And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.*

The angels had just rendered their joyful chorus to God. And when this glorious vision had come to an end and had disappeared, the shepherds conferred together on the wonders that they had witnessed. They were then determined to go immediately to Bethlehem to seek their Saviour. Although it was night, they delayed not to go and make a search according to what the angel had said. And they would soon find Mary, Joseph and the newborn Babe, exactly in the situation that had been described to them earlier.

It is amazing to see the simple faith of these poor shepherds. They were not taken up with the angels' brilliance or the lofty strains which had earlier filled the air. They said instead, "Let us go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which now is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us" [v. 15b]. They didn't have any doubts about their inspiring words.

Do mark their prompt obedience to this heavenly vision. We see in them no unnecessary hesitations. They speedily saw to their expectation. And moreover, having witnessed this unforgettable scene, they would not keep the marvellous truths to themselves. They sought to publicly report the whole event. They gave assurance that this child was indeed "the Saviour", even "Christ the Lord".

Like the shepherds, we too have found and tasted Christ to be gracious in giving us salvation and comfort. We should therefore desire to recommend Him to many more who would also love and adore Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**GENESIS 25**  
**ACTS 25**

**PRAYER**

**O heavenly Father, shine Thy light on us, so that we may shine for Thee to others around us. Amen!**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 2:21*

**LESSON**

**Circumcision of Jesus**

**LUKE 2:21**

*And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.*

It is to be noted that only Luke mentioned this event in the life of Jesus. The law in the Old Testament had required that every male should be circumcised at eight days old, or on the eighth day after its birth [Leviticus 12:1–8]. Abraham was one of the first to submit to this arrangement and agreement between himself and God [Genesis 17:12]. Our Lord here received circumcision as a token of His subjection to the law. This was, as Paul saw it, obligatory; “For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law” [Galatians 5:3].

Not surprisingly, it was something that was to be expected in the coming of Christ as it was predicted, “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” [Galatians 4:4]. It is then necessary that Jesus should be circumcised to fulfil all righteousness. He then as the Messiah could “redeem them that were under the law”. Furthermore, Hebrews 2:17 points us to the purpose for Jesus’ circumcision; “Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”

Observe also the name given to Him at His circumcision. It was significant because He came to be the Saviour as the name suggested. Thus, it is clear that as the Saviour, He is without sin and therefore able to save the sinners who come to Him unto the uttermost.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 26**  
**ACTS 26**

**PRAYER**

**Merciful Father, I praise Thee for the coming of Thy Son to redeem me from my sinful state so that I may be Thine. Amen!**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 2:22–24*

**LESSON**

**Jesus Presented in the Temple**

**LUKE 2:22**

*And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;*

According to Jewish custom, a mother is required to remain at home for about 40 days after the birth of a male child and 80 for a female child. And during this period she is reckoned to be impure. She will not be permitted to go to the temple or be engaged in any religious services with the congregation [Leviticus 12:3–5]. So here, as soon as her days are over, Mary together with Joseph in obedience to the law came to the temple for the purpose of dedicating her child to God.

Another act of Mary’s obedience to the ceremonial law was her presentation of her child at Jerusalem to the Lord. Jesus as the first-born male child is regarded among the Jews as holy to the Lord [Exodus 13:2]. By that it means that He could well belong to the office of the priests. He is to be set apart to the service of God, to offer sacrifices and to perform the duties of religion in the home and on behalf of those in the family.

Mary and Joseph had no lamb to offer, but merely come with their two doves to God [v. 24]. This simple offering declares their poverty. Still no one is forbidden to come to God though the gifts may seem so small. God looks not for abundance of gifts but sincerity and humility of the heart. Often the best are sometimes the poorest and seldom the wealthiest.

We are reminded that the Lord doesn’t require merely outward sacrifices; He desires a willing heart which is consecrated for His use and for His glory.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**GENESIS 27**  
**ACTS 27**

**PRAYER**

**Holy Father, I desire to surrender my all to Thee just as Thy Son gave His all for me.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 2:25–32***LESSON****Song of Simeon****LUKE 2:29**

*Lord, now lettest thou thy  
servant depart in peace,  
according to thy word.*

And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon" [v. 25a]. Here is a man who is worth noticing even as the Word of God points him out to us. He is one man who has proven himself to be true to the very end of his life. He is both religious and faithful and has patiently waited for the One whom every Jew longed for, even the "true consolation of Israel".

No sooner was our Saviour brought into the temple and presented to the Lord, did old Simeon spring into the scene. He had a very special revelation from God. He would not die until he had with his physical eyes seen the promised Messiah whom he had waited for a long time. It was through the Holy Spirit's working in giving him this supernatural knowledge. He became the first prophet to tell the world that its Messiah had come!

Here Messiah is called 'the consolation of Israel' as He will give comfort to them by His appearing. William Burkitt commented thus, "In Christ, who is the consolation of Israel there is light without darkness, joy without sorrow, all consolation without any mixture of discomfort." How true this is for those who found their comforts and consolation in Christ alone! He never fails to fully satisfy us. Even Simeon has no need of any other wishes but is now ready to depart!

When we have seen a glimpse of our wonderful Saviour Jesus Christ, we would certainly break forth into singing with gladness. All sorrows and pains will surely come to an end when we meet Him face to face!

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 28****ACTS 28****PRAYER**

**O gracious Lord, show us Thy glory in the face of Thy Son Jesus Christ and we shall be fully satisfied.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 2:33–35***LESSON****Prophecy of Simeon****LUKE 2:34**

*And Simeon blessed them,  
and said unto Mary his  
mother, Behold, this child  
is set for the fall and rising  
again of many in Israel;  
and for a sign which shall  
be spoken against;*

By now, both Joseph and Mary would have felt some remarkable things were about to happen—when they compared the miraculous circumstances which had surrounded the Babe’s conception and birth. They marvelled at those things that were spoken of Simeon. Although, they did not thoroughly understand them at first, they would soon be in for more surprises and shocks.

The old prophet’s words are well contrasted—one so hopeful but the other so sad. “Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also” [v. 35a]—this sentence alludes to the excessive grief that Mary would have to bear. Truly the sufferings and death of her Son shall deeply afflict her soul. Here, Mary is forewarned so that she may be sustained in time to come. She could not have borne the trials that would come upon her Son if God had not prepared her for it through His servant.

“Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel”—such strange words. How does one fall by a mere contact with the Christ? When one increases in his opposition and rejection of this Child, it would lead to greater condemnation. And how does one rise in Him? When there are repentance and faith, acceptance, blessings and hope will come. None would be quite the same as soon as he comes into contact with the Saviour.

How would your response be when Christ is preached to you? Will it be a sentence of life or one of death? May you make the right choice for the good of your soul!

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 29**  
**ROMANS I**

**PRAYER**

**Merciful Father, let Thy Holy Spirit convict and melt me so that I may readily receive Christ as my Saviour.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 2:36–38***LESSON****Song of Anna****LUKE 2:38**

*And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*

Here we are introduced to another saint of God who is prominent, Anna by name. She must have resided near the temple in Jerusalem so that she might attend to all its sacred ordinances. These seemed to be the daily engagements with which she was occupied. She spent her whole time in worship and in the service of the Lord. Often she fasted and prayed on behalf of herself and her people. This was what she was employed in the day and of the night also. Nothing could hinder her from doing these religious exercises although she was of advanced age—no less than “a hundred three years old”.

As “a prophetess,” she had extensive knowledge and deep experience in the things of God and therefore was capable of instructing others. She could have spoken unto people “to edification, and exhortation, and comfort” [1 Corinthians 14:3]. We find this holy widow proclaiming Jesus to all who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Anna, like Simeon before her, also declared that this child Jesus was the promised and expected Messiah of the Jewish people and of the world.

It is obvious that God took care that our Saviour’s coming on earth should be fully attested to. Thus, we see the testimonies of the angels, the wise men, the shepherds, Simeon and now Anna the prophetess as well.

We should like these saints of old, sing forth His praises and give thanks constantly in remembrance of all that He has done for the salvation of those who have come to Him.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 30**  
**ROMANS 2**

**PRAYER**

**O mighty Saviour, stretch forth Thy hand in restoring us to the joys of our salvation.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Matthew 2:1–8*

**LESSON**

**The King of the Jews**

**MATTHEW 2:2**

*Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.*

Shortly after the presentation of the Babe in the temple, another group of individuals came seeking for answer to their quest. Note that at this time, there was a prevalent expectation that some remarkable personage was about to appear in Judea. The Jews were anxiously looking for the coming of the Messiah. By computing the time mentioned by Daniel [Daniel 9:25–27], they knew that the period was approaching when the Messiah should appear.

‘King of the Jews’ literally means ‘the born King of the Jews.’ Herod was not born that way. In fact there has not been anyone born this way from time past. It was long since there had been a king in Israel. But the title given to this Babe was unique, it had never been known in the earlier history of Israel. Evidently, this is only applied to the Messiah. It reappeared in the inscription over the cross of Christ [Luke 23:38].

The magi from the east were determined to find this Infant King and were “come to worship Him”. They had a deep conviction that He would appear in the heart of Israel according to the intimation of Jewish Scriptures and the star that they had seen. As such, they took that long and arduous journey to crown Him. And so they didn’t come empty-handed but with the most precious gifts, they paid homage to the One who was worthy of their all.

It is important to ask the right question and have the answer that matters to our eternal soul. And when we have found Him, what kind of feelings and expressions will we regard Christ?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 31**  
**ROMANS 3**

**PRAYER**

**O heavenly Father, send out the light and lead us closer to the Christ Who loved and saved us.**

## BIBLE LESSON

### *Matthew 2:9–12*

#### LESSON

#### The Visit of the Wise Men

#### MATTHEW 2:12

*And being warned of God  
in a dream that they should  
not return to Herod, they  
departed into their own  
country another way.*

The birth of Christ was announced well in advance. The providence of God is perfect as He is. God's will is such that we ought to have continual fellowship with Him but man has sinned in disobedience to His word. Yet as early as after the fall of man, God has already given the good news on His salvation plan, so that we can be reconciled with Him [Genesis 3:15]. All of man's way to reach God is futile. Only He can initiate action through a divine plan.

This plan was fulfilled through the virgin birth of the Messiah. It was good news to mankind. Yet even as the star shined and pointed the righteous to the Saviour, a sinister king, Herod, was also actively on the move. On hearing the birth of Christ, he demanded his wise men to bring baby Jesus to him. He was troubled by the birth of this "King of the Jews".

Yet after worshipping Jesus with their gifts, the wise men returned via another way, not as commanded by Herod to report to him. God is in sovereign control always. He had warned the wise men in a dream not to return to Herod.

God's redemption plan is in place. God Incarnate has come to this earth. The first attempt by the evil one to disrupt God's plan, had failed. In fact, it is bound to fail. Nothing would happen without the approval and ordaining of the Lord Almighty—not the cunning scheme of the devil, neither the petty fears of a human king.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**GENESIS 32**  
**ROMANS 4**

#### THOUGHT

**There are many devices in a man's heart;  
nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall  
stand. – Proverbs 19:21**

### BIBLE LESSON

#### *Matthew 2:13–15*

#### LESSON

#### Flight to Egypt

#### MATTHEW 2:15

*And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.*

Every event recorded and prophesied in the Bible is from God and all details will be fulfilled to the jot. Neither man nor any of God's creatures can do anything to stop what God has ordained before time. Remember, He is the sovereign God Who is always in control.

