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DAILY *manna*

APRIL– JUNE 2017

GENERAL EDITOR

Rev Isaac Ong

Daily devotions for reading through the Bible

Dear *Daily Manna* readers,

In this quarter, we have come to the end of the life and ministry of Joshua, or in Hebrew *Yehoshua*, which means “Jehovah is Salvation”. The meaning is an accurate description of God’s faithfulness upon His people. They crossed the Jordan, occupied the land, and finally settled down in the land that God had promised their forefathers. Indeed, as Joshua proclaimed to the people, “Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof” [Joshua 23:14].

God’s faithfulness demands man’s like response, and this is also seen in Joshua’s life. He was a military commander, a leader of the nations, but above all, he was a godly father to his children [Joshua 24:15]. I pray that as you read the Book of Joshua, you will recommit yourself to serve the LORD, just as Joshua did.

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

A note to new *Daily Manna* readers

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

A step-by-step approach:

1. Read the day’s Bible chapters assigned in *Daily Manna*.
2. Review the Bible chapters to get an overview of what you’ve 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

1 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 10:1-5

LESSON

The war
against the Gibeonites

VERSE 5

*Therefore the five kings
of the Amorites, the king
of Jerusalem, the king of
Hebron, the king of Jarmuth,
the king of Lachish, the king
of Eglon, gathered themselves
together, and went up, they and
all their hosts, and encamped
before Gibeon, and made war
against it.*

In Chapter 9, the Gibeonites misled Joshua because they had seen God's power in destroying the Canaanites, and they were afraid for their lives. The power of the God of Israel had also struck fear in the inhabitants of Canaan. And now with the Gibeonites giving up to the Israelites without so much as shooting an arrow, the five kings of the Amorites – the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon – decided to form an alliance against the Gibeonites.

The first king on the list was Adonizedek king of Jerusalem. Adonizedek means "Lord of Righteousness". He was the king of Jerusalem, which means "city of peace", and of which Salem was its precursor [Psalm 76:2]. Another famous king hailed from Salem, Melchizedek, of whom Adonizedek was probably a descendant. Here is the irony. The man entitled "Lord of righteousness" and who was king of the city of peace, would take up arms against the Gibeonites and in defiance of the God of Israel.

Adonizedek was a man with the best of titles and heritage, yet was unworthy of either. We learn several lessons from this. First, noble ancestry is not to be despised. It is foolish to ignore one's godly linkages of past generations. Second, godliness is not hereditary. Righteousness in Christ cannot be attained by proxy. Third, coming to Christ in repentance is not without its cost and opposition. The world stands opposed to Christ and His people. Our Lord Jesus warns, "The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." [John 15:20]

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS I
PSALMS I-2

THOUGHT

Martin Luther says the Church is *haeres crucis* – the heir of the Cross. Christians must be prepared for the opposition from the unbelieving world. Paul warns: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" [2 Timothy 3:12].

2 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 10:6-11

LESSON

Trust and Do

VERSES 8-9

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee. Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night.

The five kings were fearful of the power of Israel, but they did not come directly against Israel. Instead they launched their attack against Gibeon, which was a royal city, and one bigger than Ai, and whose army was better equipped. Even then, they did come up against Gibeon by themselves. Thus, they formed an alliance.

Rebellion – like disobedience – finds courage in company. But what foolish thought this is. Numbers alone do not count for the rightness of a cause, nor are they an assurance of victory. Facing an impending attack from the armies of the five kings, the Gibeonites turned to Joshua. They pleaded, “Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us” [Joshua 10:6].

As Joshua prepared to launch a rescue of the Gibeonites, the LORD spoke to him, “Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand.” But notice that Joshua came to the Gibeonites’ help suddenly or swiftly. He led the troops from Gilgal all night.

Here is the divine promise working hand in hand with human effort. This is God’s formula for victory. By His sovereign will, the LORD determines not only the end, but also the means to those ends. Victory is assured in the end by the promise of God, and for that very reason, we must never be slacken in the exertion of our effort. We do not leave it all to God; neither do we take it all upon ourselves. Rather, we should spare no effort in the Lord’s work, caring nothing for the outcome but only the sincerity and integrity of our labour.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 2-3
PSALMS 3-4

THOUGHT

Augustine of Hippo says: “Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you.”

3 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 10:8

LESSON

Fear Not

VERSE 8

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.

“Fear not.” This could very well be the motto that God had given to Joshua. From the very outset when he took over the helm from Moses, the LORD told Joshua, “Be strong and of a good courage” [Joshua 1:6, 7, 9]. When Joshua led in the counter-attack against Ai, the LORD said to him: “Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land” [Joshua 8:1].

The LORD gave the same assurance to Joshua before he led the army to deliver the Gibeonites. And the fact that these words were repeated in Joshua’s ear made this assurance doubly sweet. It means that God was dealing with him now as He had graciously done in all the past.

On account of the LORD’s promise, “Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, and went up from Gilgal all night” [Joshua 10:9]. The LORD’s word alone was enough to give Joshua courage to go forward. What is a league of five or even five thousand if we have the promise of God? The Psalmist says: “Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God” [Psalm 20:7].

In the same way, we should embolden with holy resolve when we know that we will be facing a seemingly insurmountable challenge because God fights on behalf of those who fight for Him. Our victory is assured because Christ has given us the victory.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 4
PSALMS 5-6

THOUGHT

God’s assurance of success does not do away with the use of human means, rather it should spur us on to do our utmost for Him.

4 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 10:9-11

LESSON

God gave the victory

VERSE 11

And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-boron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 5
PSALMS 7-8

THOUGHT

Joshua believed the word of God, and he marched forward against the armies of the five kings with boldness. Immediately we see the help from God. The divine help first came when God sent down a fierce storm of hailstones upon the allied enemies. We know that this is not a natural hailstone because we read that there “were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.”

It was in a time when close hand-to-hand combat in warfare was the norm. It suggests that the hailstones were God’s pin-point missiles targeted at the enemies. It was a miracle. By its very nature, miracles are inexplicable. Thus when God works miracles, He does not explain how they come to be. The Bible merely recounts the miracle without any explanation. God reveals only that which man has neither the power to discover nor the intelligence to explain. It would be the height of foolishness to begrudge the divine work of God just because of our inability to satisfactorily explain the working of God’s providence.

Joshua was fearful, but he trusted God’s word. The LORD reminds us: “My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness” [2 Corinthians 12:9a]. When we do God’s work, however difficult it may be and however strong the opposition, we may always count on His grace. One writer puts it this way: “They who aim at any form of good find a secret providence furthering their enterprise ... a Divine backing which makes it that, however weak they may be, they are more than conquerors through Christ that loved them.”

When God calls us to the work, we can be sure that He will provide the strength for the work.

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 10:12-14

LESSONThe LORD
heard the voice of a man**VERSE 14**

*And there was no day like
that before it or after it, that
the LORD hearkened unto
the voice of a man: for the
LORD fought for Israel.*

The second miraculous intervention came by way of Joshua's prayer. It was a short prayer, and a poetic one: "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon" [v. 12]. Again, this event is inexplicable. Some claim that because Joshua was not speaking scientifically when he said that the sun stood still, therefore he was not to be believed. But that was not his job. He was simply recording the event in the language of the people of his day. He offered no explanation. Besides, as one writer points out that it is not Joshua's calling to be a Galileo or Copernicus; he was God's minister.

The failed scientific explanations aside, the remarkable statement of grace is that "there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel."

There was another day years removed from this one when there was a similar astronomical miracle that took place not in Gibeon, but in Golgotha. Then the brightness of midday was enveloped in darkness for three hours. Then it was not just a mere man who prayed, but the Son of God who called out from the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" [Luke 23:34].

Then, God acted because of His love for sinners, for the Father made the Son "to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" [2 Corinthians 5:21]. Then, as it was here, "there was no day like that before it or after it."

There is yet another day coming when there will be great astronomical phenomena [Revelation 6:12; 8:12]. It is the Day of the Lord coming as a thief in the night. Paul warns, "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief" [1Thessalonians 5:2-4].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 6
PSALM 9

THOUGHT

6 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 10:14

LESSON

The LORD hears

VERSE 14

And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.

Confronted by four formidable armies from all the kings of the Amorites, Joshua sought the LORD in prayer. “And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee” [Joshua 10:8].

True to His promises, the LORD never let His people down [Joshua 1:5; 6:2; 8:1]. Look at how the LORD fought for Israel as Joshua led his men in an all-night surprise attack against the enemies. The LORD sent hailstorm killing more enemies than Joshua and the Israelites did with their swords.

Pursuing the enemies, Joshua prayed for more daylight to complete his mission. In answer to his prayer, the LORD caused the sun and moon to stand still, giving Joshua a full day to rout the enemies. Only our LORD the Creator of the heaven and earth is able to do such miracle.

When Joshua took his needs to the LORD, the LORD met his needs. The LORD our Creator is able to do exceedingly beyond that which we ask according to His promises. The LORD will do the same for us. If we seek Him, ask Him to help us, He will hear, answer and meet our needs according to the promises of His holy Word.

God can use our prayer to move even the universe according to His will. The requirement – “If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” [John 15:7].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 7
PSALM 10

THOUGHT

PRAYER is the difference between the best YOU CAN DO and the best GOD CAN DO.

7 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 10:15-21

LESSON

The enemy destroyed

VERSE 20

And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest which remained of them entered into fenced cities.

Right from the start of the long drawn-out campaign, God charged Joshua to be strong and courageous in order to lead Israel to enter and occupy the land of promise. It was the punitive will of God that Joshua was to carry out to wipe out all the enemies.

We must understand that these enemies in the land were formidable and had very powerful armies. They were well-known for their idolatrous practices, brutality and wickedness. God's patience to forbear with them was running out and He must judge. According to Genesis 15:16 the time was ripe for God to use Joshua to destroy these occupants of the land because their iniquities were "full" and due for judgement.

Hence, charged with the command of God and the conviction to obey, Joshua prayed for victory and he pursued the enemies. The LORD answered his prayer by miraculously extending a full day of sunlight for Joshua to pursue the enemies. Even when told that his enemies were hiding in a cave Joshua did not stop but had commanded his men to seal the mouth of the cave while he persevered against the rest of the fleeing enemies.

A spiritual principle we draw from here is that the command of God's Word gives us the conviction both to obey and persevere in serving Him. Obedience to God's Word is not selective obedience. Neither is it dependent on situations. Partial obedience is disobedience. To obey is better than sacrifice [1 Samuel 15:22]. Total obedience to God's Word is part and parcel of our Christian faith and practice. Are we doers of God's Word?

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 8
PSALMS 11-12

REMINDER

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. – James 1:22

8 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 10:22-27

LESSON

Victory and vindication

VERSE 24

And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them.

At the start of his southern campaign to occupy the land of promise, Joshua led Israel to fight the armies of the five kings. The five kings hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah. Joshua ordered that the cave be sealed and went in hot pursuit of the fleeing enemies. Except for a few who escaped back to their fortified cities, all five armies were destroyed. It was a victory that stunned the surrounding nations.

At Joshua's command the five kings were brought out of the cave. Before they were put to death, Joshua ordered his commanders to place their feet on the necks of the five kings. This act was a symbol of victory for the conquerors but great humiliation for the defeat. "And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight" [v. 25].

Joshua's perseverance and victory over the enemies is our example to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ in our fight of faith against all evil. So long as we are in this body of flesh we will struggle against evil without and within. But let us be strong in the grace of God bestowed upon us in Christ.

We continue to look to God, be led by His Spirit to obey His Word and pray. God will give us victory over all temptations – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 9
PSALMS 13-14

MEDITATE

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds). – 2 Corinthians 10:3-4

9 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 10:28-32

LESSON

Against Makkedah

VERSE 28

And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls that were therein; he let none remain: and he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho.

Following the destruction of Jericho, Joshua led all Israel across the centre of Canaan, effectively cutting the land in half. It was a strategy that prevented enemy reinforcement from the north as Joshua mounted his southern campaign to occupy the land of promise.

One after another the city-states in the south came under the judgement of God as Joshua routed them. At Makkedah Joshua destroyed the king and all its inhabitants. The LORD was with Joshua as he was faithful in carrying out His commandment.

To answer the query of anyone who might not fully understand why Joshua did what he was told, we must realise that God is holy and just. He cannot do evil but will judge all evil. God cannot overlook sin. He must judge unrepentant sinners. The only way for sinners to be saved is through Jesus Christ who died on the cross to save us from our sins. You recall the harlot Rahab of Jericho whom Joshua spared when Jericho was destroyed? By faith Rahab believed the God of Joshua who delivered His people from Pharaoh by the Red Sea and she was saved when she acted on her belief.

The point is – Do you know the God of Joshua who has revealed Himself to us through His eternal Son Jesus Christ? If not, may you turn to Him today. Repent of your sins and submit to Christ as your Lord and only Saviour and begin the new life of faith. Then continue like what Joshua did – to persevere in faith by following the Lord, closely obeying His Word. Faith is the victory!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 10
PSALMS 15-16

REMINDER

If God be for us, who can be against us?

10 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 10:33-37

LESSON
Against Lachish

VERSE 33

*Then Horam king of Gezer
came up to help Lachish; and
Joshua smote him and his
people, until he had left him
none remaining*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 11-12
PSALM 17

HYMN

The next in line to fall before God who used Joshua as His instrument of judgement is Lachish. Unlike Makkedah, Lachish had reinforcement from the king of Gezer. Yet, they could not stand against Joshua and “all Israel” – repeated numerous times. It indicates oneness of heart and purpose to carry out God’s commandment as a nation. As a result, the enemies were completely destroyed.

The ramification of physical warfare reminds us believers that we are engaged in a spiritual warfare. The enemy of our soul is powerful, cunning and subtle. But we have the spiritual armour of God. Ephesians 6:11-12: “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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.”

We must realise that the enemies of our soul are trying very hard to keep us out of the Promised Land. The enemies of evil are constantly combating us, seeking to defeat and to destroy us by luring us to condone sin. If we give in, we go back to experiencing guilt, despair and a sense of unworthiness. But why should we allow ourselves to drift?

Put on the armour of God. This armour worn by believers is a picture of our faith in the power of God’s Word both to attack and to defend. Where we have sinned we get right with God and move on with grateful hearts to enjoy the victory we have in Christ over the evil one.

Soldiers of Christ, arise and put your armour on, Strong in the strength which God supplies through His eternal Son; Strong in the Lord of hosts and in His mighty power: Who in the strength of Jesus trusts is more than conqueror.

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 10:38-40

LESSON
Against Debir**VERSE 40**

So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 13
PSALM 18

THOUGHT

The second phase of the conquest of Canaan has begun. Having subdued the central cities of Jericho and Ai, the campaign now moves south.

The Israelites, contrary to what appears, were not an army of military combatants but a band of former slaves, accustomed more to handling plowshares and pruning hooks than swords and spears. The cities they were engaging in battle with were not passive rural communities, but fortified cities with armies seasoned by frequent battles against one another in this patchwork of Canaanite fiefdoms. Armed conflict of any kind, not least against prepared enemies, with its death and casualties, would be a terrifying thought for a people more accustomed to subservience than dominance. Thus, the killing of every Canaanite man, woman, child and beast which accompanied each conquest would have been a difficult thing to understand, much less execute, save for either the most hardened or most obedient of hearts.

But in total obedience to God's divine hand, the Israelites marched. And the cities fell – Libnah, Lachish, Eglon Hebron and Debir; they utterly destroyed all therein according to God's injunction through Moses in Deuteronomy 20:16.

For us today too, we may not understand or agree with God's commands. Human wisdom, feelings and rationale often appeal and make more sense. But God's people are to obey and trust God's explicit Word explicitly. Even in the face of human reason, consensus and impossible odds, our God knows best and will certainly accomplish His purpose.

In every battle against sin and for His kingdom's sake that we are engaged in, the Lord is with us. The final victory is assured. With men this is impossible; but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

12 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 10:41-43

LESSON

The Southern Campaign

VERSE 42

And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.

After taking Debir, the conquering Israelites moved farther south capturing Gaza, a principal city of the powerful Philistines on the south-west border of Canaan by the Mediterranean Sea, then Kadesh-barnea on the south-east border, and Goshen in the mountainous region of southern Judea.

The southern campaign thus completed, Joshua returned with the Israelites to their base in Gilgal. It was an epic triumph for a military underdog, because God was on their side.

This is the Christian's secret to success in everything: God must be for us. If He is, victory is assured. But the only way of ensuring this, is to first of all ascertain that we are correctly standing on God's side. In every venture and endeavour we attempt, in every conflict and battle that we engage, are we aligned to His Word and His will? Surrender ourselves unreservedly to the direction of His Word and wisdom. Seek counsel of godly men and submit ourselves to the guidance and control of the Holy Spirit by much prayer. For only as we seek and obey the Scriptures, examining our hearts and motives in His light, can we have full confidence and be assured that the outcome will be for our good and for God's greater glory.

For Joshua and the Israelites operating under the omnipotent leading hand of God, the campaign was not a protracted or painful one; the Canaanite kings and their people were taken "at one time". Victory was swift and sure because the Lord God of Israel undertook for His people.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 14
PSALM 19

THOUGHT

Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you. – 2 Chronicles 20:17

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 11:1-5

LESSON
Confederacy of
the kings of the north**VERSE 5**

*And when all these kings
were met together, they came
and pitched together at the
waters of Merom,
to fight against Israel.*

The mission was not fully accomplished. The time of rest was not yet for the Israelites. After central and southern Canaan were captured, the city-states of the north under the leadership of Jabin, king of Hazor, the principal fortress city in northern Palestine, now gathered in coalition to withstand the conquering Jews. The very peoples whom Moses had described in Deuteronomy 7:1 as being “greater and mightier” than the Israelites, now came together to face off the Jews. These were strong adversaries. Hazor would later on be revived to “mightily oppress” the Israelites for twenty years [Judges 4:1-3]. The Jebusites were hardy opponents that the Hebrews could not completely unseat from Jerusalem until the time of King David [Joshua 15:63, 2 Samuel 5:6-7].

And all the more determined would they be now, since their very lives were at stake, for doubtless they would have heard of the wholesale slaughter of their people at Jewish hands in the vanquished cities to their south.

This coalition army was formidable and huge. According to the historian Josephus, this combined force amounted to three hundred thousand infantry, ten thousand cavalry and twenty thousand war chariots of iron. And their determined purpose was to fight Israel. The picture is one of overwhelming odds. And this is often the lot of God’s people. Throughout history and in human eyes, God’s people are always outnumbered and outgunned by the forces of the world. But our Lord knows. With God, one is a majority.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 15
PSALMS 20-21

THOUGHT

There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy. – Psalm 33:16-18

14 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 11:6

LESSON

Assurance of victory

VERSE 6

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for to morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt bough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.

When we are faced with overwhelming odds, it is human to feel afraid. The Israelites were now facing an army of prowess and numbers. Indeed, a terrifying sight to see these fearsome adversaries, soldiers, chariots and horses, numerous as sand on the shore, all poised for battle. This struck terror in Jewish hearts. But the Lord knew the fears of Joshua and His people.

“Be not afraid” is a lovely refrain in the believer’s heart. Christians are not immune to fear. They are not spared the vicissitudes of life. Testing, tribulations, and even persecutions are often the believer’s lot in this world. Our Lord said so Himself. But He also whispers, “Be not afraid” to every fearful heart.

The Sovereign God is Lord of every circumstance and event – past, present and future, of life and death itself, And He has promised that He is with His people. He will never forsake them. He knows every detail of every happening. All things are working together for their good, in accordance with His perfect will. The Lord’s promise to Joshua was that He would deliver their enemies, that day arrayed in full battle force, the next thoroughly defeated into their hands.

So it is for the Christian. Today may be a day of hardship for our Lord’s sake, of fear on account of the enemy’s scheme, or of discouragement because God seems absent. But tomorrow dawns soon, and it will be the promised day of deliverance and vindication for all who have put their trust in Jesus Christ. Only be not afraid

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 16
PSALM 22

THOUGHT

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: – Isaiah 43:2-3

15 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 11:7-9

LESSON

Hough the horses

VERSE 9

*And Joshua did unto them
as the LORD bade him:
he houghed their horses, and
burnt their chariots with fire.*

Joshua was commanded by God to hough the horses captured. Houghing is the act of cutting the hamstrings of the horses' hind legs thus rendering them lame and useless. In human reasoning, this surely was a senseless measure, for horses with their speed, mobility and power were prized assets to any people, especially in time of war. And here were horses and chariots sitting in their hands, yet the Lord required of them to cripple the one and burn the other.

The message to the Hebrews is plainly this – trust and confidence was to be placed solely in the LORD. So often when man is blessed with success in their endeavours, the Hand from Whom that blessing flowed is quickly forgotten and in its stead he exults in his own ability and accomplishment.

Hundreds of years later in 2 Samuel 8:4, King David at the zenith of his power would trust and obey the Lord by doing the same with the horses he captured from Hadadezer, king of Zobah. The God of Joshua and David is that same unchanging God we pledge allegiance to today. And He still enjoins us to place our trust only in Him. He would have us hough the horses of our wealth and achievements, our strength and abilities, our connections and cleverness, and humble ourselves before Him, placing our confidence solely in the Almighty God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Call unto Him today and He will show you great and mighty things you cannot imagine.

Hough your horses and burn your chariots. Trust only our Lord!

But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD. – Jeremiah 9:24

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 17
PSALMS 23-24

THOUGHT

16 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 11:10-14

LESSON

Not any left
that breathe

VERSE 11

*And they smote all the souls
that were therein with the edge
of the sword, utterly destroying
them: there was not any left to
breathe: and he burnt Hazor
with fire.*

Some parts of the land that God chose for Israel were occupied by earlier inhabitants. God wanted the Israelites to be set apart so that His people would not be influenced by the heathen. What we read in our text today may seem very violent; Joshua was told to kill and to destroy. That was the order and Joshua carried out exactly according to what God has instructed.

Humans have their own standards of judgement and often times we use them to judge the actions and instructions of God. The creatures turned to criticise the Creator Himself. How ridiculous!

But look at Joshua, he did not question God. By faith he accepted that God would only give the correct instruction and the best. Joshua simply obeyed. God blessed the work of Joshua because of his obedience through faith. God could have killed those people by Himself without even Joshua having to do anything. God allowed Joshua to perform the work as a privilege.

God is omniscient (all-knowing). He wanted the Israelites to live in peace so that they could worship God freely. The Jews are His chosen people and Israel is the country that He has picked to love beyond all others. What is so special about the Jews? They are chosen because of the mercy and grace of God. We do not need to reason with God and find out as to why. By faith Joshua just accepted the commandments wholly. We ought to do so as well.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 18
PSALM 25

THOUGHT

We ought to obey God rather than men. – Acts 5:29

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 11:15

LESSONComplete
obedience**VERSE 15**

*As the LORD commanded
Moses his servant, so did
Moses command Joshua, and
so did Joshua; he left nothing
undone of all that the LORD
commanded Moses.*

Joshua carried out God's word to the jot and tittle. He fully accepted that God's word is the truth. God provided us a written record of His inspired Word but some men in their own folly have led themselves and many astray by changing and interpreting the Bible in a twisted manner. What did the serpent say? "Hath God said..." [Genesis 3:1]. The whole conversation between the serpent and Eve in Genesis 3 is about doubting and misquoting God's word. This led to Adam and Eve falling into temptation and caused the human race to fall into sin.

Similarly in school, we are taught to ask questions, but when it comes to our origin, we are forced to accept that we came from simpler life forms. Our schools would not accept any other answers other than the misguided and flawed theory of evolution. As Christian parents or teachers, we have to explain creation clearly to our children. It is our responsibility to plant the truth in the mind of our children from the very beginning.

God instructs Joshua to kill but we are instructed to save. Our mission is to preach the Gospel. The sword that we need carry is the Bible. Our task is not easy too. We face ridicule and persecution for being a Christian. Joshua succeeded because he followed God's Word. In the same manner, we too will be successful in preaching the message that only Jesus saves. We should follow the example of Joshua to carry out God's commandment.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 19
PSALMS 26-27**

THOUGHT

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. – 2 Timothy 1:13



18 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 11:16-18

LESSON

The Northern Campaign

VERSE 16

So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same.

When God plans something, there is always guaranteed success. Joshua must have remembered how the Jews had failed badly in the war at Ai [Joshua 7]. The battle was lost because of disobedience. So this time, having learnt the bitter lesson, Joshua led his men to observe and to do whatever God instructed.

The world defines success as monetary gains in that one is successful when one has a huge bank account. We should not take this measurement standard. Our success is measured in the blessings that God has given us; spiritual health and work done in accordance to His Word. He will bless our work if they are done with motives to please Him. We are told to witness to the world. This means “taking over” of lands as Joshua did. This is not to say we are to physically take over the land as in the case of Joshua but that we are to establish churches for the worship of God.

Joshua gained a large land mass. We too can gain a larger tent space for God through witnessing and preaching the Gospel. We should do so in accordance to God’s Word and His ways. Sadly as in the days past, man invents his own way to serve God. They claim glory for themselves rather than let God have the glory. In doing so, the Gospel was adulterated and twisted so that it would not sound so offensive. God’s Word should never be compromised. We should preach the truth of both Heaven and Hell. The truth may be hurtful to some who do not believe but we need to be faithful to His Word.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 20
PSALMS 28-29

THOUGHT

Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.
– Isaiah 54:2



19 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 11:19-20

LESSON

Hardened hearts

VERSE 20

For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that He might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 21
PSALM 30

THOUGHT

We are familiar with Pharaoh who hardened his heart when Moses negotiated for the release of the Jews out of Egypt. Pharaoh learnt the hard way in that God brought about punishment that no one could prevent. Egypt saw many deaths and that included the first born of Pharaoh and his mighty army who pursued the Jews. Pharaoh thought that he was mighty but God is Almighty! No one can stand against God. He is the One who created everything and everyone.

In a similar case, instead of submission, the Canaanite kings and their subjects fought Joshua fiercely. They were completely destroyed as a result of their hardened hearts.

We are sinners and are supposed to be heading for hell. We are given a chance to accept Jesus as our Saviour. He has already paid for our sins and all we need to do is come to Him repentantly. Alas there are still the millions who have hardened their hearts refusing to receive the mercy of God. While some will accept the Gospel there are others who would reject it, no matter what you say to them.

Yet, remember there are those who finally come to Christ after years of praying. Noah preached for 120 years, none came to salvation except his wife, 3 sons and their wives. The others heard and even witnessed the building of the ark. They saw but they chose not to believe. They hardened their hearts and rejected the word of God. Our duty is to pray that God will soften the hearts of those whom we are witnessing to. It is the Holy Spirit Who convicts the soul to believe in Jesus.

And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, – Ephesians 6:19

20 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 11:21-23

LESSON
The Anakims

VERSE 22

There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.

Who were the Anakims? Anakims were from the race of Anak which means “long-necked”. They are supposed to be giants and have once caused terror on the Israelites [Numbers 13:28; Deuteronomy 9:2]. The Israelites were sorely afraid of the “giants”.

But giant or no giant makes no difference to God. He is still the Creator of the Anakims. He delivered them into the hands of Joshua because of his obedience to God’s Word. There is no other factor for the victory against the Anakims.

We are fighting a spiritual war every day. Sometimes we are fearful because our enemies are too big for us to face. Read Deuteronomy 20:1-4. When we face the enemy, we see horses, chariots and many soldiers on the other side. Thank God that He knows our weaknesses so He assures us not to be afraid. Remember the Jews who once had to face the Red Sea in front and the mighty Egyptian army behind. How could they escape destruction? How could they fight the well-trained soldiers? Yet God delivered the Jews by opening the Red Sea for them as a passage for safety; He used the same sea to bury the army who pursued. God will judge and can destroy but He is also gracious to save those who call upon Him.

God will go with us to fight for us, to save us [Deuteronomy 20:4]. How comforting this is. The reason He fights for us is that He loves us. There is nothing else that we can do which merits the love of God. It is solely by His grace that we are loved. Let us stay close to God in our daily walk as He fights for us.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 22
PSALM 31

THOUGHT

For the LORD your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. – Deuteronomy 20:4

21 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 12:1-6

LESSON

Kings of the land

VERSE 1

Now these are the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the river Arnon unto mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east.

The victory over the two kings of East Jordan by Israel under the leadership of Moses, the servant of God, marks the beginning of the final segment of God's fulfilment of His promises to Abraham, "unto thy seed shall I give this land" [Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 15:18].

King Sihon of the Amorites and King Og of Bashan were two powerful kings reigning over a vast land stretching from the River Arnon in the south to Mount Hermon in the north. Yet Moses in his old age (nearly 120 years old), leading the Israelites who were weary and worn from 40 years' of wandering, was able to completely defeat the two kings. Their well-organised armies were destroyed and strongly fortified cities and lands conquered. This was a demonstration of God's goodness and His sovereign grace. There is no king on earth so powerful that the Almighty God cannot defeat nor any land too vast for God to conquer, for He is the Lord Jehovah and rightful owner and ruler of all that He has created.