Herod certainly felt threatened by baby Jesus. He was worried this "King of the Jews" might take over his throne. But Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He is certainly not interested in the small political position of Herod. His purpose on earth is to save sinners. Herod, with his petty ambitions and tunnelled vision, could never envision the mission of Christ. His finite mind could never comprehend the infinite mind of God.

To redeem man, Jesus has to be incarnated as fully man. He has to take on human attributes. As human, He is thus subjected to all the temptations and sufferings of mankind (though He does not, and cannot sin). For this reason, Jesus humbled Himself, to be born as a baby just like every one of us.

Nobody can change or frustrate God's plan. God knew the ill intention of Herod. The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and instructed him to bring the family to Egypt. They would stay there until the death of Herod. Also by doing so, the prophecy of the Lord would be fulfilled: that the Son of God shall come out of Egypt.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 33**  
**ROMANS 5**

#### THOUGHT

Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel. – John 1:49

**BIBLE LESSON***Matthew 2:16–18***LESSON****Herod's Infanticide****MATTHEW 2:16**

*Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.*

**H**erod could not locate Jesus. The wise men's failure to return made him feel betrayed and wrathful. If the birth of Jesus had threatened his position as king, the wise men's alleged mockery against him would have made him feel that things were really getting out of his control. To eliminate the threat to his kingship, Herod gave a cruel decree for every male child two years old and under to be killed.

This order is not without precedent. A similar tragedy happened during the time of Moses. Fearing the growing population of Israelites, the Pharaoh of Egypt had then ordered for every Jewish male babies to be killed at birth. However, God had preserved the children of Israel then through the hands of the God-fearing midwives.

Man has no chance against God his Creator. Balaam was humbled by his ass telling him not to go against God. Paul persecuted the Christians until on the road to Damascus, where Jesus turned him around. Herod's battle against God would be like kicking against the rock. Tried as he did, Herod would later die a terrible death [Acts 12:23].

Christians are persecuted even today. The world is against Jesus right from the start. They do not want to be accountable to God. Jesus told His disciples not to be surprised if the world hated them, for it is Him that it hated. For this reason, God will certainly give each of His child strength and grace so that we are able to withstand the haters of God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 34**  
**ROMANS 6**

**THOUGHT**

**And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. – Matthew 10:22**

### BIBLE LESSON

#### *Matthew 2:19–23*

#### LESSON

#### Return to Nazareth

#### MATTHEW 2:23

*And he came and dwelt  
in a city called Nazareth:  
that it might be fulfilled  
which was spoken by the  
prophets, He shall be called  
a Nazarene.*

The birth of Jesus was long made known to God's people through His prophets, though they might not fully understand there and then. God will fulfil every word that He has spoken. He has promised salvation and life eternal for everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus. As believers, we rejoice because God's word is truth.

After the death of King Herod, Jesus returned and was brought up in Nazareth, a very obscure and humble little town. No one would expect Nazareth to be the hometown of the Messiah. We remember the discourse between two of Jesus' disciples later: "And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see" [John 1:46].

Jesus was not a city boy from a top school. He probably went to the local school run by the synagogue. His human father Joseph was a carpenter and that Jesus would have helped out like any child would in a family trade. Yet though Jesus might have grown up in lowly places, He was from a higher place with the high calling to redeem mankind. In fact, He transformed Nazareth into a place of honour.

In the same manner, sin has degraded us to a low estate and we are separated from God, but Christ has lifted us up to a position that is higher than that of an angel. Jesus gives each believer eternal life. He brings us out of shame into His glory.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 35**  
**ROMANS 7**

#### THOUGHT

**Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life? – 1 Corinthians 6:3**

### BIBLE LESSON

*Luke 2:40*

#### LESSON

**Jesus Grew**

LUKE 2:40

*And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.*

Jesus grew just like any ordinary child because He was human. He grew in strength, in spirit and was filled with wisdom. He was subjected to the same environment and temptations, but Jesus is also God, which means He cannot sin. The next mention of Jesus would be when He was 12 years old. He would be in Jerusalem then.

Jesus definitely grew fast and strong in wisdom. By the time He was 12, the men in the synagogue were astonished at His understanding of the scriptures and His answers to many of their questions [Luke 2:47]. Jesus was different because He was filled with the Spirit. He was the Object of divine grace. God was upon Him because His purpose was to die for mankind in humble obedience to redeem the sin of the world.

There is hope at last for the human race. One little baby born in a manger, grew up in a little obscure town of Nazareth was actually the very Son of God in Whom God was well pleased. Very soon, man would be reconciled with God through His life—His miracles, teachings—and His death—His work of atonement on the cross. The heavens would rejoice because the Saviour would be the bridge between God and man. Angels would sing over the salvation of a single man.

Yet there and then, it was not time yet as Jesus needed to mature as a human for His task. It takes time. Everything in life happens in His time.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 36**  
**ROMANS 8**

#### THOUGHT

**For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. – Matthew 18:11**

### BIBLE LESSON

*Luke 2:41–47*

#### LESSON

#### Jesus at the Temple

#### LUKE 2:46

*And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.*

Jesus did not stun the teachers with miracles, but had amazed them with scriptures. He listened, He asked questions and He answered. Jesus was in the midst of these teachers, yet they did not comprehend the nature or the significance of His presence. For 12 years no one sought out the child Christ. Jesus had a purpose for His appearance at the temple—“that I must be about my Father’s business”. Jesus was setting the stage for His adult ministry.

We have a purpose for our lives too. God has given us a meaning for our existence. It is easy for us to fall into a version of Christianity that believes that God is supposed to make our lives go well, that His will is for us to get what we want. If we are constantly bound to the circumstances we believe we need in order to be joyful, we have become the lord of our own lives—believing our destiny is in our own hands. This is not the biblical picture of life with God. It is a fake copy grown out of our self-centeredness.

When we turn from our own ideas and commit our daily lives to His mission, we begin to walk more in step with Him; we take the humble posture of believing that God has us where we are for a reason.

Our purpose, the reason we are here, is for the glory of God, to proclaim His greatness, to accomplish His will. Then our lives will come together as God wants them to.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 37**  
**ROMANS 9**

#### THOUGHT

**Let us be more concerned for His mission and less concerned with our mission.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 2:48–51***LESSON****My Father's Business****LUKE 2:49**

*And he said unto them,  
How is it that ye sought me?  
wist ye not that I must be  
about my Father's business?*

While Joseph and Mary experienced parental responsibility for Jesus, and the painful anxiety of him missing, Jesus was resolved in a growing relationship with the divine Father. He had chosen this crucial stage in His life, on the brink of manhood, to tell His earthly parents that He knew Who His real Father was and what it would mean for His mission. Jesus recognised His unique son-ship to God, and that His mission will require of Him a devotion to God's purpose.

Are we about our Father's business? Are we doing the things our Father wants us to do? Do you know the will of your Father in heaven?

Many Christians seem to struggle with knowing God's will for their lives. The truth is, our part is to do what is shown to us in God's Word. Be saved, be sanctified, walk in obedience with the Lord, and He will show you step by step what His will is for you. It is in the daily trusting in God with everything in your life that He will make His will known to you. Our part is to stay close to Him in prayer and in reading our Bible.

Knowing God's will is simply knowing our Master and walking with Him in obedience to His Word day by day. It is for all of us to be about our Father's business. Pray for the wisdom to carry it out. Jesus knew He had a job to do, and obedience of another sort that He must follow. So do we, and this is what His life would teach us.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**GENESIS 38**  
**ROMANS 10**

**THOUGHT****A life in God's will is a life of obedience.**

### BIBLE LESSON

*Luke 2:52*

#### LESSON

**Jesus Increased in  
Wisdom**

#### LUKE 2:52

*And Jesus increased in  
wisdom and stature, and in  
favour with God and man.*

Jesus is fully God and fully man in one unique person, yet as a man, He has to grow. Jesus grew spiritually, physically, intellectually and socially. As a man, He has shown us how human life is to be lived in constant dependence on the Father and in obedience to His will. The Word of God is the blueprint He has given us to follow, to construct a life that gives glory to Him and to bring satisfactions and blessings to ourselves. We read that Jesus also grew in wisdom. Wisdom is the application of knowledge, which implies applying God's Word to our daily lives.

The question you must ask yourself is, "What am I doing to grow in the things of God?" Do I have a regular time in His Word and in prayer? Spiritual growth takes time, but we must actively engage in the process.

The essentials for spiritual development are the same as those for physical growth—proper food, exercise and freedom from diseases. Similarly, the correct spiritual food is the Bible. Spiritual exercise is the application of the Word of God to one's life, which results in proper character development and worthwhile service to the Lord and others. Freedom from diseases is being pure and "unspotted from the world" [James 1:27], by keeping one's lusts in check.

Jesus is our Saviour. Imitate Him in spiritual growth, in faithfulness, and in commitment to God's purpose for your life. Jesus pursued his Father's will; He practised submission; He proceeded to maturity. Will you do the same?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 39  
ROMANS 11**

#### THOUGHT

**How can a Christian discover God's purpose for his or her life?**

**BIBLE LESSON***Mark 1:1–3***LESSON****The Ministry of John****MARK 1:3**

*The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

John the Baptist was the privileged messenger and prophet—the one crying in the wilderness. Through his message of repentance, he prepared the way of the Lord. John’s ministry was one that removed obstacles from people’s understanding about how to follow Christ. He called those whom he encountered to repent and to change the way they are living.

It is a turning from self-centeredness, bringing about an awareness of sin, so that sinners could receive salvation. He was not only to make the road ready for the Lord; he was also to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Prepare your hearts for the coming of Jesus. Jesus wants to enter the wilderness which we find all around us. Let His glory shine in your heart; let His salvation grant you His peace and joy. We must take a good look at ourselves, at our lives, at our thoughts, and at our hearts to be sure that the way to our hearts is not an obstacle course. Are we preventing the Lord from coming to us?

The quickest path between two points is a straight line. Jesus wants us to get where we need to go in life. What are your ways; the paths that you follow in life? You have goals that you have chosen to pursue; what course are you following to attain those goals? Are you prepared? Is your road level or still bumpy? Is your street clean or still filled with trash? Are you ready for your King?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 40**  
**ROMANS 12**

**THOUGHT****Make straight the way of the Lord.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Mark 1:6*

**LESSON**

**The Person of John**

**MARK 1:6**

*And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;*

John the Baptist might have appeared socially awkward or eccentric. He might be seen by others as a strange hermit. In truth, he was simply a man completely focused and set in place by God for a purpose. He was humble, obedient and bold with a sense of responsibility to God. He came in a very difficult time in Israel's history and his function was ultimately to prepare the people for the ministry of Jesus. For John, it was never about himself or his ministry. It was always about Christ. He did not dwell on his ability to draw a crowd. When the crowd came, he pointed them to the One they really needed.

In the spirit of today's age, John's ministry would have been very different. He wouldn't start in the wilderness. He wouldn't dress funny. He wouldn't preach such a straightforward message. He would use marketing strategies to hone his message and presentation. However, John wasn't motivated by the spirit of today's age; but by the Spirit of God. John didn't just preach a message—his life was the message.