Just as Moses, the faithful servant of God who led the Israelites to victory over East Jordan, so the Lord Jesus leads us to secure victory over our enemies of this world. In ourselves, we are weak. Temptations, sin and the cares of the world wear us down and threaten to drag us down to destruction. We thank God for His mercy for sending Christ His Son, and servant, to give us victory over all of life. In Christ, we have strength. Through Christ, we triumph and have victory. We are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 23
PSALM 32

THOUGHT

Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place.
– 2 Corinthians 2:14

22 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 12:7-24

LESSON

Kings of the country

VERSE 7

And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir; which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 24
PSALM 33

THOUGHT

In obedience to God's command, Joshua led the children across the Jordan to claim the land the Lord had promised to them [Joshua 1:3]. Though the kings (31 of them) had formed confederacies to resist Joshua, they and their people were killed and kingdoms conquered. The country taken over by the Israelites stretched from the River Jordan, extending westward to the Mediterranean Sea, and from near Lebanon in the north to as far south as Edom.

The Israelites did not receive the Promised Land because of any merit in them, their own strength or power, for the Israelites were a "stiff-necked and rebellious people" as declared by Moses [Deuteronomy 9:5-6]. God is faithful – He fulfilled His promise to Abraham to give the Promised Land to his descendants and to all who believed His Word and promises. The Canaanites were destroyed because they had been wicked and unrepentant for a long time and their "cup of iniquity had been filled to the brim". God was using Israel as His instrument of justice and judgement against the Canaanite nations whose annihilation was necessary to prevent their evil influence upon Israel.

The meticulous record of all the evil kings and their people who were destroyed serves as a stern warning to all unrepentant sinners that none will be spared the wrath of God come the Day of Judgement. Being just and impartial, God warned Israel that they too would face the same judgement as the Canaanites if they disobeyed God.

It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.
– Lamentations 3:22

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 13:1

LESSON
Work not done**VERSE 1**

Now Joshua was old and stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.

Joshua was about 90 years old when the Israelites took possession of the land of Canaan. However, there were still hundreds of cities and much land to be conquered. These included the western coastal land of the Philistines and Geshurites [v. 2-3] and the northern coastal land that stretched all the way up to Sidon and the Lebanon Valley [v. 4-6].

These enemies would fight to regain the lands and prevent the Israelites from claiming the full inheritance given by the promises of God. Therefore there was still “much work to be done” to complete the conquest.

Just as Israel had to struggle and fight against her enemies to claim her inheritance, we too must fight against our enemies on earth who keep us from receiving our full inheritance. Although we are justified by faith and assured of our salvation, we need to continually resist sin and temptations. We are to “mortify” and put off all manner of sin [Colossians 3:5-9] and “put on the new man” with all its godly virtues [Colossians 3:12-17].

Joshua needed seven years of war after crossing the Jordan to subjugate the Canaanites so “the land rested from war” [Joshua 11:23]. Yet this was not the real rest – it was a symbol of it. “For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day” [Hebrews 4:8]. The real rest is the rest arising from faith in Jesus Christ even as we look forward to the future perfect rest in heaven. Until then, there is still much work to be done as we toil and labour for Him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 25
PSALM 34

THOUGHT

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. – Galatians 6:9

24 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 13:2-7

LESSON

Dividing the land

VERSES 6-7

All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephoth-maim, and all the Sidonians, them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee. Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 26
PSALM 35

THOUGHT

Although there was much unconquered land, God assured Joshua He would drive out the inhabitants in those lands. God chose Joshua to divide the land as there was none more worthy or appropriate. He had been a warrior, a proven leader since his youth and led the Israelites to many victories with Moses, so he had the respect and authority over the Israelites. Joshua had to perform this important task before his death [Ecclesiastes 9:10].

May God also raise and sustain leaders for His church, who are strong in faith and godly courage, whom His people will follow readily. It was God's timing to divide the Promised Land to the tribes. Since the days of their patriarch, Abraham, they had been pilgrims and strangers living in tents, without homes or lands of their own. It was the hope of the Promised Land that "floweth with milk and honey" that kept them going [Exodus 3:8]. That glorious hope was now a living reality. Yet the land still belonged to God "because the land is Mine and you are strangers and sojourners (tenants) with me" [Leviticus 25:33]. The "rent" God required was for Israel's obedience of the Law [Leviticus 26]. For Israel's disobedience, God chastened them with captivity in Assyria and Babylon.

Our glorious hope of everlasting life and heavenly inheritance is already accomplished by Christ our Saviour's atoning death on Calvary's cross, His resurrection and ascension to heaven. Our debt to Him is to "present our bodies a living sacrifice" [Romans 12:1] and "to be conformed to His image" [Romans 8:29].

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. – Colossians 1:12

25 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 13:8-14

LESSON

Land east of the Jordan

VERSE 13

Nevertheless the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites, nor the Maachathites: but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day.

The allocation of land east of Jordan to the two-and-a-half tribes was repeated as a ratification of Moses' earlier decision. It also gave a complete record of the inheritance given to all twelve tribes; stressing their unity and the importance of involving the eastern tribes in the life of Israel.

The special concession of East Jordan to the two-and-a-half tribes is a lesson against covetousness, selfishness and compromise. After Moses and the children of Israel conquered the eastern kings, the two-and-a-half tribes saw the beauty and abundance of the land and coveted after it. They told Moses that they wanted the land and settled down straightaway, thus forsaking their brothers and disobeying God's command that all Israel must cross the Jordan to fight for the Promised Land [Numbers 32:1-5]. This discouraged their brothers and Moses rebuked them sharply for refusing to cross the Jordan. Their sin was even greater than their fathers' at Kadesh-Barnea [Numbers 32:6-15]. Moses finally conceded after they promised that they would cross over the Jordan and fight alongside their brothers till Canaan was conquered. Subsequently, they did not drive out their enemies but lived with them. They were harassed by enemies around them and God sent them into captivity twenty years before the rest of the nine-and-a-half tribes [1 Chronicles 5:26].

Covetousness is a consuming sin that is never satiated. As one gets attracted by the world, one loses sight of heaven and becomes spiritually poorer. God can send a leanness into our soul [Psalm 106:15]. Friendship of the world is enmity with God [James 4:4].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
LEVITICUS 27
PSALM 36

THOUGHT

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. – 1 John 2:16

26 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON
Joshua 13:15-23

LESSON
Inheritance
of the Reubenites

VERSE 22

*Balaam also the son of Beor,
the soothsayer, did the children
of Israel slay with the sword
among them that were slain
by them.*

Moses gave the land on the east side of the Jordan River in the southern part of the Transjordan to the Reubenites. Their southern border was with Moab on the Arnon River and their territory extended to the north, including all the former lands of king Sihon of the Amorites and ending on a northern border with the tribe of Gad.

Reuben was the first-born son of Leah and Jacob. He lost his leadership status as the first-born for sleeping with his father's concubine. The next sons in birth order, Simeon and Levi, also lost their status due to transgressions against their father. Alas, great blessings were so often forfeited by our temporal obsession with sin!

The next son in line was Judah, who was God's choice according to His eternal decree. It was the tribe of Judah who was given the honour of leading the march of the twelve tribes. It was Judah, by far the largest tribe, that would also later bring forth both King David and Jesus the Messiah.

May this remind us to steer clear from sins and apostasies. In verse 22, we are reminded of the warning against turning away from God. This warning was given in reference to Balaam, a false prophet called by the king of Moab to curse the Israelites. Balaam was unsuccessful and hence had devised an evil scheme to seduce the men of Israel into false worship and forsaking God. His devious plot was discovered and he was eventually captured and executed.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS I
PSALM 37

BEWARE

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. – 1 Timothy 4:1

27 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 13:24-28

LESSON
Inheritance
of the Gadites

VERSE 28

*This is the inheritance of the
children of Gad
after their families, the cities,
and their villages.*

The Gadites were allocated lands in the middle of the country on the east side of River Jordan as outlined in verses 24 to 28. Gad's territory extended north of Reuben's tribal lands to the south point of the Sea of Chinneroth, which is the Galilee.

Despite their sin of compromise and covetousness, the Gadites were still part of God's people and were to receive the inheritance promised by God. Though they had backslidden, they were still believers in the only living and true God, and had sought to follow Him, weak and almost half-hearted as they were.

Yet thank God for His mercy and grace. If salvation is dependent on our own efforts, none of us would have been saved; it was God Who loved us before we could love Him. If not for God, we would have no part in His eternal Kingdom, but thank God for it is He Who planted us by the river of living waters, flowing through a dry thirsty land, sustaining and nourishing us.

It was a great blessing to the people of Israel that they were given lands that they did not develop, and houses they did not build. God does always stand by His Word, and whatever He promises, He delivers. Our God is a faithful God. We should be men and women who try our very best to do exactly what we say. Christians who do this, honour and glorify Jesus.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 2
PSALM 38

BE THANKFUL

Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations. – Deuteronomy 7:9

28 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 13:29-32

LESSON
Inheritance
of the Manassehites

VERSE 32

*These are the countries which
Moses did distribute for
inheritance in the plains of
Moab, on the other side Jordan,
by Jericho, eastward.*

The land allotted to the half-tribe of Manasseh was in the north of the country on the east side of Jordan River. It extended from the border with Gad and included the entire conquered kingdom of king Og, and the whole region known as the Bashan.

But there is a tragedy as seen in verse 32; that this inheritance was “on the other side” across the Jordan. The east Jordan tribes were on the other side of the River Jordan, away from the remaining tribes of Israel. There was a dividing line, a barrier between these east Jordan tribes and the promised land of God. This is a clear picture of compromise – the portrayal of “borderline believers”.

God has warned us against compromise. Compromising with the world is sin. Far too many Christians have lost sight of the promised land of heaven and have looked onto the world instead. They look at the world and see what it has to offer and begin to covet the things of the world.

When we focus on the things of the world instead of things of God, we tend to compromise. We ironically accept a lesser inheritance, more temporal riches than what the promised land of heaven has to offer. We become selfish, covetous and disloyal to God and to other believers. Worldliness stands opposed to God and to the kingdom of heaven. This is the reason God warns us against worldliness. If we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 3
PSALM 39

REMINDER

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ – Titus 2:12-13

29 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 13:33

LESSON
Inheritance
of the Levites

VERSE 33

*But unto the tribe of
Levi Moses gave not any
inheritance: the Lord God of
Israel was their inheritance, as
He said unto them.*

The tribe of Levi were priests and ministers of Israel. They were to be scattered out over the nation, throughout all the tribes, for the purpose of ministering to all the people. It was therefore not possible for them to be together in possession of a large territory of land.

The Levites were to receive their livelihood from the support of the offerings given to God [v. 14]. In addition to that, the Levites were to receive a very special inheritance – the inheritance of the Lord Himself. God’s very own presence, guidance and power were given to the Levites. The Levites were not to be entangled with the affairs of this life but instead to focus their lives upon the Lord and upon ministering to God’s people.

Many of us are dissatisfied with our place before God. We wish He would have given us something different. We could even get bitter towards God regarding the life circumstances He put us into. The primary answer to this is to see ourselves as priests, and to understand that our real inheritance is God Himself. When God is with us, what else do we need? If God is for us, who can be against us?

To have God for an inheritance is to enjoy communion with Him, to be protected by Him and to live for His service. We are God’s people and He is our eternal inheritance to keep. Nothing can separate us from His love which is in Christ Jesus. Let us thus go out to every land and minister to God’s people.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 4
PSALMS 40-41

PRAYER

Father, we pray especially for all ministers of God that they will focus totally on You and be totally committed to serve God’s people.

30 APRIL

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 14:1-5

LESSON

Land west of Jordan

VERSE 5

*As the LORD
commanded Moses, so the
children of Israel did,
and they divided the land.*

The conquest of the Promised Land had taken place. The long anticipated day that the Israelites had been waiting to receive their promised inheritance had finally arrived. It was time for the leaders [Eleazar the high priest, Joshua and the tribal heads] to divide the promised land among the remaining 9½ tribes. What an exciting day it must have been for the Israelites!

The leaders did exactly what God had commanded and divided the land as He had instructed. The actual allocation of the land was to be by lot. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" [Proverbs 16:33].

The strict adherence of Israel to God's instructions is a strong lesson for us on obedience. We must obey and do what God says, execute His commands just as the Word of God dictates. We are to keep His commandments. If we are obedient, we too shall receive the inheritance of God.

God has given you an inheritance to redeem. He has placed you in your family, school and workplace for a purpose. He wants you to take what He has given you, come to Him, and work with Him to redeem it for eternity. Some of us are living in land that will quickly produce fruit, while others will need to work hard to remove the stones and debris from years of abuse and neglect. Both are very valuable to the Lord. He is with you and will show you how to do it.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 5
PSALMS 42-43

CHALLENGE

Let us by the abundant mercy and grace of God seek to obey His voice and keep His covenant.

1 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 14:6-15

LESSON

Inheritance of Caleb

VERSE 9

And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.

By now, Caleb was 85 years old, and alongside Joshua, one of the oldest men in Israel. All other Israelites of their generation had perished in the wilderness, as was promised in Numbers 14:29. Our God is a faithful God who keeps His word. He had said that the Israelites who murmured against Him would perish, and they did. He had also said that Caleb, who in complete faith and obedience followed Him whole-heartedly, would have the land Hebron for His inheritance, and now it was time for this promise to be fulfilled.

However, Hebron was not an easy land to inherit, for it still remained unconquered by the Israelites. It was filled with Anakims, the children of giants — the very same people that caused the Israelites to fear and murmur against God 40 years ago. Despite these daunting facts, we can see Caleb's insistence on claiming this piece of land as his, believing that he is still as strong and able to drive these people out. Despite his advanced age, Caleb continued to believe that his strength was sufficient to perform his duty. This is because Caleb had a source of strength that was timeless and would never fail. He had God.

In our sojourning in this world, are we afraid to stand up and do things for God because of similar fears? Do we doubt our strength, use age as an excuse, or perhaps see the many obstacles ahead and because of them, give up? Let us remember that God is still our Strength today.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 6
PSALM 44

HYMN

I could not see through the shadows ahead,
So I looked at the cross of my Saviour instead.
I bowed to the will of the Master that day,
Then peace came, and tears fled away

2 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 14:9-10

LESSON

Wholly
followed the LORD

VERSE 9

And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 7
PSALM 45

PONDER

Yesterday, we considered how Caleb remained unafraid to claim his inheritance despite the many obstacles because he knew that God was his strength. Today, we get a glimpse of his experiential knowledge of this fact.

In verse 8, we see that Caleb had a great testimony – he could confidently say that he wholly followed the Lord his God. In verse 9, we have a statement from God through Moses confirming and rewarding him for this. In verses 9 and 10, we see the way Caleb acknowledged the soon-to-be fulfilment of this promise.

In order to fulfil His promise of giving Hebron to Caleb, God had kept Caleb alive through the 40 years of wandering in the desert, through the many skirmishes and plagues that the Israelites experienced, and had brought Caleb into the Promised Land. Caleb, in verse 10, recognised all these things, and acknowledged that it was God's doing, because he had wholly followed God.

As Christians, we know that God has given us His word; that as we put Him first in our lives and give Him the priority, He has promised us showers of blessings, be they material or spiritual. However, do we know this experientially? Oftentimes, it seems as if we place our worldly needs above our spiritual ones, in the name of practicality. This is similar to the Israelites who feared going into the Promised Land. Let us cultivate a right view of things. The most practical thing in life is to trust in the Giver and Sustainer of life, and experience His goodness.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. – Matthew 6:33

3 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 14:11

LESSON

Fountain of Youth

VERSE 11

*As yet I am as strong this day
as I was in the day that Moses
sent me: as my strength was
then, even so is my strength
now, for war, both to go out,
and to come in.*

Caleb was 85 years old. He had gone through many hardships and lived a hard life traversing the wilderness. Despite all this, Caleb was able to say that he was still as strong as he was in the day that Moses sent the 12 spies to scout out the land. Like Moses, of whom it was said in Deuteronomy 34:7 “And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated”, Caleb was mentally and physically fit to meet the obstacles ahead and the challenges of being a leader.

What was his secret? In Numbers 14:8, we see the source of his strength. As a spy, he had trusted that God would be the One who is able to bring them into the Promised Land. Now, as a wise old man, Caleb continued to rely on God as his source of strength. In contrast, the Israelites who looked to other sources of strength, perhaps comparing their own physical size and prowess against that of the sons of the Anak, had all long perished in the wilderness. Because Caleb had an eternal, everlasting God as his source of strength, he could carry on to perform his abilities through His grace.

Today, are we more like Caleb, trusting in the power and the hand of the invisible God, or are we more like the Israelites who perished, trusting only in the things they could see and touch? Let us look to our spiritual fitness first.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 8
PSALMS 46-47

MEDITATE

Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days,
so shall thy strength be. – Deuteronomy 33:25

4 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 14:12

LESSON

Give me
this mountain

VERSE 12

*Now therefore give me this
mountain, whereof the
LORD spake in that day; for
thou heardest in that day how
the Anakims were there, and
that the cities were great and
fenced: if so be the LORD
will be with me, then I shall be
able to drive them out, as the
LORD said.*

Having established that this was rightly his inheritance, Caleb now boldly asked for the mountain. It was not with a greedy, grasping heart that Caleb wanted to receive this piece of land. In fact, as we have seen the past few days, asking for this mountain was akin to asking for the ability to perform a difficult task. In this verse, Caleb himself continued to acknowledge the difficulty of the task he was asking for – the cities were great and well-defended by Anakims, sons of giants. Yet, we see Caleb acknowledging his dependency on God and faith in His ability, not his own human strength.

By asking for the privilege of carrying out this difficult task of driving the Anakims out of the land, Caleb showed a living faith in God. Forty years ago, Joshua and Caleb testified to the Israelites regarding their faith that God would be able to help them conquer this land. Now, Caleb had the opportunity to prove his faith and he took it gladly. Perhaps, it was also his intention to provoke his fellow Israelites unto love and good works – namely the work of conquering and establishing themselves in the Promised Land.

Do we see doing difficult things for God as a privilege or a burden? Perhaps we would do well to serve our Lord and King with greater faith, leading by example in the difficult tasks such that others around us would be provoked unto love and good works as well.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 9
PSALM 48

MEMORISE

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. – Hebrews 10:24

5 MAY

BIBLE LESSON
Joshua 14:13-15

LESSON
Hebron

VERSE 14
Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.

Hebron was a place of significance in the Old Testament. Before it was named Hebron, it was known as Kirjath-arba – named after a great man of the Anakims. It was a place where the patriarchs lived [Genesis 13:18], where Sarah died [Genesis 23:2], and later on, it was a city belonging to the priests [Joshua 21:13], a city of refuge [Joshua 20:7], and also the city which David was king for 7 years at the beginning of his reign [2 Samuel 2:11].

Spiritually however, as can be seen in verse 14, Hebron was a reward given to Caleb because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel. In this sense, Hebron signified fellowship or communion between man and God – something that all Christians should seek after.

As Christians, do we seek after a spiritual “Hebron” as well? Are we willing to work for it like Caleb did – putting aside his doubts and fears, going against his own people and taking a stand for God? It is not an easy task, and the fruit of putting God first may not manifest instantly, just as it took over forty years for Caleb to inherit Hebron. However, we can take heart that God remembers; “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name” [Malachi 3:16].

May we yearn and thirst for God each day.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 10
PSALM 49

MEDITATE

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. – Psalm 42:1

6 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 15:1-12

LESSON

God's faithfulness
in Judah's inheritance

VERSE 1

*This then was the lot of the
tribe of the children of Judah
by their families;
even to the border of Edom
the wilderness of Zin
southward was the uttermost
part of the south coast.*

These twelve verses may seem repetitive, but through them we get a glimpse into a climactic moment in the Israelites' lives. Earlier on, they had placed their faith in God and faced their enemies, successfully securing the Promised Land. Now, they could divide the land up among the 12 tribes, and finally settle down. The people were definitely excited for this moment after many years of wandering in a foreign land.

Here, we read of the tribe of Judah receiving their portion of the land. As it was the biggest tribe of the 12, it was the first to receive its allocated lot. Following God's principal of allocation by size in Numbers 33:54 ("to the more you shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer you shall give the less"), Judah received the biggest plot of land. The fact that Israel finally received its inheritance after it was promised centuries ago proved God's faithfulness. Let us look back at God's unending faithfulness to the Israelites since day one, which eventually led them into the Promised Land.

God first made a covenant with Abraham, for him to be the forefather of His chosen people. God protected the promised seed of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the descendants of Jacob – who eventually became the heads of the twelve tribes. God looked after the nation of Israel and caused them to prosper into a mighty population. God protected and delivered His people through the desert wanderings. Finally, God made good His word and gave His people their due inheritance.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 11
PSALM 50

MEDITATE

Read Hebrews 10:23. We are dependent on our God for grace to hold fast to our profession. Be assured that all He has promised, He will surely perform. With such a faithful God, we should not waver in trials, but should look forward to our inheritance of eternal life.

7 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 15:13-15

LESSON

A lion-hearted hero

VERSE 14

And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Abiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak.

Caleb requested for Hebron as his inheritance. Note that Joshua was tasked with splitting the land according to the size of the receiver, and thus Caleb's request was special. Therefore, Joshua must have consulted the Lord, and God must have commanded him to grant Caleb his land. When in doubt, it is always good to seek the will of the Lord, and to dutifully obey His plans.

Caleb's request for Hebron was not one that was particularly fanciful. Hebron was the major fortress of the Anakite enemies, who were large-framed giants. Caleb would have to defeat the Anakites in order to obtain his land, and thus it would not be an easy inheritance. Yet we see his faith in the presence of God, and thus his courage. Caleb did not slay the enemies, but he drove them out, indicating that the three sons of Anak were intimidated by Caleb and had fled before him. Their strong stature could not withstand the bravery of Caleb's spirit. What wonderful confidence Caleb had in God! It is true that "[God] shall cut off the spirit of princes: He is terrible to the kings of the earth" [Psalm 76:12]. Similarly, if we resist the devil, that roaring lion, though he fall not, yet he will flee.

Caleb continued to drive out enemies in Debir, southward of Hebron. He wanted to make sure Debir was safe, for the benefit of his tribe. Let us concern and engage ourselves in the welfare of the community we are in, and seek the benefit of others even if we are inconvenienced.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 12-13
PSALM 51

THOUGHT

Read Deuteronomy 31:6. Can I, and do I, truly trust in the Rock of Salvation? The hour calls for lion-hearted heroes, and God commands us to be courageous in our fight against the enemies of our life. Let us stand in the power of Christ and drive them thence.

8 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 15:16-17

LESSON

Integrity

VERSE 17

*And Othniel the son of
Kenaz, the brother of Caleb,
took it: and he gave him
Achsah his daughter to wife.*

As Caleb marched against the great city of Debir, he promised his daughter Achsah in marriage to the man who captured the city. The promise of giving away one's own daughter as the prize was a custom of ancient history. For example, King Saul promised to give away his own daughter to the hero who could kill the Philistine giant [1 Samuel 17:25].

Othniel, son of Kenaz, Caleb's brother, was able to attack and capture the city of Debir formerly known as Kiriath-sepher. Caleb was a man of integrity. He kept his promise and gave his daughter in marriage to the victorious young man. God demands us to have the integrity, to be truthful and faithful, both in word and in deed.

Othniel was a valiant and capable commander, as we learn from Judges 3:9. Othniel became the first judge of Israel after the death of Joshua. He was raised by God as a deliverer. God's presence was with Othniel, and he led the Israelites back to God and also to victory against the enemies.

We need to have the courage like Othniel and Caleb, with unwavering faith in God. Do not fall back into the worldly sinful traps. Be vigilant, be watchful and keep a close walk with God. We should pray for the Holy Spirit to help us deal with the obstacles in our life – hostile people, life challenges and baffling problems. Allowing God to guide every step of our life will lead us to develop a stronger faith and obedience in Him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 14
PSALMS 52-54

PRAYER

God, help me to live righteously, put away lying, speak the truth and be faithful to others. Amen.

9 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 15:18-19

LESSON
Unselfishness

VERSE 19

Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs.

Caleb was an unselfish man. He had already given his daughter and son-in-law the land in Negev. But when both of them came and requested for a field with springs of water, he willingly gave them the upper and lower springs. This is a sign of generosity as spring water was a valuable gift in a dry country.

As believers of Christ, we must follow the example of our Lord to care for others, help the needy and serve one another. Be like Caleb and have a lion-hearted spirit of selflessness. As stated in Philippians 2:3-4: Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Do remember that we are to reflect God's image and be a good testimony for the Lord. Care for your brethren, your family and even non-believers, bear the weaknesses of those without strength and be kind to one another. Do not have selfish ambition. Put others first, love one another and be one in spirit in God.

The fact that Caleb as an earthly parent so readily bestowed on his children that which was good assures us that our heavenly Father will not spare us from His good gifts and blessings. He knows our needs and has compassion to provide for all the necessities in our lives. Commit everything to our good and sovereign God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 15
PSALM 55

THOUGHT

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. – Galatians 6:10

10 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 15:20-63

LESSON
The Jebusites

VERSE 63

As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 16
PSALMS 56-57

PRAYER

The tribe of Judah inherited a large number of cities. Cities meant wealth as they were the key commercial centres, usually built in strategic locations, and around water supplies and fertile land. This signifies that God's people shall be given a rich inheritance. All believers of Christ are indeed the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. We belong to God's rich kingdom. According to the promise of God, we shall be blessed abundantly as His people. We shall have the assurance of eternal life.

The Lord shall deliver all of us who believe in Him from every evil work, and will preserve us unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory forever and ever [2 Tim 4:18]. The promise of God for us to inherit a beautiful place in heaven is incorruptible and undefiled. Let us lay our treasures in heaven. Focus our eyes on the Lord, live a holy life, set ourselves apart from a sinful life and walk the narrow path in His light.

We are warned not to repeat the mistake of Judah, which was to live together with the Jebusites, the original inhabitants of Jerusalem. God had told His people to drive out ALL enemies of the Promised Land. There would not be peace when they were allowed to live within the Promised Land. There will not be peace if we allow sins to remain in our lives.

We have to be more steadfast and zealous in seeking the inheritance of God. We need to take heed of God's instruction and to stand strong, be unwavering in our pursuit of God.

Dear God, help me to stay faithful, to be a good testimony and be able to resist all temptations. Grant me the wisdom, perseverance and determination as a follower of Christ. Amen.

11 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 16:1-4

LESSON

The tribe of Ephraim

VERSE 4

So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

Both chapters 16 and 17 give the account of the apportioning of the inheritance of the land of Canaan to Israel. Verses 1-4 refer to a general account of the lot of Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph. We will read of the differences and reactions to their inheritance in the following chapter.

The tribe of Judah was already given their lot in the southern part of Canaan. The sovereignty was promised to Judah. Ephraim and Manasseh, the children of Joseph, were given the post of honour. Manasseh, as the first-born, received a double portion of the inheritance. They had the first and best portion in the northern part of Canaan. It is remarkable that God disposed of these lots in due order.

These settled boundaries serve to remind us that our present and future circumstances are appointed by the all-knowing God. Therefore, we should be content with our portion, since God knows what is best for us. Be thankful for our lot in life because what we have is more than we deserve.

How contented are you right now with your spiritual life? How about your material status? On the other hand, do you always gripe about your situation in life? Are you unhappy about your present situation? Learn to accept God's will for your life in whatever situation you are in right now. It is good if such dissatisfaction spurs you on in the pursuit of holiness.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 17-18
PSALMS 58-59

THOUGHT

... and be content with such things as ye have –
Hebrews 13:5

12 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 16:5-10

LESSON

Failure to
drive out the enemy

VERSE 10

*And they drove not out
the Canaanites that dwelt in
Gezer: but the Canaanites
dwell among the Ephraimites
unto this day, and serve under
tribute.*

The lot of Ephraim was apportioned accordingly, from Benjamin on the south to Manasseh on the north. On the east and west it stretched from Jordan to the great sea. Next to Judah, the sons of Joseph were given the best part of northern Canaan. Such was the honour rendered to them.

Being the more important tribe, after the separation of the two kingdoms, the larger division was named after Ephraim. In fact, the whole kingdom of the ten tribes, especially in the book of Hosea, is often called Ephraim.

Sad to say, those Ephraimites did not drive out the Canaanites living in Gezer. They allowed their enemies to live under tribute to them. The tribe of Ephraim disobeyed God's command to drive out their enemies. God's command to the Israelites was very clear-cut. Yet they chose to disobey Him. Even meek Moses, a great servant of God, was guilty of this sin of disobedience. He hit the rock instead of speaking to it, as commanded by the Lord.

There are many examples of Bible characters disobeying God's command. What about you and me? Are we any better? Do we mingle with non-believers in worldly activities? Though Christians are in this world, we must not be of the world. We must not partake in worldly pursuits which are displeasing to the Lord. We must not even appear to be like the world. Remember that you are being watched every moment. Be wary of the enemies from within too.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 19
PSALMS 60-61

REMINDER

Partial obedience is disobedience.

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 17:1-6

LESSON
The tribe
of Manasseh

VERSE 6

*Because the daughters of
Manasseh had an inheritance
among his sons: and the rest
of Manasseh's sons had the
land of Gilead.*

Here we read about the allotted portions given to the half tribe of Manasseh. Machir, the firstborn of Israel, together with his descendants, received the inheritance accordingly. The rest of the tribe received theirs westward of Jordan.