This was John the Baptist, but who are you, and who will you be? Will you be the one who is among the people and yet points their attention to Christ? Will you be the one who is cognizant of God's statutes and the one who follows them? Will you think lowly of yourself and highly of Christ? Will you point people to Him?

You may not be the voice in the wilderness. But you can be a voice for Christ wherever you are.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 41**  
**ROMANS 13**

**THOUGHT**

**Christ must increase; we must decrease.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Matthew 3:7–12*

**LESSON**

**John and the Pharisees**

**MATTHEW 3:7**

*But when he saw many  
of the Pharisees and  
Sadducees come to his  
baptism, he said unto them,  
O generation of vipers, who  
hath warned you to flee  
from the wrath to come?*

John's first words to the religious leaders then were less than pleasant. He knew that the Pharisees and the Sadducees had no desire to repent. The Pharisees often lived moral lives, full of good deeds, but it was all outward actions with no thought given to the heart or motives of their actions. Their lives were consumed with accusing and condemning people; caustic towards the lost. They viewed themselves as the great guardians of truth. They were ever watchful to find a flaw in others. They were eager to pounce on any sign of shortcomings, and condemn people, being the judge and jury all in one. They were often stirring something up or in the middle of contention.

What about us? If we don't guard our attitudes, we may become like the Pharisees—patting ourselves on the back as though we deserve to be saved because we are better than others. Good deeds are essential in the Lord, but good deeds themselves can never make up for our sins.

All of us need forgiveness. That means we must humble ourselves to recognise our sins and to plead for mercy. We must realise we do not deserve salvation but have received it only because of the goodness and mercy of God.

We must be careful to examine our own lives, making sure that we truly belong to Christ. For, if we do not, the axe is laid at the root of our tree. The Pharisees and Sadducees were not willing to be baptised by John; they only came to see what was going on.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 42**  
**ROMANS 14**

**THOUGHT**

**Truth does not begin and end with me.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 3:10–14*

**LESSON**

**The People’s Response**

**LUKE 3:10**

*And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?*

John the Baptist has made it clear to the people. The doors to heaven are opened not to those who claim they are descendants of Abraham. To have everlasting life, one must truly repent of one’s sins. What is the evidence of true repentance then? The evidence lies in the bringing forth of “fruits worthy of repentance” [Luke 3:8].

The people were eager to know more and we read that three groups of people actually approached John for further instructions. They were the common people, the publicans and the soldiers. To each group, John gave a different answer, not because their repentance was of varying degrees but more because the fruit of their repentance would be manifested in different ways depending on the place God had put them in the society.

For the common people, the fruit of repentance lies in their sharing of their possessions with those in need [v. 11]; for the publicans or tax-collectors, it lies in overcoming the temptation to collect from people more taxes than they should [v. 12]; whereas for the soldiers, it is shown through their temperance, discernment and contentment with remuneration [v. 14].

Take note that John is not saying here that these works are necessary for repentance. Instead, He is saying that these works are fruits of their repentance. Furthermore, by highlighting the different areas each individual group needs to work on, John is actually transforming the lives of those people. Repentance brings about godly sorrow, and with sensitivity to sin, the path is cleared for the life-changing gospel.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**GENESIS 43**  
**ROMANS 15**

**THOUGHT**

**What would Jesus tell you if you were to ask Him about your fruit of repentance?**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 3:15–18***LESSON****One Mightier than I****LUKE 3:16**

*John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptise you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*

As the forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist had spoken with authority, so much so that some people were thinking in their hearts whether he was the Messiah Whom they were waiting for all these years.

A worldly man might have responded in pleasure given this flattery but this was not the case for John. He answered truthfully that someone much mightier than he was to come. His humility was genuine as he was given the revelation from heaven. His illustrations were even more vivid. This Person Who was to come was One Whose shoelaces he was not worthy to unloose. He was to baptise the people with the Holy Spirit.

Imagine yourself stooping low to tie the shoelaces of a person. Next consider yourself unfit to even do this seeming simple and lowly task. Before the presence of Christ, John admitted his inadequacy despite the high regard of men. He knew what he could do was to only preach the message of repentance and baptise people with water.

Christ is the One Who has come with the life-changing power of the gospel. The fiery baptism of Christ will purge believing men of their sins. Yet at the same time, He is the One Who will separate the chaff from the wheat and burn them with fire unquenchable. As we serve Christ, we need to have the heart of John the Baptist. Even when men praise us for our good works, remember to point them to Christ. He is the One to Whom all glory and honour is due.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 44**  
**ROMANS 16**

**THOUGHT**

**He who truly knows his condition before God, truly understands himself indeed.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Matthew 3:13–17*

**LESSON**

**John Baptises Jesus**

**MATTHEW 3:16**

*And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.*

Of all the accounts in the synoptic gospels, Matthew's offered us the most detail of what actually happened. The gospels of Mark and Luke did not mention the hesitation of John the Baptist. John forbade Jesus when he was asked to baptise Him, telling Him he should be the one being baptised by Jesus instead. But Jesus gave His answer. All these should be done to fulfil all righteousness. By doing so, Jesus was submitting to God the Father in perfect obedience.

Jesus' baptism was spectacular, to say the least. All three accounts mentioned the opening of heaven. We were not told what really happened. The Spirit of God then descended upon Jesus like a dove. Note that the divine baptism was one *like* a dove descending upon Jesus instead of an actual dove doing that.

If witnessing this strikes the eyes with awe, then the next happening is going to impact the ears with thunder. A voice came from heaven, even the very voice of God, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." Here is God the Father Himself affirming the position and office of Christ before us.

We are not told of the reactions of the people who saw God's glory and heard His voice. However, we can imagine at least John the Baptist would have been one of those privileged ones to see and hear God's revelation. In fact, he has encountered all three Persons of the Trinity! It must have left John stunted in holy fear.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**GENESIS 45**  
**I CORINTHIANS I**

**PRAYER**

**Blessed be God the Father Who sent His only begotten and well-pleasing Son to die on the cross for our sins. How dreadful is the judgement yet how great the love!**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 4:1–4*

**LESSON**

**Temptations**

**LUKE 4:3**

*And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.*

After being baptised, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil for 40 days. This itself is a good reminder to us. Baptism is not the end of our fight with sins. In fact, it might even mark a new beginning. As we grow in the faith, we become more sensitive to sins, and thus the fight usually gets tougher as we strive to reach higher ground.

At the same time, the devil dreads to see spiritual growth in us and will tempt us even more. Oh, how many souls have first proclaimed the faith in haste, thinking that they had triumphed over sin, death and the devil, only to find themselves backsliding to their old selves or even not saved in the first place! Let not this be a summary of your walk with Christ.

With profession of faith comes the cost, which is often manifested in the discipline one commands against temptations. The devil first tempted Christ with physical needs—and perhaps few things on earth are as pressing as a hungry stomach. The temptation was fleshed out as a challenge, “If You are the Son of God, turn this stone into bread.”

If Christ had followed the devil’s suggestion, He would have proven to the devil He is the Son of God. He could also satisfy His hunger. What a natural thing to do. Yet Jesus had rebuked the devil with the very Word of God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**GENESIS 46**  
**I CORINTHIANS 2**

**THOUGHT**

**The devil knows our weaknesses. Do not prove him right.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 4:5–8*

**LESSON**

**All this Power**

**LUKE 4:6**

*And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.*

In the second temptation Jesus stood upon a mountain from which the whole civilised world could be seen. The tempter said, “Worship me, and all will be yours.” This is the temptation to compromise. Satan knew Jesus had come to win the kingdoms of the world. This was an invitation to conquer the world without going to the cross. Satan would simply give it to Jesus, if Jesus would worship the devil.

Satan claimed that authority over the earth’s kingdoms was delivered to him, and Jesus never challenged the statement. Who delivered it over to Satan and when? In Genesis 1, God gave man dominion over the earth, and Adam and his descendants had forfeited it over to Satan. Satan is the ruler of this world [John 12:31] and the prince of the power of the air [Ephesians 2:2] by the popular election of mankind since the days of Adam.

The Father’s plan for Jesus was for Him to suffer first, then enter into His glory [Luke 24:25–26]. Satan offered Jesus a way out of the suffering. One day, it will be said that “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever” [Revelation 11:15b]. Satan wanted to offer this to Jesus now, before the agony of the cross.

If Jesus accepted this, our salvation would be impossible. Christ might have gained the appearance of an authority to rule, but He could not have redeemed individual sinners through His sacrifice.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**GENESIS 47**  
**I CORINTHIANS 3**

THOUGHT

**Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. – James 4:7b**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 4:9–13*

**LESSON**

**Pick up the Sword**

**LUKE 4:9**

*And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence.*

Satan could not himself throw Jesus off the Pinnacle of the temple. He could do no more than suggested, as such he asked Jesus to throw Himself down instead. In Matthew’s account, we read of a quote. “For it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up...” This time, the devil knew and quoted Scripture [Psalm 91:11–12]. Beware the guile of Satan, for chances are, he knows the Scriptures more than you do!

And it is also true that angels were around Jesus in these 40 days of temptation. The Gospel of Mark tells us “the angels ministered unto Him”. With these, the devil tempted Jesus.

However, Jesus again rebuked Satan with Scripture, “Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God” [Deuteronomy 6:16a]. Jesus answered Satan’s misuse of Scripture with the proper use of the Bible. Christ rejected Satan’s twisting of God’s Word by rightly dividing the word of truth, understanding it in its context.

Jesus understood from His knowledge of the whole counsel of God that Satan was distorting this passage from Psalm 91, but a superficial reader of the Bible new in the faith might concur with Satan’s suggestion. He might from there make the wrong decision in life. We should be fully armed with the sword of the Spirit [Ephesians 6:17] so that when Satan launches his assault on us, we can stand firm and strong in God’s Word.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**GENESIS 48**

**I CORINTHIANS 4**

**THOUGHT**

**Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. – Ephesians 6:13**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*John 1:19–28*

**LESSON**

**A Faithful Testimony**

**JOHN 1:20**

*And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.*

The Pharisees sent men to investigate the identity of this man who was preaching repentance and baptism. They were familiar with the baptism of Gentiles into Judaism, but here was John baptising both Jews and Gentiles alike, unto a repentance, not of the law.

Was he the promised Messiah or Elijah [Malachi 4:5] or the Prophet spoken of by Moses [Deuteronomy 18:15]? By whose authority did he baptise sinners? The Pharisees sought to accuse him. But John bore testimony of his mission. “He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias” [v. 23].

Today, more than ever, we are living in a world of satanic deception and darkness. Man’s nature has not changed since his fall in Eden. And in this 21st century wilderness, Satan is still our accuser and the father of lies. If the light of Christ does not shine into our hearts to dispel the darkness, we would be lost and without hope.

Yet our times are more urgent than John’s. Much nearer are we to the second coming of our Lord. In light of that, we too must hasten with our mission and be faithful to our calling. Let us testify of the Gospel that saves. Let our lives be lived in likeness and obedience to our Master and our testimony a consistent and faithful one so that the unbelieving world may ask Whom we follow. And may we like John, confess and deny not our Lord and Saviour.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**GENESIS 49**  
**I CORINTHIANS 5**

**THOUGHT**

**Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. – Matthew 5:16**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*John 1:29–34*

**LESSON**

**The Lamb of God**

**JOHN 1:34**

*And I saw, and bare record  
that this is the Son of God.*

John knew Jesus for 33 years as his cousin. But in the fullness of God's time on this appointed day, John saw Jesus and knew him to be the Son of God, the Lamb that would take away the sins of the world. And as the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus, John knew the Messiah's time had come.