Manasseh, as the first-born of Joseph, received a double portion of the inheritance. Such was the privilege of the first child. The first-born of Manasseh, Machir, together with his posterity, were men of valour. His descendants had his valiant blood still running in their veins. Machir and his posterity received that frontier land because valiant men of war were needed to defend the place.

“And they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father” [Numbers 36:12]. The daughters of Zelophedad had already pleaded their own cause before Moses when they were young and had obtained the grant of an inheritance with their brethren. Now they themselves put in their claim before Joshua. Hence, Joshua readily gave them their lots as inheritance among the brethren of their father. Joshua recognised it as a royal decree from God. Therefore, the daughters were not deprived of their legitimate succession.

This incident here shows a larger consideration of the rights of women than was usually accorded at that time. The question arises whether females should inherit properties when there is no male heir in the family. The decision was that they should inherit, provided they do not marry outside their own tribe.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 20
PSALMS 62-63

PRAYER

Lord, teach us here to believe and obey, and give us an inheritance among Thy saints, in glory everlasting.

14 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 17:7-13

LESSON

Strong but ...

VERSE 13

Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 21
PSALMS 64-65

THOUGHT

The distribution of the Promised Land of Canaan was very clear-cut. It reached from Jordan on the east to the great sea on the west. Southward was Ephraim's and northward belongs to the tribe of Manasseh. Manasseh, the first-born of Joseph, had the privilege of receiving a double portion of the inheritance. Numerous lots had been assigned to them. Yet the children of Manasseh suffered the Canaanites to live with them. They chose the easy way out instead of driving them out. This was contrary to God's specific command.

If you recall, the Ephraimites in Joshua 16:10 was guilty of such disobedience. Perhaps the tribe of Manasseh used this as an excuse to do the same. Yet was such an attitude excusable? The earlier verses describe the many different places given to the tribe of Manasseh. This shows their ungratefulness to God.

Gratefulness is the hallmark of remembrance. Instead of being thankful, the tribe of Manasseh was complacent. They chose the easy way out in dealing with those Canaanites by exacting tribute from them. They were guilty of living and mingling among the enemies. Being mighty and strong, they defied God's command by allowing those Canaanites to stay put in the land.

How do you express a thankful heart? You will surely remember someone's kindness no matter how small the deed is. We are indebted to God for His amazing, sacrificial love for us shown on the cross of Calvary. Let's show our thankfulness by giving Him our first love.

Note the hallmarks of life:

Remembrance – the hallmark of gratitude

Gratitude – the hallmark of obedience

Obedience – the hallmark of love

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 17:14-16

LESSONComplaints...
complaints... complaints**VERSE 14**

*And the children of Joseph
spoke unto Joshua, saying,
Why hast thou given me
but one lot and one portion
to inherit, seeing I am a
great people, forasmuch as
the LORD hath blessed me
hitherto?*

In these few short verses we read of Joseph's children grumbling and complaining about their given lot. They were dissatisfied with their given lot. Here we read of their request for the enlargement of their lot. Yet we hear of them boasting about their greatness and blessing from the Lord since then.

Joshua dealt with Israel impartially in all fairness. He did not show any special favour to his own tribe whatsoever. Perhaps they were expecting some favour from Joshua who was of the same tribe. This is the proof of Joshua's fair dealing with all the different tribes of Israel.

The two tribes were encouraged to work hard and fight for their lot. Instead, they were whining and complaining that it was insufficient for them. This is the attitude of indolence, usually from those who have too much, and still expect more to be given to them. They even disdainfully describe their inheritance as "one lot and one portion".

Pride causes a person to think that he deserves more than what he has. When a person's heart is stuffed up and filled with pride, he expects to receive more and more. We must guard against the sin of sloth and greed, even in our spiritual walk with the Lord. Idleness will only magnify difficulty and danger. Remember that without Christ we can do nothing. He can empower us to attempt great things for Him. Then our complaining will turn into joyful thanksgiving.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 22
PSALMS 66-67

THOUGHT

In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:18

16 MAY

BIBLE LESSON
Joshua 17:17-18

LESSON
The mountain
is yours

VERSE 18

*But the mountain shall be
thine; for it is a wood, and
thou shalt cut it down: and the
outgoings of it shall be thine:
for thou shalt drive out the
Canaanites, though they have
iron chariots, and though they
be strong.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 23
PSALM 68

THOUGHT

The children of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) registered a belligerent complaint with Joshua that they had been given but one lot and one portion though they are a great people. They desired a larger lot in which they might indulge themselves in ease and luxury. Joshua keenly rebuked them for their self-sufficiency. He agreed that they were a great people and very powerful and fully capable of expanding their territory by clearing the trees of the mountain.

With God on their side and by going forward in His name the children of Joseph shall “drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong” [v.18]. Joshua threw them, in the wisdom of God, upon themselves to shame them into action. Caleb had not let the formidable opposition of giants defeat him [Joshua 14:6-12]. Similarly, the tribes had to act in courageous faith if they were to secure their full inheritance.

“Cut down the wood for thyself.” We need such a reminder. We do not know the extent of our advantages till we try them. We have no excuse for complaints before we have made full use of what we possess. The one talent is buried because it is not five.

If we use well what powers God has given us, we will grow more effective. One talent that is not neglected produces other talents. Our lot in life will improve as it is used well. Beware the danger of neglecting to use your God-given talents.

We may make excuses for not obeying God, but He still calls it disobedience.

17 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 18:1

LESSON

Shiloh

VERSE 1

*And the whole congregation
of the children of Israel
assembled together at Shiloh,
and set up the tabernacle of
the congregation there. And the
land was subdued before them.*

The tabernacle, which had been in Gilgal since the Israelites entered the Promised Land, was moved to a more central place, Shiloh, when the land was subdued. The sacred name “Shiloh” signifies rest or peace. Jacob predicted that Shiloh (the Messiah) was to come through his seed, his offspring [Genesis 49:10]. Rest and peace is only to be found in the presence of God. The choice of Shiloh as a resting place for the tabernacle was a matter of divine appointment [Deuteronomy 12:10-12].

For 40 years the priests and Levites had taken down the tabernacle, carried it and set it again in the wilderness, never having a permanent resting place. Now the tabernacle was to be firmly established at Shiloh. It was more accessible to all the 12 tribes who were to present their religious service to God. Believers are not far from His tabernacle. God is among men, to dwell with them, commune with them and make Himself known to them.

“The erection at Shiloh was ‘the tabernacle of the congregation’. There the tribes assembled together. It was to them the centre of national unity. In our worship we should forget our differences. Rich and poor meet together as one in sin and want and helplessness, and then as one in redemption, spiritual joy and Christian service. No duty is more important than that of maintaining a spirit of Christian brotherhood [John 4:20-21]. By no means is this more fully realised than by union in the deepest emotions of the spiritual life.” – WF Adeney

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 24
PSALM 69

THOUGHT

God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. – John 4:24

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 18:2-6

LESSONHow long
are you slack?**VERSE 3**

And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you?

There were no less than seven tribes out of the 12, who had not received their inheritance. They had set foot in Canaan but became slack in laying claim to God's wonderful gift, the inheritance of the Promised Land. A spirit of inactivity and apathy had overtaken them.

This slackness is supposed to arise from their dissatisfaction in the proportion already allotted, partly being weary of war, having sufficient good things in their present condition and unwilling to run into new hazards and wars. They were prepared to settle back, enjoy what they had, and waited till things were adjusted to great satisfaction.

Joshua reproached them sharply: How long will you be sluggish and show only half-hearted commitment? Then Joshua gave them a strong charge. The seven tribes were to appoint three men from each tribe to survey and describe the remaining land. Once the survey was completed, they would divide it into seven parts, a territory for each tribe. The surveyors were to respect the territories of Judah and Joseph, not to infringe on their borders. Once Joshua received an accurate description of the remaining land, he would seek the Lord in dividing the inheritance by casting lots in the presence of the Lord.

As Israel received the promised land as a gift from the Lord [v. 3], so we have received, in Jesus, every spiritual blessing [Ephesians 1:3]. The question for us is, "How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of these gifts?"

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 25
PSALMS 70-71

THOUGHT

God expects us to be hardworking, so His Word warns us in Proverbs 10:4: "He becometh poor that dealth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich."

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 18:7-10

LESSONCasting lots
for the land**VERSE 10**

*And Joshua cast lots for them
in Shiloh before the LORD:
and there Joshua divided
the land unto the children
of Israel according to their
divisions.*

Joshua gave 21 men their commission. He did not appoint them. They were selected by the seven tribes. The same principle is to be observed under Christianity: “Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business” [Acts 6:3]. It was a project by which they might behold for themselves what a godly inheritance God had given them.

By surveying the same, they would obtain a better knowledge of what awaited them and then they would be disposed to take possession of the land of promise. The Levites were to be excluded. The Lord Himself was to be their inheritance. The Reubenites, the Gaddites and half of Manasseh had been assigned their places and portions by Moses on the eastern side of the Jordan [Numbers 32:33].

The surveyors duly performed their tasks: “The men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven parts in a book, and came again to Joshua to the host at Shiloh.” And we are told, “And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions” [v. 9-10]. The order of their allotment accorded neither with their seniority nor with their numerical strength.

The lesson simply is to obey God and do His will. God will be with us and we will have the victory. This has always been the way of the Lord.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 26
PSALM 72

THOUGHT

Respond to undeserved blessing with unreserved obedience.

20 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 18:11-28

LESSON
The tribe
of Benjamin

VERSE 11

*And the lot of the tribe of
the children of Benjamin came
up according to their families:
and the coast of their lot came
forth between the children of
Judah and the children of
Joseph.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 27
PSALM 73

THOUGHT

The tribe of Benjamin was one of the 12 tribes of Israel which descended from Benjamin, the youngest and most beloved son of the patriarch Jacob and his wife Rachel. The land inherited by the tribe of Benjamin was protected between Judah (south) and Ephraim (north). This is a picture of God's gift of protection and security. The cities of Benjamin fell into two groups. 12 cities stood in the eastern part of the territory and 14 in the west.

Two striking predictions had been made concerning this tribe. The earlier one was made by dying Jacob, "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil" [Genesis 49:27]. Benjamin was indeed the fiercest and most warlike of the tribes. King Saul, who so fiercely persecuted David, was of this tribe. Esther and Mordecai were also of this tribe and through them the enemies of Israel were destroyed. Most remarkably were the terms of Jacob's prophecy made good of Saul of Tarsus [Romans 11:1; Philippians 3:5], for in the morning of his career when persecuting the early Christians, he ravined as a wolf; but at the close, by his evangelistic labours, he delivered the Devil's prey.

The later prediction concerning this tribe was made through Moses [Deuteronomy 33:12], which had reference chiefly to the favoured and honoured position or portion which that tribe would occupy. The site of the future temple in Jerusalem was in the tribe of Benjamin, a fulfilment of Moses' prophecy.

God is the great Protector of His people and He promises to protect us.

21 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 18:13

LESSON

Bethel

VERSE 13

*And the border went over from
thence toward Luz,
to the side of Luz,
which is Bethel, southward;
and the border descended to
Ataroth-adar, near the hill
that lieth on the south side of
the nether Beth-boron.*

Bethel was a city of the Canaanites, captured by Joshua, and allotted to the tribe of Benjamin. Bethel means “house of God”. It represents a right relationship with God. It was so in the life of Abraham and Jacob. It is a picture of those who come back to God after leaving Him for the world, only returning to that pure feeling of being forgiven and right with God again.

As a society, we have lost our respect and reverence for God as well as the house of God. We stray away from the Lord. We lose our confidence in our ability to maintain a right relationship with God. We lose our joy in service to Him. In the distractions of this world, we so often forget our first love.

The path back to God is to reverse the errors that brought us this way. We have to go back by the way we came. It is back to Bethel. The return to God begins with repentance. “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works...” [Revelation 2:5]. If you cannot at first do it with joy, do it with determination. The joy will return in God’s time. What you can gain after the experience of failure is actually greater and deeper than the first experience of salvation.

So are you dwelling at Bethel? If not, now is the time to hear the voice of God, calling us back to Bethel. The journey back to Bethel begins when we once again hear and obey the voice of God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 28
PSALM 74

THOUGHT

Believers who have walked away from God so often fear their journey back. May the Lord grant His grace and strength to such a one.

22 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 18:16

LESSON

Valley of Hinnom

VERSE 16

And the border came down to the end of the mountain that lieth before the valley of the son of Hinnom, and which is in the valley of the giants on the north, and descended to the valley of Hinnom, to the side of Jebusi on the south, and descended to En-rogel.

The Valley of Hinnom was a landmark setting the boundaries of the territories of Judah and Benjamin. It was used as a place where pagans did all sorts of vile and wicked things – including child sacrifices. The Jews turned it into a place of burning flesh and garbage. There was always a fire there, burning constantly. The Hinnom Valley presented such a vivid image that Christ used it as a symbolic depiction of hell: of eternal punishment in unquenchable fire; a place of eternal torment. It is a metaphor for the terrible consequences of rejecting the life that God has for us.

The rejection of the reality of hell stems from a human inability to reconcile the love of God with eternal punishment or from an outright rejection of God's Word. One who rejects God does not know the real horrors of hell. When he chooses against God, he is wrong about God and about hell. He is blind to both. The realities of eternal damnation, eternal hell, and eternal punishment are frightening and disturbing. But it is good that we might, indeed, be terrified.

Thank God, as hell-deserving sinners, for Jesus Christ our Saviour, Who became a curse for us and suffered, that He might deliver us from the wrath to come. While there is time, He will do that for anyone who turns from sin and treasures Him and His work above all.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 29
PSALMS 75-76

THOUGHT

We can choose to trust in Jesus' payment for our sin, or we can choose to pay for our sins ourselves.

23 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 19:1-9

LESSON

The land of Simeon

VERSE 9

Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them: therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them.

The tribe of Simeon was given the land inside of the land of Judah. The cities that were assigned to them were all in the most arid and inhospitable region. They were isolated cities and had no definite territorial boundaries. This was a prophecy of Jacob fulfilled, that Simeon's tribe inherits land scattered throughout Judah's territory. Jacob pronounced a curse upon the anger of Simeon (and Levi), when they treacherously and barbarously destroyed the Shechemites. The tribe of Judah eventually absorbed the Simeonites, and they disappeared from history.

Our actions determine our future blessings in God's program and the choices we make today will affect our descendents. We cannot live recklessly. All the potential in the world won't benefit you if you don't develop self-control. You may have tremendous potential in the Lord. But if you are as uncontrolled as water, it's a matter of time your potential is swept away by the flood. We may feel that we have gotten away, but we haven't. We just haven't faced the music yet. Even though we are secure in Christ, there are still consequences to our actions. Satan has plenty of time to wait for you to fall.