To the Jews, the lamb is a symbol of innocence. It is gentle and meek, obedient and patient. It was a sacrificial animal; the Passover was marked by the killing of a lamb [Exodus 12]. A lamb was offered in the tabernacle, every morning and evening as part of the daily worship [Exodus 29]. And this animal of sacrifice had to be without blemish. So in the lamb, we have the beautiful picture of our Saviour on earth, for when He was reviled, He did not retaliate. When He suffered, He did not threaten and as a sheep before her shearers was silent, so He opened not His mouth.

The sinless Son of God, perfect and holy, is the only acceptable sacrifice for the sins of mankind. This is the unfathomable mystery of God's love—that the innocent should die for the guilty, that Christ should take our place on the cross.

Do we realise the enormity of the sacrifice and the price of our souls? The Lamb had to die so that we can live. Do you treasure what He has done for you? How are you living that valuable life today? Remember the Lamb that was slain for you.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**GENESIS 50**  
**1 CORINTHIANS 6**

**THOUGHT**

**Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. – Revelation 5:12**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*John 1:35–42*

**LESSON**

**The First Disciples**

**JOHN 1:41**

*He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.*

The water baptism of Jesus by John signalled the advent of Christ's earthly ministry. And the anointing of the Holy Spirit confirmed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. In today's reading, we are introduced to the Lord's first disciples. Like His humble birth before, this was a humble beginning. Then it was the lowly shepherds hearing the news, now it would be two lowly fishermen receiving the call. Andrew and Simon, who would be called Peter (in Greek, and 'Cephas' in Aramaic) by the Lord.

According to God's marvellous grace through the preparatory work of John the Baptist, Andrew found Christ, and he hurried to tell his brother and brought him to Jesus.

Salvation is by the grace of God. But He has chosen men as the means of carrying His message and doing His work. We who are His chosen are therefore required to do our Master's bidding. To the world of dying sinners, we may be called to be like John, a lonely voice crying in the wilderness, sounding the unwelcome but needed message of repentance unto salvation. We may be called to be like Andrew, who finding the Saviour kept it not to himself, but hurried to tell his brother and fetching him to meet the Lord. We may be called to be like Peter, a stone upon which fellow believers may find a footing, and build thereon.

In the eyes of the world, John, Andrew and Peter were nobodies. But they were faithful and known by the Lord. In God's eyes, only that matters.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 1**  
**1 CORINTHIANS 7**

**PRAYER**

**Make me a servant, humble and meek. Help me to lift up those who are weak.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 1:43–51***LESSON****Can Any Good Thing  
Come Out from  
Nazareth?****JOHN 1:48**

*Nathanael saith unto him,  
Whence knowest thou me?  
Jesus answered and said  
unto him, Before that Philip  
called thee, when thou wast  
under the fig tree, I saw  
thee.*

**N**ote firstly that it is Jesus who finds His disciples. As a shepherd seeking His lost sheep, so we see that Jesus seeks His own. He finds Philip, who unhesitatingly goes to Nathanael with the good news of Jesus of Nazareth.

Secondly, note the curious question that Nathanael asks. Some have supposed that the insignificance of Nazareth, the poor reputation and coarseness of the Nazarenes may have been cause for Nathanael to wonder whether out of such could come anything good. But this one thing we know, that Nathanael's wonder sprang from a blameless heart, for Jesus saw and knew his heart and claimed it. That same instant, Nathanael confessed Christ, the Son of God, his Master and King.

Thirdly, note that this too is a question we often ask. When we are challenged with bringing the gospel to a stranger, "can any good thing come out of our doing so?" When we are asked to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them who despitefully use us, "can any good thing come out of our obedience?" Thank God that He knows the end from the beginning and it is enough that we obey and trust the outcome to Him.

God will vindicate such obedience and faith in His time. What is required of us only, is to like Nathanael, be without deceit or hypocrisy in our hearts, guileless and devoid of offence toward God and men [Acts 24:16], for with such the Lord is well pleased.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 2**  
**I CORINTHIANS 8**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, occupy and rule my heart. Help me to guard it from guile, deceit and hypocrisy, from that which is offensive and odious to You.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 2:1–12***LESSON****The First Miracle****JOHN 2:1**

*And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there.*

We have seen the Lord calling His first disciples, Andrew, Peter, then Philip and Nathanael by a prescient and irresistible call. The sheep know their Master's voice and they follow Him [John 10:27]. As His ministry unfolds, Jesus now comes to a wedding in Cana with His disciples. Here at the outset we see the Incarnate God establishing both the place of humanity and nature in subjection to Him, according to God's higher plan. When the wine ran out, Mary said to Him, "They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."

First, why did Mary tell Jesus? Perhaps she supposed that this special son could help. And she was right. Jesus could help.

Second, mark Jesus' reply. These are striking words for by them we can see that the immortal Lord will not tolerate a mere mortal, even one as near and dear as his human mother, directing the exercise of His divine prerogative and program. God alone dictates when and where He will execute and manifest His power and glory. Mary was gently reminded of her place. She was only the earthly mother of Jesus and not the heavenly mother of God.

But she sought the Lord for help and He did. Jesus is willing to meet the mundane needs of man, for His higher purpose. By this miracle, the disciples' faith was strengthened and His glory manifested. May our faith likewise be strengthened, as we witness the miracle in Cana.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 3****I CORINTHIANS 9****THOUGHT**

**Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses. Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. – Psalm 107:6, 8, 9**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*John 2:1–12*

**LESSON**

**Whatsoever He Saith  
Unto You, Do It.**

**JOHN 2:7**

*Jesus saith unto them, Fill  
the waterpots with water.  
And they filled them up to  
the brim.*

The wine supply at the wedding celebrations had run out. They needed help and Mary sought it from Jesus. “Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.” May these words resonate in the hearts of all Christians today, for this is the hallmark of true discipleship and genuine love for Christ.

The servants’ lot was to obey. Six large water pots were to be filled with water. Likely they could not understand the reason, nor see the purpose of which they were asked to do. It was water they were filling when the lack was wine. But witness then the mighty working of the creator God. Mere servants by their obedience, they became firsthand witnesses of this first miracle of Jesus [v. 9]. Not only was water transformed into wine, heaven’s supply was wine of excellence.

This same Christ still supplies all our needs today. He is able to transform what and whom He wills. He transforms sinners to saints. He transforms sadness to joy. He gives spiritual life to the dying soul. And on that great day of His coming again, He will transform decayed bodies into glorified vessels.

But if we desire to see great things of Christ, we must first obey as the servants did. We obey His commandments even though we may not see the purpose or even agree with what they say. That matters not. That the Master has said should suffice for His servants. But let us also ask confidently and expectantly. We can be assured that He gives only what is good.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 4**  
**I CORINTHIANS 10**

THOUGHT

Read 1 John 2:3–5.

**BIBLE LESSON**

*John 2:13–17*

**LESSON**

**The First Temple  
Cleansing**

**JOHN 2:15**

*And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;*

**W**hen the Passover approached, Jesus left Capernaum and went to the temple in Jerusalem. Seeing that the temple had become a place for commerce rather than worship, the Lord was infuriated. He made a scourge out of small cords, and used it to drive out all the merchants from the temple ground.

The Jews had forgotten how the Lord had given Moses specific instructions [Exodus 25–30] on how God's house was to be set aside for worship, and not any other activities. Therefore, Jesus had to correct that error and cleanse the temple of those corrupt practices.

Christians, what is your attitude towards God's holy temple? Do you treat your church like God's house? Like the temple in Jerusalem, the church building, like God's temple, is dedicated to and is set aside for God's use. It is not meant to be used for the pursuit of filthy lucre. If a person is pursuing worldly things, how can he also pursue heavenly things? Indeed, a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways [James 1:8]. A Chinese saying likens such a double-minded man as straddling between 2 boats. It is a precarious position indeed, because the boats may separate at any time and the man will fall into the waters!

And what is your attitude towards your body as the temple of God's Holy Spirit? Let us take heed from today's reading that, if we have committed to serve God, then we should keep our bodies holy, and acceptable unto Him, which is our reasonable service.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 5**  
**I CORINTHIANS 11**

**MEDITATION**

**What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. – 1 Corinthians 6:19–20**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 2:18–25***LESSON****Temple Destroyed and  
Raised in Three Days****JOHN 2:22**

*When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.*

Seeing that the Lord had driven away all the merchants from the temple ground, the Jews, and particularly the religious leaders in the temple, asked Jesus for a sign. They wanted to know what authority Jesus had to drive out the merchants from the temple. Basically, they were asking whether Jesus was the owner of the temple.

In reply, Jesus answered them with a cryptic answer: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” Bewildered, the Jews could not grasp what Jesus was saying, because the building of the physical temple took some 46 years. How could Jesus raise it up again in three days? Jesus left the question unanswered, but John wrote—as a parenthesis—in the next verse that Jesus was referring to the temple of His own body. Jesus’ words would only be understood by the disciples after Jesus had risen from the dead.

Whether Jesus was referring to the physical body, or the physical temple, it was humanly impossible to raise up either in the span of three days. But our Lord is the Master of both the body and the temple. He was issuing a challenge to those under the sound of His voice, to witness the miracles that He will perform during His ministry here on earth.

Jesus performed miracles as a sign of His deity, that He is indeed the Son of God. Let us who have heard the gospel of Christ rejoice and be glad, because God had sent His Messiah, the Chosen One, to save His people from their sins.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 6**  
**I CORINTHIANS 12**

**MEDITATION**

**For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. – Matthew 12:40**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 3:1–8***LESSON****Nicodemus Meets Jesus  
at Night****JOHN 3:2**

*The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

Of the four gospels in the New Testament, Nicodemus was only mentioned in John's. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, very much like the Apostle Paul, and he was a respected ruler of the Jews. In today's passage, we see him coming to Jesus in the middle of the night. Jesus' ministry and miracles were obviously exciting and interesting news among the Jews, and when Nicodemus heard of them, he had questions that needed to be answered.

Nicodemus acknowledged that God was at work in Jesus' miracles. As a keeper of the Jewish traditions, Nicodemus knew that prophets in the past had also performed miracles because God was with them. Yet, because of the enmity between Jesus and the Pharisees, Nicodemus was careful to seek Jesus at night. Nicodemus was probably one of the few Pharisees who were deeply impressed by Jesus' work, because in verse 2, he used the phrase "we know" instead of "I know".

Nicodemus' encounter with Jesus changed his opinion about the Lord, as we will see his name again in John 19, when he brought myrrh and aloes to anoint Jesus' body after His death on the cross. We see that by that time, Nicodemus has already believed and become a follower of Jesus, and he was not ashamed anymore to be associated with Christ.

Are you a closet Christian like how Nicodemus used to be? Continue to enquire and grow in God's Word, and God will give you the strength to be bold and to witness for Him as you walk in His Spirit.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 7**  
**I CORINTHIANS 13**

**MEDITATION****Read 1 Peter 3:15–16.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*John 3:9–16*

LESSON

**God Loved the World**

**JOHN 3:14**

*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.*

John 3:16 is perhaps the most quoted verse in the Bible, and the verse that is translated to the most number of languages. Yet note that the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus was the precursor to this verse.

Here, Jesus was showing Nicodemus how one must be born again; it is a spiritual birth and not a physical birth. Note Jesus' comment that Nicodemus, as a "master of Israel", should know this truth. As a religious leader, Nicodemus should have known Jesus was speaking of heavenly issues, and not earthly issues.

The most pertinent issue that Jesus was impressing upon Nicodemus, and to us, is that the people of this world are perishing in sin. We are all born sinners, and cannot find our way to heaven on our own efforts. Without God's intervention, mankind is doomed to an eternity in hell. No man had ascended up to heaven and came back, therefore, no man can know the way to heaven. Only the one Who is from heaven, namely Jesus Himself, is able to show us the way to get back to heaven and to God. And the way is for Him to be lifted up on the cross, to bear the sins of all mankind, so that those who look to Him, should not perish.

Dear reader, God loved us so much that He is willing to sacrifice His only Begotten Son, so that we can have everlasting life in heaven with Him. Would you not respond to His love, by giving your life to serve Him?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 8**  
**I CORINTHIANS 14**

PRAYER

**Dear Lord, thank You for Your matchless love, manifested in the cross of Calvary. Forgive me of my unbelief and help me to look to You the rest of my life. Amen.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 3:17–21***LESSON****Man Loved Darkness****JOHN 3:19**

*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

All mankind after Adam are born sinners. Adam sinned when he disobeyed God's command and ate of the forbidden fruit. By his disobedience, all were made sinners [Romans 5:19a]. The entire world is also condemned to be destroyed by fire in the last days [2 Peter 3:10]. This has been the state of this fallen world ever since Adam's disobedience. Condemnation has fallen upon all, and without God's intervention, all creation will perish.

God's salvation plan began as soon as Adam and Eve sinned. He gave His promise to Eve that her seed would bruise the serpent's head [Genesis 3:15]. Later, God promised Abraham that in him shall all the families of the earth be blessed [Genesis 12:2–3].

The Jews have been waiting for the fulfilment of this promise. Jesus is the promised Messiah. Jesus came into this world not to condemn the world. He came so that we can all be saved from the condemnation. And what is the nature of the condemnation? It is precisely the rejection of the Saviour [v. 19]. Man, in his sinful state, loves darkness and rejects light, because light exposes the works of darkness to the judgement of God.

How then can sinful men come to the light? It is impossible without God's help. We thank God that He is the Almighty and He is the God of the impossible. Through the ministry of Jesus, even Pharisees like Nicodemus and Paul were able to come to the saving knowledge of God. Will you come to the light also?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 9**  
**I CORINTHIANS 15**

**MEDITATION**

**And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgement was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. – Romans 5:16**

## 1 MARCH

### BIBLE LESSON

*John 3:22–24*

#### LESSON

### The Baptism of John

#### JOHN 3:23

*And John also was baptising in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptised.*

Jesus and His disciples were baptising. This was the only place in Scripture where Jesus was said to baptise, though strictly speaking, it was His disciples who actually did the baptising [John 4:2]. John and his disciples were also baptising in Aenon, which was near Salim. The question that arises is, what was it exactly that John was doing when he baptised?

It is important to remember that John was a prophet. A prophet is a messenger of God. The role of John was simply to relay God's message to His people. John's purpose was to get the people ready for the coming Messiah. Isaiah said of him, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" [Isaiah 40:3].

John taught the people to leave their sins behind, to repent and get ready for the Messiah. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" [Matthew 3:1–2]. He was a no-nonsense preacher who was straightforward in his message. John's baptism was said to be "unto repentance". That is, it led to repentance of sins, paving the way for Jesus' forgiveness.

As Christians, our role is similar to that of John. We are to turn sinners to Christ the Saviour. Jesus' commandment to each one of us is to "go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature". Are you heeding His commandment?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 10**  
**I CORINTHIANS 16**

#### REMINDER

**Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. – Acts 4:12**

### BIBLE LESSON

*John 3:25–30*

#### LESSON

#### The Testimony of John

#### JOHN 3:28

*Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.*

People began to flock from John to Jesus. This decline in John's popularity gave the religionists an opportunity to attack John by questioning the purifying value of his baptism. If John's baptism was really cleansing the people's hearts, why were the people now flocking to Jesus? Hurt by such a charge, John's disciples went to him and asked why all men were now forsaking him for Christ.

John answered by pointing them to the Lord, for Jesus alone was the Messiah, God's appointed one. God did not appoint John to be the Messiah, but to be His forerunner. John was clear about this. Jesus alone was the One appointed from heaven.

Christ was the Bridegroom. The bridegroom was the one who has the bride (the church, the followers of God). The friend is important, but he is not the bridegroom. The Bridegroom is the One by whom the friend stands. The Bridegroom's voice is the voice to be heard. He is the one who brings joy to the bride. He is the object of the friend's loyalty.

John's humility and attitude of wanting only to lift up and honour his Master is an attitude that all Christians should emulate. In our service for Him, we must not in any way draw attention, praise and honour to ourselves. Nevertheless this is something sinful men will find very difficult to do; and it is a weakness that the devil will seek to exploit. We need to put on the whole armour of God to protect us from the wiles of the devil [Ephesians 6:11].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS II**  
**2 CORINTHIANS I**

#### REMINDER

**Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. – Philippians 2:3**

### BIBLE LESSON

*John 3:31–36*

#### LESSON

**He is Above All**

#### JOHN 3:31

*He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.*

In these six short verses, John explains who the Messiah is and what mankind's response should be to Him. Firstly, Christ is "above all". These two words are very important. They are mentioned twice. It means that Jesus is superior and pre-eminent. Jesus is from heaven and not of the earth. A man can only speak of the earth and of earthly things. He can only know earthly things. Hence, the only conceivable way for a man to know anything about heaven is for someone from heaven to come and tell him. That Someone is Jesus Christ.

Jesus alone is the spokesman for God. He testified, revealed and proclaimed what He had seen and heard, but tragically, the vast majority of mankind do not believe Him. Yet the few who do believe Him, receive and seal His testimony; meaning, they show that God is true. In other words, the only way a man can show that God is true is through his accepting of the testimony of Jesus.

John ends with a frightening warning. Jesus alone determines man's destiny. The man who believes on the Son has everlasting life. God will receive and honour anyone who receives and honours the Son Whom He loves so much. It does not matter who the person is or what the person has done. If he believes on God's only Son, God gives everlasting life to him.

The man who does not believe the Son faces two things. He will not see life—he perishes. And the wrath of God is upon him.

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

#### WARNING

**It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. – Hebrews 10:31**

### BIBLE LESSON

*Mark 1:14*

#### LESSON

### John Imprisoned

MARK 1:14

*Now after that John was  
put in prison, Jesus came  
into Galilee, preaching the  
gospel of the kingdom of  
God,*

John the Baptist was a fearless servant of God. His message was one of repentance. He spoke the Truth plainly and even bluntly to all, including the religious leaders of his day [Matthew 3:7–8]. He did not back away from pointing out the sins of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. Herod Antipas, incidentally, was a son of Herod the Great who had massacred every male baby around Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth.

Now, the fact that Herod Antipas was a king did not deter the brave preacher from directly reproving him of “all the evils which Herod had done” [Luke 3:19], and in particular the sin of adultery because Herod had married his brother Philip's wife, Herodias, when Philip was still living. Herod was greatly offended. For this, he had John seized, bound in prison, and subsequently beheaded.

John's faithfulness and courage should inspire us today. We live in an age of political correctness where few preachers dare to point out the sins of liberal Christians who openly violate the moral laws of God. And in a world that is increasingly hostile towards the church, many Christians are behaving like the disciples of Jesus who cowered behind closed doors after Jesus died, paralysed with fear that the world would recognise them.

As bearers of the good news of salvation, let's proclaim, as Paul did in Romans 1:16a, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 13**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 3**

#### REMINDER

**Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. – Matthew 5:11**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*John 4:1-4*

**LESSON**

**Going through Samaria**

**JOHN 4:4**

*And he must needs go through Samaria.*

Jesus left Judaea out of necessity. He left for John's sake. The crowds were leaving John and going to Jesus, and the religionists were using the fact to belittle John's ministry. Jesus did not want to create a competitive scene and damage John's ministry, so He left the area and returned to Galilee.

Verse 4 says, "He must needs go through Samaria." Actually He did not need to go through Samaria to get from Judaea in the south of Palestine to Galilee in the north. He could have crossed the Jordan River and go via the Eastern route, as do most Jews to avoid interaction with their much-despised cousins, the Samaritans. But He chose to go through Samaria. Why?

Jesus must go to Samaria because He had a mission. The Samaritans needed the gospel as much as others. In fact, His parting instructions to His disciples at His Ascension were, to bring the gospel to Jerusalem, Judaea and Samaria, and the whole world [Acts 1:8]. Jesus went to Samaria because it was the Father's will for Him. His example is vastly different from that of the Old Testament prophet Jonah, who, when told by God to go to Nineveh to warn the Assyrians, headed in the opposite direction to Tarshish.

We thank God that countless missionaries since the time of Jesus have heeded the Great Commission and brought the gospel to some of the most inhospitable and hostile places on the planet. And it is thanks to their sacrifices that we have the gospel today. Shouldn't we also follow the Lord's example?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 14**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 4**

**THOUGHT**

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

### BIBLE LESSON

*John 4:5–9*

#### LESSON

#### Give Me to Drink

JOHN 4:7

*There cometh a woman of  
Samaria to draw water:  
Jesus saith unto her, Give  
me to drink.*

If you need an example of how to share the gospel with a total stranger, look no further than the Master Himself. Today we witness how our Lord Jesus used an everyday topic of physical thirst and a common place like a well to lead a complete stranger to the door of salvation.

It was midday and the Lord was both tired and thirsty from His journey. As He entered the city of Sychar in Samaria, he came to a well. While sitting there, he met a Samaritan woman who had come to draw water. He struck up a conversation by asking her for a drink. She was shocked, for the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. The Jews despised the Samaritans and regarded them a mongrel or half-Jews by birth and by religion.

She asked Jesus why He would ask her, a Samaritan for a drink. It was this question, this subject of water, that Jesus took and used to reveal one of the greatest truths of spiritual life, that of living water; and to present the claims of God upon a life.

Every day, we come across people from all walks of life who are still outside God's kingdom. Our conversations with them, be it about the weather or the news, can present countless opportunities to bring up the subject of sin, man's eternal destiny and his need for the gospel. What is stopping you from grabbing these opportunities as did our Lord at the well in Sychar?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 15**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 5**

#### THOUGHT

**Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace. – Acts 18:9**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 4:10–19***LESSON****Living Water****JOHN 4:14**

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

The woman saw clearly that Jesus was making an unusual claim. She recognised something that most people did not; that Jesus was claiming to be greater than one of the greatest religious fathers, Jacob himself. He was also claiming to have access to much water, even one of a different kind, for quenching the thirst of men.

All humans have two kinds of thirst—a physical thirst and a spiritual thirst. Physical thirst, unless quenched by physical water, will lead to physical death. Spiritual thirst, unless quenched by “living water”, which Christ alone is able to provide, will lead to spiritual death.