Simeon (and Levi) took justice into their own hands; they did not repent, but rather justified their actions. They carried that mistake for the rest of their lives. Every single word of Jacob's blessings came true.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 30
PSALM 77

THOUGHT

Great gifts are worthless without godly character.

24 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 19:10-16

LESSON

The Land of Zebulun

VERSE 16

This is the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages.

The land that Zebulun was given as a tribe is the land that lies between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea, far north of Canaan.

Isaiah, on his prophecy of Zebulun and Napthali [Isaiah 9] called it a place of “dimness” because primarily pagans populated it and they had difficulty holding onto their ancestral faith. They were terrorised by the Assyrians and the Babylonians who came to burn and slaughter. Zebulun had lived in godlessness, had given up their faith in God and turned to the world and eventually overrun by invaders from the North. They were in oblivion for 700 years until Jesus began His ministry there, by which it had become known as Galilee.

Upon occupation of the land, Zebulun had failed to drive out the Canaanites. It was incomplete obedience to God’s command; not responding fully to God’s Word. This is a trait to which all of us can relate. How often do we choose to follow our own paths for various reasons, many of which may not be in God’s will?

Even though our present circumstance is all darkness, we can still say no to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope. We must be reminded to live in repentance, so that we would not fall and be dominated by sin and the devil.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 31
PSALM 78:1-39

THOUGHT

This life is given to you for repentance, waste it not in vain pursuits.

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 19:17-23

LESSON

The land of Issachar

VERSE 23

This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages.

Genesis 49:14-15 state Issachar's land would be agricultural. True to the prophecy, his tribe inherited the rich farmland of the Valley of Jezreel in Galilee. Issachar was given the fertility of the earth as the earth blessed him. The tribe of Issachar is compared to an ass, not for stupidity and sluggishness, but for its strength, and its use in farming, in which this tribe was chiefly occupied. As a result Issachar became a farmer for the benefit of his father and brothers. He also supplied, of all the good things of the earth, to all the poor and the oppressed.

Possession and cultivation of land were central to God's plan for Israel, and successful farming was the leading indication of God's blessings. Farming is backbreaking work, dirty work, detailed work and most of all it is risky work. There aren't any guarantees. Let us keep the deep-root, big picture in mind. If we don't give up, one day we will enjoy the final harvest and its bountiful rewards. Unlike our farming friends, this harvest, one cultivated by faith, is absolutely guaranteed.

Do you feel trapped by the everydayness of life and how much work there is yet to do, wondering if your labor matters or will amount to anything in the end? How do you continue in all God has called you to do without growing weary, especially when the work is demanding and the harvest appears so far into the future? Look to the farmer for answers.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 32
PSALM 78:40-72

THOUGHT

Farming is a noble calling.

26 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 19:24-31

LESSON

The land of Asher

VERSE 24

*And the fifth lot came out
for the tribe of the children
of Asher according to their
families.*

The fifth to receive their lot was the tribe of Asher, claiming the rich piece of land in western coastal Galilee. In God's pleasure, He had blessed the children of Asher with many natural resources. This is seen in the words of Jacob, "Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties" [Genesis 49:20].

When blessed with riches, we ought to pray more for the wisdom of stewardship. On that note, the words of Jacob paled in comparison to the blessings of Moses: "And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children, let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be" [Deuteronomy 33:24-25].

Asher proved to be successful both materially and spiritually - at least up till this time of Joshua when they received the fruit of their quest. God had not only granted them posterity, but had also blessed them with love from his fellow people. "Dipping his foot in oil" even foretells the greatest product of that region - olive oil. More importantly, as the days passed, they grew from strength to strength.

And indeed, had the tribe of Asher, and for that matter Israel, persevered in her walk with God, she would have ridden upon the heaven with God as their refuge and underneath His everlasting arms, cast out their enemies and dwell safely upon a land of corn and wine [Deuteronomy 33:26-28].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 33
PSALM 79

PRAYER

Father in heaven, thank You for all Your blessings; teach me to use them wisely to further Your Kingdom. Grant me, with the increase of age, even more strength to do Your bidding.

27 MAY

BIBLE LESSON
Joshua 19:32-39

LESSON
The land of Naphtali

VERSE 32
The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, even for the children of Naphtali according to their families.

In the words of Jacob, the tribe of Naphtali “is a hind let loose”, “he giveth goodly words” (also interpreted as “he giveth birth to adorable fawns”) – symbols of life and strength. Living in the highlands north of the Sea of Galilee, the terrain must have given these people the greater picture of life; this group of people proves to be simple and independent.

Yet when called to fight with the fellow brethren, the tribe of Naphtali was found to be faithful and trustworthy. Their history gave us a good testimony to this. The people of Naphtali helped Barak in the defeat of Sisera [Judges 4:10; 5:18] and Gideon in the pursuit of the Midianites [Judges 7:23]. Out of this tribe came later the prophet who would call down fire from the heavens – Elijah.

The way we behave is often the direct reflection of the place we are brought up. Does your life tell of the presence and cleansing power of Christ? Does the joy of the Holy Spirit permeate your life so much that it naturally and inevitably shows in your daily interactions with the world? Does the peace of God saturate your life so much that it gives a wonderful sense of confidence and assurance to the people around you?

“Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word” [1 Kings 18:36b].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 34
PSALM 80

THOUGHT

Deer are born to sprint. When restrained, wait in obedience and godly patience; when let loose, do what God has created you to do.

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 19:40-48

LESSONThe land
of Dan**VERSE 47**

And the coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 35
PSALMS 81-82

PRAYER

Have you ever been given a project so big you do not even know where to start with? Have you met a challenge so tough you cannot imagine yourself overcoming it? Here we read of the land allotted to the children of Dan. It was one of the most difficult lands given, for it is situated north of the Philistines, one of the more persistent and strongest enemies of Israel. Foreign to Canaan, the Philistines were tough seafaring people who came from the west to carve out a land for themselves.

Yet the tribe of Dan was not daunted by the allotment. Holding to the promise of God, the people further acquired more lands to fortify themselves. The battle of Leshem must be a great battle, for after conquering it, they named it Dan.

In life, we do not expect every one of our lot to be the same. Each of us has our own set of problems and challenges. Instead of complaining, learn to trust in the leading of our Lord and make the best of it with the means of grace God has given us. If He puts us in a certain circumstance, He will surely provide us a way of escape [1 Corinthians 10:13]. Call upon Him and He will surely deliver.

Dear reader, are you worried and troubled? Are you sad and heavy-laden? Learn to commit everything to God as He grants you the strength and wisdom to persevere. Fight the battle of faith one step at a time. Give thanks to God for every progress made and lesson learnt.

But let all those that put their trust in Thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because Thou defendest them: let them also that love Thy name be joyful in Thee. – Psalm 5:11

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 19:49-51

LESSONThe inheritance
of Joshua**VERSE 49**

When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them.

Israel has entered Canaan and by the grace of God, she has conquered most of it. The division is now done. Looking back, it must have struck wonder in the hearts of some that they could even have done it. Once suffering in the wilderness as a loose mass of people, they now possess land and a place to be called home. Their heart should be filled with gratitude.

But just like in any major project, the completion does not mark the end of issues that need to be resolved. And one of them, ironically yet very real, is the issue of merit. Many a time, leaders whom God used to finish a great work would fall into the snare of self-glory; they might even congratulate themselves with the thought that the church would not have done it without his leadership.

Joshua is definitely not one of such. In the division of Canaan, not only was he the last one to claim his land (“Timnath-heres” means “the remaining portion”), he had also claimed a humble and convenient lot in the land of his own tribe, where he would live until the end of his life, where he was also buried [Joshua 24:30].

The life of Joshua should be a great example for us. When called to give a testimony, he had bravely presented a good report. When commanded to lead the people, he had heeded the Master’s call to be strong and of a good courage. Yet when all was done, he had given all glory to God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
NUMBERS 36
PSALMS 83-84

THOUGHT

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. – Colossians 3:23-24

30 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 20:1-9

LESSON
Cities of refuge

VERSE 4

*And when he that doth flee
unto one of those cities shall
stand at the entering of the
gate of the city, and shall
declare his cause in the ears
of the elders of that city, they
shall take him into the city
unto them, and give him a
place, that he may dwell
among them.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY I
PSALM 85

QUESTION

The cities of refuge are not a novelty after the conquest of Canaan. Specific instructions for their assignment were given before the Canaan entry [Numbers 35; Deuteronomy 19]. In fact, the fundamental principle was laid out in Exodus 21:13. If a man kill another unintentionally, and if he could make it to any of the six cities spread out three each on either side of the Jordan, he could present his case before the elders, and stay in the city if proven innocent, until the death of the high priest. This also provided at least a buffer time for any man who sought revenge (the avenger of blood) to cool down and see the case of manslaughter rationally.

The institution of such a covenant law not only shows that God understands the hearts of men, it also presents to us the mercy of the Lord. To one who did something not amounting to murder, God has shown grace for him against the cold iron rule of a life for another.

Many also see the typology involved here. Whoever is aware of his wrongdoing and calls upon the name of the Lord and flees to Him for protection shall be delivered from death.

And not only that, in Christ we have a great High Priest Who would never die. A city of refuge may have unrighteous judges and be even taken by the enemies, but in Christ we have a city that would never fall – we are safe in the everlasting arms of Jesus.

Consider Joshua 20:4 again. As we flee from this world into God's city, should there be elders at the gates, what would you declare in their ears?

31 MAY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 20:3

LESSON

Refuge from
the avenger of blood

VERSE 3

*That the slayer that killeth
any person unawares and
unwittingly may flee thither:
and they shall be your refuge
from the avenger of blood.*

The ancient Israelites had a custom which we would consider strange by today's standards. It is the case of a man killing another man by accident. The modern practice is that if a man has been tried in a court of law for killing another person, and if it has been established that the killing was by accident and no premeditation or malice was involved, the accused would be set free. But in ancient Israel the case was treated differently. There, the relative of the man killed by accident would avenge the killing by taking the life of the man [manslayer] who killed his relative by accident. This man was known as "the avenger of blood" because he took vengeance for the blood of his relative.

However, to avoid being killed by "the avenger of blood", the manslayer could flee to a city designated as a place of refuge. He would be allowed to reside in the city after explaining his case to the elders. Upon the death of the high priest in the city [verses 4 to 6], the man [refugee] can return to his hometown.

Christ is both the "avenger of blood" [Revelation 6:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10] and the City of Refuge [Hebrews 6:18]. We too have a "strong city" to which we may "continually resort". The ancient Israelite had the right to enter only if his act had been inadvertent, but fortunately, and by God's grace, we are able to hide ourselves in Christ even if we have sinned wilfully – and are truly repentant.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 2
PSALMS 86-87

PRAYER

"Dearest Jesus! how strikingly art Thou pointed out herein, as the Refuge of Thy people, and what a strong consolation have we all to flee unto, in the shelter of Thy blood and righteousness? [Hebrews 6:18-19]." – Hawker

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 21:1-8

LESSON
Cities of Levites**VERSE 3**

*And the children of Israel
gave unto the Levites out
of their inheritance, at the
commandment of the LORD,
these cities and their suburbs.*

The Lord instructed Moses to give lands to the Levites: "... the Lord said to Moses, 'Command the people of Israel to give to the Levites from their property certain towns to live in, along with the surrounding pasturelands'... In all, 48 towns with the surrounding pastureland will be given to the Levites" [Numbers 35:1-7, paraphrased]. Of the 48 towns or cities, six were cities of refuge.

In his curse on Simeon and Levi for their fierce anger, Jacob prophesied that Levi would be scattered and dispersed in Israel [Genesis 49:5-7]. Those words were fulfilled when the Levites received their cities scattered among the 12 tribes. The Levites living in their 48 cities all over the land served as itinerant instructors of God's people as they watched over the covenant of the Lord and the Word. At the Tabernacle, and later at the Temple, the priestly Levites from the line of Aaron offered the sacrifices that pointed forward to the sacrifice of Jesus.

When it was not their turn to be serving at the Temple, the Levites would appear to be engaged in educational work and religious ministrations among the people of their neighbourhood.

Similarly, church services are useless unless the private lives of people are improved. We must carry the Gospel to those who will not come to hear it in the regular place of worship. It is the duty of Christians not to live apart from the world for their own sanctification, but to instead live in the world for the world's redemption.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 3
PSALM 88

THOUGHT

Godliness cannot exist without humanity. The man of God is most truly human. Sympathy for human affairs, active pity for the distress of the world, and brotherly kindness are essential to the Christian life.

2 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 21:9-19

LESSON

Sons of Aaron

VERSE 19

*All the cities of the children
of Aaron, the priests,
were thirteen cities
with their suburbs.*

The sons of Aaron (who were from the Kohath tribe) received 13 cities, the rest of the sons of Kohath received 10, the sons of Gershon received 13, and the sons of Merari received 12 – a total of 48 Levitical cities. Each tribe had four Levitical cities except Judah which had eight, Simeon which had one, and Naphtali which had three. Six of the Levitical cities were cities of refuge.

Aaron had four sons – Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar – who were chosen as priests to minister in the tabernacle. Nadab and Abihu had been with Moses at the foot of Mount Sinai, and they had seen the presence and glory of God. Nadab and Abihu were appointed to minister in the Tabernacle. Their sin and their end were well-known; the sin of Nadab and Abihu was a sin of arrogance and lack of respect for the power and holiness of God. It was not just that they used strange fire, but that they did not honour God in their hearts.

Aaron had two other sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, who were commanded to continue the tabernacle service without showing any remorse over what had just happened to their older brothers. But they failed to obey a specific command to eat the sin offering in the holy place [Leviticus10:16-20].

Moses addressed his anger at Aaron's sons. But Aaron answered Moses that the error was an honest mistake (caused by the grief of the death of Nadab and Abihu). For his sons had done the all the ritual sacrifice correctly up to the point of eating the meat.

The difference between the sins of Nadab and Abihu and the sins of Eleazar and Ithamar was the difference of attitude towards God. Nadab and Abihu were arrogant and perhaps drunk. Eleazar and Ithamar were filled with sorrow over the death of their brothers.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 4
PSALM 89

THOUGHT

3 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON
Joshua 21:20-26

LESSON
Sons of Kohath

VERSE 26
*All the cities were ten with
their suburbs for the families
of the children of Kohath
that remained.*

The three sons of Levi were Gershon, Merari, and Kohath. But unlike the Gershonites and the Merarites, who were allowed to transport the items under their care on carts, the Kohathites had to carry their items, the holy things of the tabernacle, on their shoulders. They had the arduous burden of transporting these items from place to place as the camp moved, but they were not allowed to actually touch the items or they would die. The priests had to wrap the sacred objects in special coverings before they were transported [Numbers 4:15]. As such, many of the Kohathites [sons of Kohath] began to disdain this task and to covet the role of the priests.

Korah was the grandson of Kohath, and he began to run with another group of Reubenite malcontents, namely, Dathan and Abiram. In pride, they roused a group of 250 men together to challenge the right of Moses and Aaron to the priesthood [Numbers 16]. Moses summoned the rebellious men to stand before God and burn incense. God warned Moses to let the assembly know about the rebels and keep away from them. In the event that ensued [Numbers 16], the three rebels and their household were swallowed up by the earth and fire came forth from the Lord and consumed the 250.

Yet God was merciful to the sons of Korah [grandson of Kohath] despite the rebellion of Korah. Of all the psalms in the Bible, eleven are attributed to the sons of Korah. These beautiful psalms express a spirit of great gratitude and humility to an awesome, mighty God. They express a longing for God and deep devotion [Psalms 42, 46].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 5
PSALM 90

CONSIDER

Read Psalm 42.

4 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 21:27-33

LESSON

Sons of Gershon

VERSE 33

*All the cities of the
Gershonites according to their
families were thirteen cities
with their suburbs.*

Firstborn of the three sons of Levi, Gershon had two sons: Libni, also known as Ladan, and Shimei. Consequently, two groups of descendants were enumerated in the census taken in the wilderness of Sinai and that in the plains of Moab. The Gershonites (sons or descendants of Gershon) were responsible for the care of the tabernacle and tent, its coverings, the curtain at the entrance to the tent of meeting, the curtains of the courtyard, the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard surrounding the tabernacle and altar, and the ropes—and everything related to their use.

After the settlement in the land, the Gershonites were allotted 13 cities with pasture grounds in the territories of Manasseh, Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali. Kedesh, in Galilee, and Golan, in Bashan, allotted to them, were two of the nation's six cities of refuge.

Among the Gershonites who achieved distinction in later Biblical times was the family of Asaph, the singers from the time of David to the days of the Second Temple. He was assigned by King David as one of the worship leaders in the Tabernacle choir [1 Chronicles 6:31–32]. Both Asaph and David were skilled singers and poets. Asaph is also mentioned as a “seer” or prophet.

Psalms 50 and 73 to 83 are called the “Psalms of Asaph”. Regarding Asaph's role as a prophet, of particular interest is the imprecatory Psalm 83, which deals with God's judgement on His enemies.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

DEUTERONOMY 6
PSALM 91

PLEA

Keep not Thou silence, O God: hold not Thy peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, Thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate Thee have lifted up the head. – Psalm 83:1-2

5 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON
Joshua 21:34-42

LESSON
The sons
of Merari

VERSE 40
*So all the cities for the children
of Merari by their families,
which were remaining of the
families of the Levites, were by
their lot twelve cities.*

These are the descendants of the youngest son of Levi, who were all that remained of the Levites to receive of the cities, which were distributed by lot to them, according to the number of their families. These were the last division of them, besides those of the Kohathites, Levites, and the Gershonites. Their lot was twelve cities; four out of the tribe of Zebulun, four out of the tribe of Reuben, and four out of the tribe of Gad.

The Levites were dispersed among all the tribes. They were near to God and thus put near their brethren in every division, that they might receive divine counsel and instruction which they were qualified to administer, and behold the exemplariness of their conduct, and that their brethren might shew them kindness, as commanded [Deuteronomy 12:19]. Their portion of cities was great, and also of the best; because God would have His peculiar servants honourably and comfortably lodged and cared for, that they might wait upon God without distraction, that they might more entirely and fervently devote themselves to the service of God, and the instruction of souls.

As with the old, so with the new or Gospel dispensation, a similar provision has been made. By an extension of the principle of Levitical dispersion, came our present institution of a resident minister or ministers in every Church, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. It is the duty of God's people to provide, support and pray for their ministers whom God had set over them for their good.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 7
PSALMS 92-93

THOUGHT

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.
– Hebrews 13:17

6 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 21:43-45

LESSON

The Word of God
failed not

VERSE 45

*There failed not ought of any
good thing which the LORD
had spoken unto the house of
Israel; all came to pass.*

The sacred historian having finished his narrative of the partition of the land, deems it a fitting opportunity to bear witness to the fact that God had proven equal to His word. He now appeals, as it were, to their own consciences, whether that precious character, in which He had revealed Himself to them, and in which Jehovah Himself seemed to glory, in that of a faithful God, was most fully confirmed.

All the promises of God were fulfilled. "All came to pass, exactly, precisely, and punctually, even everything relative to their temporal and spiritual good" [John Gill]. There failed not ought of any good thing the Lord had spoken: as of their deliverance out of Egypt, passage through the Red Sea, the desert wilderness had its food and water; their passage through Jordan, the conquest of their enemies, possession of their land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And all this took place easily, without any hitch whatever, so long as Israel was willing simply to go on in faith.

"It is finished." So all that God promises to His spiritual Israel, with respect to their present comfort or everlasting happiness, all is exactly fulfilled, all His promises in Christ are yea and amen. God is the same yesterday, and today, and forever: not further from us in heart, not feebler in power. His anointing is not exhausted; He is still fresh to do what He has promised. And if we faithfully follow on in the way in which He leads us, there will not fail ought of the good that God hath spoken to us.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 8
PSALM 94

THOUGHT

Oh! for faith in lively exercise to believe God's word: to trust Him now in the moment of trial, and not to hesitate, until it be seen, how His purposes will unfold.

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 22:1-10

LESSON

The trans-Jordan tribes

VERSE 3

Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God.

The war against the Canaanites had happily concluded. The priests and people had settled in the conquered lands in peaceable possession of the cities assigned them. Joshua now thought it was time to dismiss the 40,000 men of the three tribes beyond the Jordan, who, for seven or eight years before, had generously quitted their families, and run all the hazards of war, to assist their brethren in their conquest, as Moses had enjoined them. Accordingly, he sent for their chiefs, bore public testimony to their courage and fidelity, and in a solemn manner permitted them to return to their tents, counselled them to faithful obedience, charged them to love and serve the LORD God with all their heart, and blessed them.

There is no more honourable service in the whole record of the seven years' war in Canaan than this which speaks of the steady faithfulness of these eastern tribes. Faithful service was rendered not for personal gain, but for the welfare of brethren. The inheritance of the two and a half tribes was won already, at the time of crossing the Jordan. Every march they made was for the inheritance of others. Every blow they struck was for a brother. Every victory they helped to win was a victory to add to the possessions of someone else.

He who starts to serve his brethren marks the beginning that which, while strength and opportunities continue, he can never leave. The man who begins to serve God ushers in the beginning that which in eternity itself he can never lay aside. This is no bondage, save the bondage of love.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 9
PSALMS 95-96

THOUGHT

Life is nowhere so beautiful as where it is unselfish, all and altogether for others. Fidelity to men and God is the only true fidelity to self, as with the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 22:5

LESSON

Be diligent to obey

VERSE 5

But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments, and to cleave unto Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 10
PSALMS 97-98

THOUGHT

The eastern tribes had faithfully completed their mission. Joshua now sent them back and gave them his blessings. The Reubenites and their associates had chosen an inheritance which would separate them from their brethren. They were about to depart for a life of comparative separation from the mass of the nation. Their remoteness and their occupations drew them away from the current of the national life, and gave them a kind of quasi-independence. They would necessarily be less directly under Joshua's control than the other tribes were.

Joshua will not suffer the people to depart without once more putting them in remembrance of the greatest of all concerns. "He dismisses them with good counsel, not to cultivate their ground, fortify their cities, to invade their neighbours, and so enlarge their own territories, but to keep up serious godliness among them in the power of it" [M. Henry]. He then charged them concerning the future, that they should be obedient to the Law. How they might fulfil this charge he explained in brief and suggestive words, the principal thoughts of which were that they were to love, to walk, to keep, to cleave, to serve.

There was danger lest the separation should injure their fidelity to God. They who live beyond the reach of such religious ordinances as they have found profitable in the past – as in lonely country places, studying, working or holidaying – should be on their guard against the spiritual deadness which may result unless they are assiduous in private devotion. The closer we cleave to Him, the nearer we shall be to all His tribes.

There is a scene where spirits blend,
Where friend holds fellowship with friend;
Though sundered far, by faith they meet
Around one common mercy seat.

9 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 22:11-20

LESSON

Civil war

VERSE 12

And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them.

After receiving the blessings and counsels of Joshua, the eastern tribes returned to their inheritance on the other side of Jordan. They then built a great altar, of remarkable size and magnificence, at the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel, visible for all to see at a great distance. The news produced the greatest consternation, and caused an uprising of all the tribes. A separate altar implied the setting up of a new religion, and fore-shadowed a secession from the theocratic state. The law ordained that if any city went over to idolatry it should be smitten with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed [Deuteronomy 13:15-16].

The congregation at Shiloh, therefore, in the first emotions of its zeal, thought that the Israelites beyond Jordan were fallen into idolatry, either by devoting themselves to the worship of false gods, or by presuming to worship the Lord in another place and manner than He had appointed. Hereupon they consulted how it was necessary to act towards the supposed offenders. The conclusion was, that they should proceed in strict conformity to the law of Moses, and that in case the 40,000 men had done as was presumed, it was necessary to go up to war against them, to avenge their insulted religion, and destroy them, as God had commanded.

Many reflections might be drawn from this determination: we may boldly conclude, that it is not sufficient to have right intentions in what we undertake; but that in the execution of it, piety requires us to avoid, as much as possible, all appearance of evil.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY II
PSALMS 99-101

THOUGHT

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. – Acts 24:16

BIBLE LESSON
Joshua 22:16-18

LESSON
Confrontation

VERSE 18

*But that ye must turn away
this day from following the
LORD? and it will be, seeing
ye rebel to day against the
LORD, that to morrow He
will be wroth with the whole
congregation of Israel.*

The delegation led by Phinehas summoned the apparent rebels and confronted them with some searching questions. How could the eastern tribes trespass, betray, and break faith with God? How could they turn away and rebel against the Lord by building a competing altar? Had they forgotten the sin of Peor, the plague and judgement of God upon the people who turned away from the Lord [Numbers 25:1-9]? At Peor, some of the Israelites had turned to immorality and false worship, forsaking God and following after the influence of their neighbours. The result was catastrophic: about 24,000 people died under the hand of God's judgement. The entire community had suffered because of the sin and evil of a few.

The delegation asked the deciding question: Were the eastern tribes now turning away from the Lord? If they were rebelling against God, the result would be judgement upon the entire nation [v. 18].

As we study the history of the Jews, we see that they had repeatedly and knowingly rebelled against God. In the time of the Judges for example, we see the recurring cycle of apostasy, oppression, repentance and deliverance. The sad truth is that God's people are a forgetful people and they need to be reminded time and again. May we learn from today's lesson to keep walking close to God, to heed the reminders of the leaders that God sends to warn us whenever we go astray. Church leaders and parents should not shun away from correcting those whom we have been given the privilege to shepherd whenever they turn away from God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 12
PSALM 102

THOUGHT

But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him ... To such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them.

– Psalm 103:17-18

11 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 22:21-29

LESSON

Explanation

VERSE 29

God forbid that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn this day from following the LORD, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for meat offerings, or for sacrifices, beside the altar of the LORD our God that is before His tabernacle.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 13-14
PSALM 103

TAKE HEED

The eastern tribes gave a passionate explanation of their purpose for building the altar. Simply stated, they had feared future isolation from the true faith and worship of God because of the natural barrier posed by the Jordan River. Future generations of the western tribes might claim that they were the true followers of the Lord, and had a stronger claim to the true worship of the Lord.

Moreover, there was a danger that future generations of the western tribes may prevent the eastern tribes from worshipping at the Tabernacle. It was this fear that motivated them to build the altar. In no uncertain terms, they declared that they had not built this altar in order to offer burnt offerings or sacrifices [v. 26]. They clearly understood that burnt offerings and sacrifices could only be made upon the altar of the Tabernacle, only at the true centre of worship. They had built this altar solely as a memorial, as a witness of their strong faith in the Lord [v. 27-28].

The attitude of the eastern tribes in wanting to ensure that future generations would not depart from the true faith is admirable and worthy of emulation. Today true worshippers can worship the Lord in spirit and in truth from any place [John 4:23]. Nevertheless, parents should bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord so that when they grow up, even if they move to places far from us, they would continue to worship the Lord in the way they have been taught from young.

If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then He will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that He hath done you good.

– Joshua 24:20

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 22:27, 34

LESSON

An altar of witness

VERSE 34

*And the children of Reuben
and the children of Gad called
the altar Ed: for it shall be
a witness between us that the
LORD is God.*

In pleading their innocence, the eastern tribes appealed to God as their witness, using the solemn appeal not just once, but twice [Joshua 22: 21-23]. The appeal in Hebrew says, “The Mighty One, God, the Lord! The Mighty One, God, The Lord!” This was an appeal to God the Mighty One, as the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe. Moreover, note what they said: if the altar had really been built in rebellion or disobedience to the Lord, then the Lord should not spare them; they deserved the judgement of God to fall upon them.

The children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, called the altar Ed, which signifies a “witness”. The altar was to be a testimony of their being one with their brethren on the other side of Jordan, in worship, faith, and fellowship. It would be a witness between them that the Lord is the God of all Israel, whether on the one or the other side of Jordan; to be worshipped by them in one and the same manner, and their sacrifices to be offered to Him on His altar before the Tabernacle.

Today, true believers worship this same God from all corners of the earth. We worship Him in spirit and in truth. The things God wishes us to know have been revealed through His Spirit. These things have been written down for us to read and understand [1 Corinthians 2:10]. Furthermore, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” [Romans 8:16].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

DEUTERONOMY 15
PSALM 104

THOUGHT

Happy will it be when all professed Christians learn to copy the example of Israel, to unite zeal and steady adherence to the cause of truth. – Matthew Henry

13 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 22:30-34

LESSON

Civil war averted

VERSE 33

And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God, and did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.

The delegation from the western tribes accepted the passionate defence of their brethren from the east. The explanation not only gave perfect satisfaction to the deputies, and they were relieved beyond measure. The pressure of confrontation was relaxed and the threat of war averted.

Phinehas and his delegation returned home and reported to Joshua and his cabinet the outcome of the summit conference. The news of the outcome stirred joy and praise to God for reconciliation and unity among God's people had been achieved.

Nothing grieves the heart of our God more than to see division and conflict within the Body of Christ. The Lord's parting instruction to His disciples were that they were to love one another. Similarly, Paul instructed his followers in 1 Corinthians 1:10 thus; "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement".