How can one get this living water? One, it is a ‘gift of God’. It is free but you have to ask for it [v. 10]. Two, the living water is from a Person much greater than a religious father. Three, you must recognise your need for it. Four, you must first settle the sin problem, as seen shortly when our Lord exposed this Samaritan woman’s sin problem and help her deal with it.

Are you feeling this spiritual thirst? Are you trying to quench it with the stagnant waters of the flesh and of this world; like money, success and lusts of the flesh? Are you craving for more of the same? If you answer yes, then you are guilty of committing two evils, in the words of Jeremiah the prophet. You have forsaken God, the fountain of living waters, and had hewed out broken cisterns that can hold no water [Jeremiah 2:13]. You need to read the rest of this chapter.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 16**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 6**

**PRAYER**

**Give me this water, that I thirst not.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 4:20–26***LESSON****Divine Revelation****JOHN 4:26***Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.*

The topic of discussion between our Lord Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well was focused on spiritual truth. Note the Samaritan woman's knowledge of Christ as a prophet in this passage. Her esteem of Jesus led to His divine acknowledgment of Messiahship. John recorded this faithfully in the gospel under his name. Indeed the purpose of the gospel is to reveal the truth about Christ so that whosoever believeth can have eternal life.

This is the only instance where Christ revealed His divine nature so openly, and this is exactly the Apostle John's purpose in writing this gospel. More importantly, Christ truly lived up to the authenticity of His claim of deity.

A marked difference for this divine revelation to the Samaritan woman is the reaction of the hearer. There would be no obstacles hindering Christ's ministry. However, the Jews' desire for a political revolution was to lead to Jesus' silencing of His own disciples, about this sacred truth. "Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ" [Matthew 16:20]. This was told to the disciples only during the latter part of their ministry.

How would you react to the thought of someone knowing so much about you? There should be no fear when it's based on the truth. Christ's use of the object lesson of "the water of the well" has a symbolic truth. It also shows His sensitivity to the needs of people.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 17**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 7**

**THOUGHT**

**But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name. – John 20:31**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 4:27–30***LESSON****Overcoming Prejudice****JOHN 4:27**

*And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? Or, Why talkest thou with her?*

At this moment, the disciples returned from running their errand. Upon witnessing the discourse of Christ with the Samaritan woman, the disciples had some unvoiced questions of their own. However, their reverential respect for the Lord's wisdom and condescension to Him prevented them from asking further.

The animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans was the reason for the disciples' reaction here. The Jews would even take the longer way, taking a detour instead of passing through Samaria, to reach their destination. They would go to all lengths to avoid any contact with the accursed Samaritans.

To quote the commentator Lightfoot, "A man should not salute a woman in a public place, not even his own wife." Such public speaking with a woman was contrary to the Rabbinic precepts. According to Ellicott, "The words of the Law were to be burnt rather than taught to a woman." Another quote from Westcott, "One of the daily thanksgivings was, Blessed art thou, O Lord... who hast not made me a woman." Yet contrary to such prejudices, many women ministered to Christ in His earthly ministry.

The saying 'Prejudice runs deep' is really true. All of us are guilty of prejudice in one way or another. We may not even be aware of showing partiality in favouring one over another. If this is true, let's pause a moment to pray for God's forgiveness. May the example of our Lord motivate you and me to be sensitive to the needs of others, regardless of who the person may be.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 18**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 8**

**REMINDER**

**There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. – Galatians 3:28**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 4:31–39***LESSON****Doing God's Will****JOHN 4:34**

*Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*

In this passage we read of the higher purpose of God the Son in doing the will of God the Father. Jesus' physical thirst was put aside in His desire to minister to the Samaritan woman's spiritual need. Likewise, the physical food brought by His disciples was left aside as He focused on spiritual food instead.

Yet again the disciples were clueless as to what Christ really meant. They were puzzled by the symbolic language in verse 34. This was not the first time they were obtuse and slow to catch on. We are reminded of our Master's loving patience when He explained the harvesting of souls to His disciples.

In contrast, the immediate and positive response of the other Samaritans was to their credit. They readily and willingly accepted Christ's claim to His own divinity. Similarly, the ready willingness of our Lord to supply all spiritual need shows His obedience in doing God's will. The will of Jesus the Son of God is always attuned to the will of God the Father.

All earthly parents will definitely be very pleased with such obedience from their children. In a similar way, God will be pleased with our obedience. As God's children, let's be motivated to continue serving our Lord Jesus willingly and cheerfully. The amount of time you spent on an activity shows your preference for that sport. How active are you in doing God's will then? Let obedience to God be your top priority in life and stay focused on it.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 19**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 9**

**THOUGHT**

**... Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? – Luke 2:49**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 4:40–42***LESSON****Revival in Samaria****JOHN 4:41***And many more believed  
because of his own word;*

We see a great contrast between the response of the Jews and that of the Samaritans. Not only did those Gentiles hear about Jesus from the Samaritan woman, they even sought Him out. Their desire to know more caused them to look for Him in person. Their spiritual hunger and thirst were assuaged immediately. It resulted in many more coming to know God's saving grace.

Unlike them, the Jews looked for signs and wonders [John 4:48]. Such an attitude stumbled them in knowing more spiritual truths. Even worse was the fact that some unbelieving Jews did not even welcome our Lord at all.

Can you stand up to scrutiny when others question what you say and do? It is one thing when people believe in you based on the testimony of others. It is quite another when they see and hear for themselves in person.

We must always be careful to match our walk with our talk. Actions always speak louder than words. Not only church leaders but every child of God must be doers of the Word and not hearers only. The outcome in verse 41 was "many more believed". This attested to the truth that Christ, as the Saviour of the world, was indeed Who He claimed to be. This should spur us on to be faithful witnesses to point unbelievers to Christ. Can this same result—"many more believed"—be true of your witness for the Lord Jesus Christ too?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 20**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 10**

**THOUGHT****Therefore many of them believed ... – Acts 17:12**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 4:14–15*

**LESSON**

**Exemplary Teacher**

**LUKE 4:15**

*And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.*

The ministry of Christ in Galilee was very well received. At that moment in time, neither the rabbis nor the Jews have begun to oppose Jesus yet. The divine working of the Holy Spirit was upon Him. This empowering was evidenced in the wonder-working miracles and teaching of doctrinal truths. As a result, the public ministry of Jesus was commended by all who heard Him. Many honoured Him even as His fame spread far and wide.

Our Lord Jesus would seek out His own people in the synagogue to minister to. His emphasis was on the spiritual condition of the Jews. We must emulate this example of Christ to witness to our own loved ones first, remembering that ‘charity begins at home.’ Salvation is of the Jews [John 4:22b], so Christ’s first priority was to reach out to them.

What Jesus did and claimed to be was always up to scrutiny. Yet His exemplary life was unquestionable. Even when His disciples were puzzled by His communication with the Samaritan woman, they did not query Him simply because of their implicit faith in His wisdom and decisions. Here in Cana of Galilee, Jesus performed one miracle only, that of changing water into wine. His other marvellous miracles wrought in Jerusalem and Judea, not forgetting Samaria, made Him even more famous.

How about you and me? Are we willing to live a Christ-like life? We must live exemplary lives in obedience to God’s Word. This will certainly bring glory to God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 21**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 11**

**THOUGHT**

**Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. – Ephesians 6:6**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 4:16–24***LESSON****First Rejection at  
Nazareth****LUKE 4:24**

*And he said, Verily I say  
unto you, No prophet  
is accepted in his own  
country.*

The fame and popularity of Jesus in Luke 4:14–15 did not last long. Soon we see the account of the negative response to Christ’s ministry. As the saying goes, “A calm goeth before a storm.” That outward calm and fame would soon turn to ridicule, opposition and rejection by His own people. The Jews, expecting a political Messiah of honour and glory, rejected the humble Jesus of Nazareth.

Christ and His disciples attended the Jewish church in Nazareth on Sabbath day. Jesus stood up to read the Scriptures. Standing up signified His desire to read the Scriptures to the congregation. The rulers of the synagogue would normally assign certain capable people to do so. Every one present was astonished at His fluent reading of the original Hebrew Scriptures as well as his ability to expound them so clearly. This was indeed proof of His divine inspiration.

“And they said, Is not this Joseph’s son?” This remark showed their utter amazement. However, such words showed their disbelief that the son of a mere carpenter could be a religious teacher, what more their glorious Messiah. Christ foresaw their rejection even then.

Can you remember your first reaction upon hearing the Gospel? Did you receive the Word of God readily? What about this present moment? As a child of God, how do you react when others reject His Gospel call? Do not be surprised at the stubborn attitude of unbelievers. In rejecting God’s saving grace, they are rejecting Christ Jesus. Let’s pray for God’s mercy upon lost souls headed for eternal damnation.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 22**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 12**

**THOUGHT**

**He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. – John 12:48**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 4:25–30***LESSON****Jesus' Response to the Rejection****LUKE 4:30***But he passing through the midst of them went his way,*

Jesus knew that His own people at Nazareth had rejected Him. Instead of gratifying their curiosity and their demand for signs, Jesus warned the people by recalling two well-known stories in the history of Israel.

In Elijah's days, there was a famine. Many people were without food. Destitute and starving, they were crying out to God for mercy. While there were so many who professed to be God's chosen people, God sent His prophet to help only one needy widow who was a despised Gentile. Why would God turn away from the Jews to save a Gentile? Reason—she was the only one whose heart was turned towards God.

The other story was about Naaman, a leper, who was a Syrian Gentile. When God sent Elisha to heal Naaman, Elisha passed by many Jewish lepers. Many thought they were the chosen people of God but the prophet did not stop to help any of them; he helped Naaman only. Why? Reason—Naaman was the only one who acknowledged God and trusted in Him.

Jesus warned that God would not show mercy to people who just thought they were "God's people." He would grant His grace to only those whose heart was turned towards Him and who trusted in Him. More importantly, He would not continue to appeal to those who were always rejecting Him and hardening their hearts. Salvation requires more than mere profession. A person must really repent of his sins and turn to God for forgiveness.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 23**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 13**

**WARNING**

**The Lord will not always strive with a man—not forever. A person must surrender to God while there is still time.**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 4: 43–45***LESSON****Jesus Arrives in Galilee****JOHN 4:45**

*Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.*

Jesus spent two days in Samaria where he had an amazing encounter with a Samaritan woman at the well. Many in Samaria believed in Him because of His teaching. Their faith had increased because they had heard Him for themselves. They confessed Jesus to be the Saviour of the world.

Now as Jesus returned to Galilee, He repeated the fact that a prophet had no honour in his own country. However, when He came to Galilee not expecting to receive any honour, the Galileans welcomed him. Why? They were welcoming Him because they had seen the miracles He had done at Jerusalem [v. 45].

Jesus was being honoured by the Galileans not for who He was, but for what He was able to do. The same false belief exists today. There are many who believe in Jesus on the basis of some shallow, physical benefits that they can get from Him. They have not believed knowing that Jesus is their Saviour and that He has saved them from eternal punishment. Rather they have believed because the church is nice, the music is good, there are financial gains to be reaped, or for some other shallow reasons. When we turn worship and service for God into what we like, or what we can get out of it, then we do not have the life-transforming faith that Jesus expects.

Jesus demands life change. Jesus calls for new birth. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” [John 3:3].

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 24**  
**GALATIANS I**

**THOUGHT**

**Why do you believe in Jesus? Why do you serve God?**

**BIBLE LESSON***John 4:46–54***LESSON****Healing of the  
Nobleman's Son****JOHN 4:53**

*So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.*

When Jesus entered the city of Cana, a nobleman, a high-ranking official in King Herod's royal court, approached Jesus for help. This man's son was dying. The man had heard about Jesus and he believed Jesus was the only one who might be able to help him. So, he made the long journey, bore the anxiety and fear that his son might die while he was away, and humbled himself to ask Jesus for help. The man demonstrated believing faith.

The man begged Jesus to go to his house and heal his son. Jesus said to him, "Go thy way: thy son liveth" [v. 50]. Having heard that, the man went his way. He demonstrated trusting and obedient faith. Both faith and obedience are necessary to receive the promise and help of Jesus.

As he was returning home, he received news that his son was healed. His belief and obedience in Jesus brought the blessing. He asked the exact hour his son recovered. He wanted to confirm the supernatural versus the natural. He was reaching out for stronger faith in Jesus. He wanted to believe on Him more and more.

The man not only believed in Jesus but he also witnessed to "his whole house". Witnessing for Jesus was not easy for this man of high position. He would face ridicule and persecution, loss of social position or even loss of life. Yet, he demonstrated witnessing faith. He wanted others to know what Jesus had done for him and he wanted others to know Jesus' glorious salvation.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 25**  
**GALATIANS 2**

**CHALLENGE**

**True belief is one that brings about radical life transformation in obedience to Jesus. Take the road of faith and let your faith grow deeper with your Saviour.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Matthew 4:12–16***LESSON****Jesus Settles in  
Capernaum****MATTHEW 4:13**

*And leaving Nazareth,  
he came and dwelt in  
Capernaum, which is  
upon the sea coast, in the  
borders of Zabulon and  
Nephtalim.*

When Jesus heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee. The imprisonment of John made His work more pressing. On His way into Galilee, Jesus met the Samaritan woman waiting at the well. He also healed the nobleman's dying son and attended to many Galileans who were waiting to be healed and preached to. Many souls were won.

When Jesus arrived at Galilee, He went to Nazareth—the place where he was brought up. He entered and preached at the synagogue on the Sabbath day [Luke 4:16], but was rejected by His people. Jesus thus left Nazareth and settled down in Capernaum of Galilee.

Capernaum is a flourishing city with a strategic location. It was right at the northern tip of the Sea of Galilee, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. It was a vital place where one could get access to many places, be it by land or by boat. It was a place thriving with life, where many people were farmers and fishermen.

In Capernaum, we find no theologians. The outstanding Jewish minds were mostly in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the sacred city and seemed to be the only befitting place for the Messiah. People did not believe a prophet would arise out of Galilee [John 7:52]. Yet, out of Galilee did arise the greatest prophet, the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. To them who sat in the region and shadow of death, light has come.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 26**  
**GALATIANS 3**

**PRAYER**

**Father, we pray that Your Light will burn in our hearts and may we have a greater love for Thee.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Matthew 4:17–22*

**LESSON**

**Fishermen Called to be Disciples**

**MATTHEW 4:19**

*And he saith unto them,  
Follow me, and I will make  
you fishers of men.*

There are two different commands in today’s passage: (1) repent and (2) follow. It is not enough to repent of our sins and of evil. Jesus wants us to go the next step and follow Him. We need to turn from sin so that we can go after Jesus.

“Come, follow me”, that was what Jesus said to Peter and Andrew, James and John. This was not an invitation to be saved. It was a call to discipleship and service. Note that Jesus was the One Who did the choosing—not the fishermen. This is a picture of grace and election.

What was their response? At once, Peter and Andrew left their nets and followed Jesus. James and John immediately left their boat and their father to follow Jesus. Even though it was not their choice, but when called by Jesus, they had responded in obedience. They left their occupation. They left their family. They showed that following Jesus took precedence over everything else. Following Jesus means Christ comes first before anything or anyone else.

Jesus said, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” What a promise! He did not say I wanted you to do it. He promised to make us into the ones that could do it. This was the first lifesaving crew gathered in the New Testament to be trained for evangelism. It is the beginning of what will be later revealed as the Great Commission. Are we obedient to Christ’s command to follow Him and be fishers of men?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 27**  
**GALATIANS 4**

**THOUGHT**

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

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke: 4:33–37***LESSON****Healing of the Demoniac  
in the Capernaum  
Synagogue****LUKE: 4:34**

*Saying, Let us alone; what  
have we to do with thee,  
thou Jesus of Nazareth? art  
thou come to destroy us? I  
know thee who thou art; the  
Holy One of God.*

**D**uring Jesus' time, people were always wondering, "Is Jesus a good teacher? Is He a prophet? Could He be the Messiah?" But the demons asked no such questions. The demons knew who Jesus was.

The demons acknowledged Jesus as the Holy One of God. Upon seeing Him, they panicked and cried out at the top of their voice. They asked Jesus to go away; to leave them alone. They were fearful that Jesus would destroy them.

Jesus, with authority and power, rebuked the demons to leave the man. Though the demons were reluctant to obey Jesus, they had no choice but to obey Jesus. "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth" [Philippines 2:10]. The demons threw the man before all the people and came out without injuring him.

How vulnerable are you to the attack of the evil one? The New Testament offers three principles for combating the forces of evil. (1) Peter says, "Be wary" [1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 4:26], (2) Paul warns, "Be ready" [Ephesians 6:11] and (3) James says, "Be steady" [James 4:7]. Let us take heed of these principles so that we will be able to face whatever Satan and his minions may throw at us.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 28**  
**GALATIANS 5**

**THOUGHT**

**For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places – Ephesians 6:12.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Mark 1:25–28*

**LESSON**

**With Authority**

**MARK 1:27**

*And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.*

Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit. He commanded the demon to leave immediately. His word was accompanied with power. Note the power of Jesus and His word. We need to apply His word as we face issues in life. God’s word guides us and helps us to face trials and challenges in the world.

Jesus told the evil spirit to “hold thy (your) peace”. This was the command for him to be quiet. Jesus did not permit the demons to continue speaking even though they could recognise and acknowledge Jesus as the “Holy One of God”. The Lord requires those on earth who carry the vessels of the Lord to be clean [Isaiah 52:11]. The Lord will not even allow demons to spread the truth about the Son.

We also learn here that head knowledge of the truth does not bring eternal salvation. It is not sufficient to know that Jesus is the Son of God. One has to believe in Christ, confess his sins and accept the Lord as personal Saviour and Master in order to be saved. As His believers, we are expected to live a clean and pure life.

The evil spirit obeyed in anguish and left the man with a shriek. The people were amazed at the power and authority of Jesus. They marvelled at the authority and jurisdiction Jesus had over the world of darkness, and they spread His fame everywhere. Today, as believers of Christ, we have the mission to share the truth and bring unsaved souls into the kingdom of God.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 29**  
**GALATIANS 6**

**MEDITATION**

**Oh Lord God, help me to strengthen my faith in You. Set me free from any negative and evil spiritual forces hindering my walk with Jesus Christ, for I know I can do all things through Christ, Who strengthens me.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Mark 1:29–31***LESSON****Healing of Peter's  
Mother-in-law****MARK 1:31**

*And he came and took her  
by the hand, and lifted  
her up; and immediately  
the fever left her, and she  
ministered unto them.*

**P**eter invited Jesus and His disciples to his home for lunch. A reflection here is that we need to invite Jesus to our “home” to have close fellowship with him. When we truly worship the Lord, invite Him into our hearts so that His presence is always with us. “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me” [Revelation 3:20]. The presence of the Lord brings us hope and assurance of peace and salvation.

When Jesus came into Peter’s house, he saw Peter’s mother-in-law lying in bed with a great fever [Luke 4:38]. In those days, a high fever was a life-threatening illness as there was no medicine available to cure the sickness.

The presence of Jesus brought hope to the family. Jesus, full of compassion and love, immediately went to her bedside, touched the woman and helped her up. The fever left her immediately. What a miraculous healing! Jesus has the full authority and power to drive illness and demons away.

Peter’s mother-in-law was not only healed from the fever, she was able to gain the strength immediately to get up and serve the Lord and the guests in her house. We need to learn from her. Be appreciative of the goodness we receive from the Lord, serve Him faithfully and be a channel of blessings to others. Remember to reach out to those in need, share their sorrow, comfort and support them in prayer.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 30**  
**EPHESIANS 1**

**PRAYER**

**O God, help me to remember all the beautiful things You have done in my life with all gratitude and humility. Help me to serve You by being a blessing to others.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Mark 1:32–34***LESSON****Healing of the Multitudes****MARK 1:34**

*And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.*

Here we read how news of Jesus' teaching in the synagogue and of his healing power spread far and wide. Many people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, including those possessed by demons. These people heard the miracles of Jesus and believed. Thus they travelled all the way to Simon's house to seek for help from Jesus. Jesus laid hands on the afflicted and healed them.

Jesus is approachable by those who are in need of His help. He cares and is full of compassion. We can cast all our care upon Him for He careth for us [1 Peter 5:7]. Jesus understands our needs. He knows that we are helpless, hopeless, gripped with troubles and deprived of true joy.

We live in a corrupted world and we need to depend on the power of the Lord to live a consecrated life and to enjoy His peace. Our Lord opens His arms to all of us. He is patient and gentle. He cares for all of us, taking time to heal each and every one that comes to seek him.

Jesus drove out many demons but would not let them speak because they knew he was the Messiah, Son of God. He commanded the demons to remain silent as He had authority even over the demons. Jesus wanted the people to believe in Him through His own words and works, not through what the demons said. Also, Jesus knew that God had His own plan and timetable in revealing His true identity.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 31**  
**EPHESIANS 2**

**THOUGHT**

**Do we often forget how much Jesus cares and loves us? Do we often forget to pray for His strength and guidance in every decision we make? Be still! Listen to God's instruction.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Mark 1:35–38***LESSON****Disciples Seeking Jesus****MARK 1:35**

*And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.*

This passage reminds us regardless how busy we are, whether in secular work or in our labours for the Lord, we ought to take time to rest in the Lord. We need to spend time to pray, do our devotion, and build our personal relationship with God. Stay close to the Lord so that we may constantly draw strength and peace from Him.

Jesus spent the day before teaching in the synagogue, performing miracles and ministering to the people in the city of Capernaum. He must be tired but He still woke up early in the morning while it was still dark, went off to a solitary place to pray. We should follow the good example of Jesus, finding time to pray, as it is important that we communicate with God regularly, so that we can seek and do His will.

As encouraged by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:18, we are to pray in the Spirit on all occasions. Make prayer your life and your life a prayer. As we are living in a world full of evil temptations, we need to continuously be on guard and seek God's protection and guidance.

Jesus was very clear with His mission on earth. He was to preach to as many people as possible. The people in the city had experienced Jesus' greatness. He knew His time on earth was limited, therefore He needed to move on to other villages to minister to the non-believers there. We have the same great commandment to share the gospel with others too.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 32**  
**EPHESIANS 3**

**THOUGHT**

**Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. – Mark 16:15.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Mark 1:39*

**LESSON**

**Jesus Preaching in the Synagogues**

**MARK 1:39**

*And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.*

Jesus was faithful in His preaching ministry. He went throughout Galilee, which was densely populated with more than 200 cities, and often spoke in the synagogues. He urged the people to confess their sins, repent and live for God in a holy manner.

Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom of God. It was supposed to be good news to the Jews because they had been waiting for the promised Messiah. It is definitely good news for us. Those who believe in Christ will receive eternal salvation, hope, peace and joy.

Here we read that Jesus preached with compassion. He continued to minister and heal every disease and sickness among the people, including those who were possessed with devils [Read Matthew 4:24–25]. Christ cares for us. He is able to cure the sick, not just the physical illnesses but also spiritual ones as well. In the same way, we are to show mercy and kindness to one another. We must try to reach out to those who are sad, lonely, and helpless. Jesus is our example and He has shown us how to be compassionate to others.

As servants of Christ, we are to remain faithful and always be willing to do God's work. God will strengthen the faith in those who are willing to give of their talents and time in serving Him. "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" [1 Corinthians 4:2]. God assures us that He will give power to His servants who are committed in serving Him and His people.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 33**  
**EPHESIANS 4**

**THOUGHT**

**As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. – 1 Peter 4:10**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 5:1–3***LESSON****Jesus Preaching from  
Peter's Ship****LUKE 5:3**

*And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.*

Jesus had a successful preaching ministry; the crowd that followed Him multiplied. They were eager to hear the Word of God. They were hoping to learn more from Jesus and also witness more miracles. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled [Matthew 5:6]. Jesus was eager to share God's Word with the multitude too. Similarly, we should seize every opportunity to share the gospel with people around us.

Jesus also knew that he needed to train some disciples to help him as fishers of men. He was looking around and saw Simon Peter the fisherman with his ship at the water edge. He asked Simon to lend his ship for the preaching of the Word. Peter agreed. He was later recruited as one of Jesus' disciples. We could learn here that we need to be willing and ready to share our house or possession for the great mission of expanding God's kingdom.

Jesus went up the ship and requested Simon to push the ship a little from shore. He then sat down and taught the people from the ship. Even in instructions like these, Jesus was preparing Peter as a disciple, requesting him to help while observing what the Lord did in meeting the need of the multitude. Peter had willingly and delightfully obeyed. As such, he was indeed blessed.

Are you ready to be called by the Lord to serve Him? Are you prepared to proclaim and defend the gospel? Pray for a cheerful heart of service.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 34**  
**EPHESIANS 5**

**MEDITATION**

**But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. – 1 Peter 3:15**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 5:4–11*

**LESSON**

**A Miraculous Catch of Fish**

**LUKE 5:6**

*And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.*

After Jesus finished His sermon from Simon's ship, He commanded Simon, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught" [v. 4], to which Simon obeyed "nevertheless". What was the reward of the ready compliance to our Lord's commands? We were told that the two ships were filled with a great multitude of fish that they began to sink.

The impression that this miraculous draught of fishes made upon Peter was remarkable. Luke told us that, when Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus' knees saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" [v. 8b]. Peter's association with Jesus led him to examine his own heart.

Through this miracle, Peter realised who Jesus was. Our Lord said to him, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men" [v. 10b]. This is essentially a call to discipleship. "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men" in Mark 1:17 beautifully expressed Jesus' purpose for Peter and for us as well. After the first disciples of Christ brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

Jesus taught the disciples later to think in terms of the ever-growing kingdom of God, beginning in Jerusalem and to all Judea, Samaria and eventually unto the uttermost parts of the earth. If we are disciples of Jesus, in His strength we are to bring others to know Him and follow Him, and by His grace we shall become fishers of men.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 35**  
**EPHESIANS 6**

**PRAYER**

**Lord, give us great faith that we may stand for You in the days to come and remain faithful till the end of our lives.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 5:12–16***LESSON****Jesus Healing a Leper****LUKE 5:13**

*And he put forth his hand,  
and touched him, saying,  
I will: be thou clean. And  
immediately the leprosy  
departed from him.*

Jesus encountered a man “full of leprosy”. A leper in Old Testament times is prohibited from all interaction with others. This man was physically, socially and probably economically isolated. We would expect, since he had little chance to listen to God’s Word, he would be spiritually poor as well. Yet with great faith, he had approached Jesus confidently and humbly, kneeling down to worship Him, thus manifesting both his earnestness and reverence. He pleaded with humble submission, saying, “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.”

The answer he received was singularly merciful and gracious. “I will: be thou clean.” This is not only comfort and encouragement to the poor leper; it is also assurance to all heavy-laden souls. It manifests God’s infinite willingness to do good to us, and His readiness to show His personal love for us. He is always willing to heal us if we call out to Him in faith and in humility.

“He put forth His hand and touched him.” One single touch from the Lord Almighty “and immediately the leprosy departed from him”. By that touch, the force of health routed the regiment of disease and the leper became clean—not only physically but spiritually and socially as well.

All of us are lepers spiritually in the sight of God. Sin is the deadly disease by which we are all affected. Our bodies may be healthy and active but our souls are by nature dead in trespasses and sin. Who can deliver us from this body of death? Only our Lord Jesus can.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 36**  
**PHILIPPIANS I**

**PRAYER**

**Heavenly Father, sometimes I feel like the leper who rushed to Jesus for healing. I ask that You would continue to heal me, both in body and in spirit.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 5:17–20***LESSON****Jesus Curing a Paralytic****LUKE 5:20**

*And when he saw their  
faith, he said unto him,  
Man, thy sins are forgiven  
thee.*

**F**our men brought their paralysed friend for healing. The house in which Jesus was teaching and healing the multitude was packed. The four men could not get close to Jesus, so they lowered their friend on his bed down through an opening on the roof into the crowded house and laid him at the Master's feet.

Faith binds men and unites their powers for a common purpose. Clearly the determination of this men revealed that they believed in Jesus and His power to heal. Christ saw the faith of these men. He also knew exactly what was in their heart. They were definitely seeking forgiveness of sins as well as healing of body—for it was still the common belief of those days that one's suffering was due to one's sin. Jesus would later do both.

In the Bible there are many instances of Jesus healing people. Each time, faith is an integral part of the healing process. Jesus had also seen the courage of the four men—their initiative, their perseverance and the difficulties they had to face to bring the palsy to the Master's feet. Yet the thing that was most precious to Him was their faith.

If leprosy serves to illustrate the corrupting and defiling effects of sin, then palsy is a picture of the paralysis that sin produces in life. The earnestness of these men is also perhaps a rebuke to us, who make so little effort to bring our unsaved family members and friends within the healing influence of our Lord.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 37**  
**PHILIPPIANS 2**

**PRAYER**

**Heavenly Father, when physical afflictions come into my life, may they draw me closer to You. May they also cause me to think of others who are suffering from these pains yet without You as their Refuge.**

**BIBLE LESSON**

*Luke 5:21–26*

**LESSON**

**Who Can Forgive Sins?**

**LUKE 5:21**

*And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?*

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ  
**EXODUS 38**  
**PHILIPPIANS 3**

Today we continue with the account of the palsied man who was lowered down through the roof to be healed by Jesus. Our Lord had told him, “Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.” This claim immediately caused an outrage among the scribes and Pharisees. They charged Jesus of blasphemy, saying, “Who can forgive sins, but God alone?”

Jesus perceived their thoughts. This declaration of forgiveness would certainly be blasphemy if Jesus were only a man. Our Lord assured them that the Son of man has power to forgive sins. He confirmed His assertion by immediately healing the paralytic to health. Our Lord’s ability to forgive spiritual transgressions is proven in His healing of the physical ailment. In this miraculous healing of the palsied man, Jesus distinctly challenges the doubting scribes and Pharisees. Indeed He Who with a word can give life and strength to a paralysed man, would surely have the right and power to exercise the divine prerogative of the forgiveness of sins.

The young man was no sooner healed than “he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.” The assembled multitude was amazed and they too, gave honour to God. They “were filled with fear, saying, we have seen strange things today”.

How about you? Have you experienced the cleansing power of Christ? Do you give glory to God? You who have been forgiven of your sins, are you forgiving of others as well?

**PRAYER**

**Lord, help me to see and admit my great need of Your forgiveness, and then in love and thankfulness may I show the way of forgiveness and life to others.**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 5:27–28***LESSON****Matthew Called to be a Disciple****LUKE 5:27**

*And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.*

In the Bible, we often read of the different ways God calls His servants for service. The responses to these callings vary too. Yet we see a clear similarity when it comes to the responses of Christ's first disciples. When Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James and John, who were fishermen, to be "fishers of men", they forsook all and followed him [Matthew 4:18–22; Mark 1:16–20; Luke 5:11]. Likewise, when Jesus called Levi, who was a tax collector, to follow Him, "he left all, rose up, and followed Him" [v. 27–28; Matthew 9:9; Mark 2:14].

In the Gospels of Mark and Luke, Matthew is called Levi, the son of Alphaeus. He was a tax collector. He lived in Capernaum, the centre of Jesus' public ministry. Some may thus infer that he had more than once seen or heard Christ prior to his calling. He could have seen His mighty deeds and felt the authority with which He spoke. Jesus' sermons might have probed his desires and longings after purity.

Jesus addressed Matthew personally and said, "Follow me." He who is His sheep hears His voice. It was the call Matthew longed to hear and he answered in instant obedience. His was not merely an emotional obedience; it was practical, genuine and sacrificial.

Matthew, once a Jewish publican, was called to the high honour of becoming one of Jesus' first disciples. Like Matthew, many today are also called to be Jesus' disciples. Have you answered the call like how Matthew did?

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 39**  
**PHILIPPIANS 4**

**THOUGHT**

**For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? – Mark 8:35–36**

**BIBLE LESSON***Luke 5:29–32***LESSON****Questions for Jesus****LUKE 5:30**

*But their scribes and  
Pharisees murmured  
against his disciples, saying,  
Why do ye eat and drink  
with publicans and sinners?*

When Jesus began His public ministry, the people in Palestine could be said to be divided socially into two groups—“the righteous” on the one hand and “the sinners” on the other. The scribes and Pharisees and all those associated with worship in the synagogues were often reckoned to be “the righteous”. The rest were sinners. This misguided social division is the context to our account today.

The first service that Matthew the publican did for Jesus his Redeemer after his conversion was to make “a great feast in his house”. He invited “a great company of publicans and others” to be his guests. He was eager to have his old friends introduced to Christ. He wanted his Lord to be their Lord.

However, during the feast, Jesus was criticised by the Pharisees for eating and drinking with publicans and sinners. The religious leaders had singled out publicans because they despised these tax collectors who were then notorious for their dishonesty, extortion and greed under the Roman power. To this, Jesus replied, “They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” [v. 31b–32].

By this statement, Jesus not only vindicated His conduct and those of His disciples; He also defined for us, His mission. To Jesus, this was a golden opportunity to call sinners to repentance—a call for them to change their ways. We need to be frequently reminded that Jesus “came into the world to save sinners”. His charge is our charge too.

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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE  
IN 2 YEARS, READ

**EXODUS 40**  
**COLOSSIANS I**

**PRAYER**

**Heavenly Father, thank You for forgiving me of my sins. Use me to point people who are still in the bondage of sin to You.**