Yet sadly, conflict and division is commonplace in today's churches. Often these divisions did not arise from valid reasons of error or falsehood or apostasy, but because of personal pride and bitterness of heart and an unforgiving spirit. May the Lord have mercy on His people and grant them the desire to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" [Ephesians 4:1-3].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 16
PSALM 105

THOUGHT

In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 22:31

LESSON

The LORD is among us

VERSE 31

And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that the LORD is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the LORD: now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 17
PSALM 106

THOUGHT

Phinehas and his team were obviously satisfied with the explanation by the eastern tribes. He expressed his joy and thankfulness in declaring, “This day we perceive that the Lord is among us”, that is, by His gracious presence and preventing goodness, He has kept you from falling into the suspected sin and rescued the nation from the calamity of a fratricidal war or providential judgement. Phinehas could see that the Lord was among them, because unity had been restored among the people of Israel. This fulfilled the passage from Psalm 133:1: Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

When trouble and chiding from the Lord come into the lives of Christians, they often arrive at the conclusion that God was not with them. Like the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness of Sin, they would ask, “Is the Lord among us or not?” [Exodus 17:7]. Such doubts are a sign of unbelief, a lack of trust and faith. It is also a sign of our ignorance of the teachings of the Bible.

Another, and more serious mistake is the type committed by Samson in Judges 16:20. Samson was so engulfed in wilful sin that he did not even realise that “the Lord was departed from him”. O, how we need to ask the Lord to be ever near us – as He was with Joseph in Egypt – and order our steps as we sojourn on this sinful earth.

Nearer, still nearer,
Close to Thy heart,
Draw me, my Saviour,
So precious Thou art.
— Leila N. Morris

15 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 23:1-16

LESSON

You have seen

VERSE 3

*And ye have seen all that the
Lord your God hath done unto
all these nations because of
you; for the Lord your God is
He that hath fought for you.*

The second last chapter of the Book of Joshua begins many years after Joshua had successfully led the Israelites into the Promised Land, conquering the land from the heathen that dwelt there. He had divided the land according to God's command, and the Israelites finally found rest in the land that God promised Abraham [Genesis 17:8]. By this time, Joshua was an old man, and stricken with the effects of old age. He knew that his time on earth was limited, and had called for the Israelites to gather for one last message.

What was Joshua's final message to the people that God entrusted to him? Joshua reminded them of God's goodness towards them. God fought for them, and brought them out of Egypt. All that they had seen, heard and experienced, were proofs of God's faithfulness to His promise to Abraham, and consequently, to them. Joshua charged them to continue in their steadfastness in following God and to keep all that was commanded to them from the scriptures. They were to be very courageous and not to stray from the path that was laid before them by God.

We are reminded today of our own Christian walk. When we first believed in Christ, our eyes were open to see this world through heaven-bound eyes. Through the trials that God sends in our way, we see God's goodness towards us, as He moulds us to be what He wants us to be. Let us continue to follow Jesus, and not stray from the path that is before us. Let us walk close to Him and obey His every command.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 18
PSALM 107

THOUGHT

Just to be clay in the Potter's hands,
Ready to do what His Word commands.
Only to be what He wants me to be,
Ev'ry moment of ev'ry day.

16 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 23:6

LESSON

Be courageous

VERSE 6

*Be ye therefore very courageous
to keep and to do all that is
written in the book of the law
of Moses, that ye turn not
aside therefrom to the right
hand or to the left;*

In his final message to the Israelites, Joshua encouraged the people to be courageous in keeping and doing all that had been instructed in Moses' book of the law. He gave this charge especially to the elders and leaders of the people, the judges and the officers [Joshua 23:6] because he believed that they should be an example to the Israelites.

When the elders and leaders walk close to God, the people will follow. Joshua was keenly aware that the people were surrounded by heathen nations, and the people would be tempted to turn aside from the path that God had set for them. Therefore, Israel's leaders needed to stand strong and united against pressures from the people to stray from God's ways.

Christians, make no mistake that we also are in the world that is full of temptations, which will cause us to turn away from Christ. We have to be courageous in our stance for Christ. We should be walking closely with Christ. How should we do this? By keeping and doing all that God has written in the Bible. When trials and temptations come, look to the elders, the mature Christians among you, so that you may do well to follow their example and counsel.

For the sake of those who look up to us, our family, our children, let us continue to keep and do all of God's commandments, and to do it with courage, as Joshua had encouraged his people to do.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 19
PSALMS 108-109

THOUGHT

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong – 1 Corinthians 16:13.

17 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 23:7-8

LESSON

Cleave unto the Lord

VERSE 8

*But cleave unto
the Lord your God,
as ye have done unto this day.*

After reminding the Israelites of what God had done for them, Joshua entreated them to continue to cleave unto the Lord their God. He specifically forbade them from going among the remnants of the heathen nations that were still around them. Furthermore, the Israelites were not to have anything to do with their gods; neither to mention the names of their gods, to swear by their gods, to serve their gods nor to bow before their gods.

Joshua knew that once the idolatry of the heathen nations creep into the Israelites' camp, it would slowly erode the faith of the people in the Lord their God, and corrupt the people absolutely. When this happens, the consequences of the sins of the Israelites will catch up with them. The Lord will no longer drive out any of the nations. The idols of the nations will become snares and traps to the Israelites. The heathen also will be scourges in their sides and thorns in their eyes, they will be a constant source of trouble and torment for the Israelites [Joshua 23:13].

Let us also be reminded this day, of the goodness that Christ has shown towards us – how He had died to pay the penalty for our sins, and that therefore, we also should cleave unto Him. Let us be watchful lest any idols should remain in our hearts, as these idols will be surely turn our hearts from loving the one true living God, Jesus Christ our Lord.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 20
PSALMS 110-111

MEDITATE

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. – Romans 8:13

18 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 23:9-10

LESSON

God fights for you

VERSE 10

*One man of you shall chase
a thousand: for the Lord your
God, He it is that fighteth for
you, as He hath promised you.*

In all his life, Joshua had witnessed the hand of the Lord, in leading the Israelites from their captivity in Egypt, through the wilderness and the campaigns that he fought to gain the Promised Land. He reminded the elders how God had driven out all the nations that were greater and stronger than the Israelites.

As for the Israelites, no one had been able to withstand them. Joshua attributed all these successes to the Lord their God. With God on their side, one Israelite is able to chase a thousand men, and prevail against them. Indeed, God is faithful in all His ways. What God had promised to the Israelites, He had performed.

Dear reader, we also are the children of the same God, Who is the same, yesterday, and today and for ever. The same God who promised to fight for the Israelites, is also the One Who said to us in the Bible: “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” [Hebrews 13:5]. The same God Who so loves us that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Therefore, no matter what circumstances you may be in, no matter how tough life can be, if you are trusting Christ, if you are keeping and doing His commandments, then be assured of this certainty, that God will fight for you, and will see you through whatsoever difficulty that may be plaguing you.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 21
PSALMS 112-113

MEDITATE

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

19 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON
Joshua 23:11-13

LESSON
Love the LORD
your God

VERSE 11
*Take good heed therefore unto
yourselves, that ye love the
LORD your God.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 22
PSALMS 114-115

PRAYER

This is supposed to have been the 110th year of the life of Joshua. He has led in Israel's military conquest of Canaan which lasted about 15 years, and then about 7 years into the division of the land among the tribes. And knowing that his time is coming to a close, he gathered the leaders of all the tribes to give his farewell message.

Israel has finally found peace and rest from all their wilderness wandering and after many battles. However, Joshua with his prophetic foresight exhorts them to take heed, and keep themselves in the love of God. He must have realised that their enemies still lurk on every side and they cannot be careless about their lives which would quickly bring ruin on their souls. No doubt they now have their peace and prosperity, but pride and forgetfulness of God can bring swift destruction [v. 13].

Thus, they are required to be more watchful and diligent than they were in the wilderness, because temptations would now be more and stronger. This is due in part that they still have their bad neighbours and the remainders of some wicked people who are still not subdued [v. 12].

Beloved, we must be aware that we are constantly surrounded with the world's temptations and our unseen enemies on every side. Therefore, we need to constantly watch and pray. But most of all, we need to have the love of God dwelling in our hearts and thoughts, which is our great defence from all evil. For "who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" [Romans 8:35].

Holy Father, set our hearts and thoughts on the truth and power of Your love for us and not our love for You. Amen!

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 23:14-16

LESSONNot one thing
has failed**VERSE 14**

And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.

**TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 23
PSALM 116**

PRAYER

Joshua with his last breath solemnly assured the children of Israel of the faithfulness of God. They are personally aware of it and it should deeply affect them with the wonderful performance of His promises to their fathers. Everything seemed so remote in centuries past, as their forefathers traversed in the wilderness and crossed the sea. For hundreds of years, Abraham had wandered over the country without so much as a house in it. Isaac lived the same pilgrim life. And Jacob with even a much more troubled life, had to go down to Egypt, left with nothing. But now they are in the very land which God Himself had promised!

But as sure as God's promises are true, so also the warnings would be accomplished with equal certainty and exactness, if they should transgress in their covenant with God, by apostasy and idolatry. God is as good as His spoken Word. His faithfulness to His promises leaves us no room to doubt His warnings as well. As Spurgeon commented, "He is a true God, both in mercy and in justice". Therefore, it behoves us to be obedient no matter what, for the Lord will fulfil every word He utters.

Dear believer, the fulfilment of God's declarations in times past, should assure us of their fulfilment in time to come. All will come to pass, exactly, precisely, and punctually as the eternal God has promised. You will never wait on Him in vain. Everything related to your temporal, spiritual and eternal good will be exactly fulfilled in Christ. For the "promises of God are yea and amen in Him"!

O God, You are ever so faithful and true to Your Word. Remove from me any doubt but let me trust only in You. Amen!

21 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 24:1-13

LESSON

Mercies remembered

VERSE 13

*And I have given you a land
for which ye did not labour,
and cities which ye built not,
and ye dwell in them; of the
vineyards and oliveyards which
ye planted not do ye eat.*

The place Shechem where all the people were assembled now was indeed significant. It was an ancient city situated in a valley near the entrance of two mountains, Gerizim and Ebal. The contour of this valley surrounded by these mountains was a perfect amphitheatre to rehearsal the mighty deeds of God for His people. Moreover, it was here that Abraham first met with God who promised that this land would be given to his descendants [Genesis 12:7].

And so for the last time of his earthly life, Joshua in his final appeal began with a recollection of God's mercies, from the beginning of time until now – how God had shown to their ancestors and to them His tender mercies. Their ancestors too, had sunk as any heathen, into gross idolatry. But God in His sovereign grace separated Abraham from them, to be a vessel of mercy. And with a mighty arm He rescued them from bondage, and protecting them with His pillar of a cloud, and overwhelming their pursuers in the sea. Through the dreary wilderness He led them safely, defeated the plots of their enemies, and turned wicked Balaam's intended curse into a blessing. These were all God's glorious exploits and of which none was deserving.

How necessary it is for all of God's people to come before the Lord and to look back on the way through which He had led us. We will be amazed by all the wonderful works of God in our lives, every minutest detail of them. By recounting His goodness and mercies, we will respond with renewed hearts to serve Him all the days of our lives.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 24
PSALMS 117-118

PRAYER

O gracious Father, we thank You that Your goodness and mercies will follow us all the days of our earthly lives! Amen!

22 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 24:14

LESSON

Serve Him
in sincerity and in truth

VERSE 14

*Now therefore fear the
LORD, and serve Him in
sincerity and in truth: and
put away the gods which your
fathers served on the other side
of the flood, and in Egypt;
and serve ye the LORD.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 25
PSALM 119:1-24

PRAYER

After having enumerated so many grounds for gratitude, Joshua calls on the children of Israel to declare publicly and in a solemn manner, whether they will be faithful and obedient to the God of Israel. They must choose between serving the pagan gods of their early ancestors which the patriarchs especially Abraham worshipped beyond the Euphrates River, or the gods of the Amorites whom Jehovah had driven out of their land to provide an inheritance for Israel, or they must choose Jehovah.

The requirements are simple yet demanding. They must firstly “fear the LORD” that is to recognise His greatness, His sovereignty and His power. Secondly, they are to serve Him without pretence, but truly and honestly. And thirdly, they should reject all other gods. The challenge for them is to serve God exclusively. This is not to be a blind leap of faith, for they have seen God’s works and have experienced His blessings.

Sincerity is opposed to the syncretism of false gods with the true God, and truth is opposed to falseness, and instability of heart. Thus, they are to serve God in the uprightness of their hearts, without hypocrisy and deceit, and according to the truth of God’s Word without any pollution of superstition.

Dear reader, until you and I have experienced the workings of God in our lives, it would be impossible for us to respond positively and willingly to His demands for us. In our stubborn nature, we will repel His instructions to submit but when we realise how deeply God loves us, we will certainly be constrained and motivated to surrender to Him.

Loving Father, You have loved us with an everlasting love in Christ, and we are indebted to serve You sincerely and truthfully. Amen!

23 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 24:15a

LESSON

Choose you
this day

VERSE 15a

*And if it seem evil unto you
to serve the LORD, choose you
this day whom ye will serve ...*

Having recounted the mercies and blessings of God upon them, Joshua challenges the Israelites to make a choice. “CHOOSE” is a command. There is no sitting on the fence with God. We are either in His service or we are not. “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” [Matthew 12:30].

Choices are made after we weigh up the options and their merits. Joshua’s challenge comes having rehearsed in the ears of the Israelites the grace and mercies of Jehovah. We do well to continually meditate on God’s grace, mercies and blessings upon us as we make our choices in life.

“CHOOSE” implies an act of the will. God the sovereign Creator, in His divine wisdom, has given man the creature free will. Regenerate men are empowered by God to choose serving Him in humble submission. Unregenerate men on seeing who God is, must cry to Him in humility for salvation, which is of God’s grace alone.

A direct personal command to each individual to choose is implied by “YOU”. We cannot decide for our neighbor or friend to serve God. Nor they for us. We can (and most definitely must) pray for and encourage them to do so, while being an example ourselves. Ultimately, the decision to serve God is a personal one for which one is accountable. There is urgency in the matter. Having considered God’s love and blessings upon us, His glory and majesty, we are to decide TODAY if we are serving God or not.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 26
PSALM 119:25-48

THOUGHT

We make choices based on the meditations of our heart. What are we meditating upon? Are they Biblical thoughts based on the right Person?

24 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 24:15b

LESSON

Two kinds
of idols

VERSE 15b

*... whether the gods which your
fathers served that were on the
other side of the flood, or the
gods of the Amorites, in whose
land ye dwell ...*

From their forefather Abraham to the time of this writing was a span of about 700 years. Yet Joshua confronts the people about the false gods served by Abraham's father Terah and the false gods of the Amorites (inhabitants of the land they had conquered). The Holy Spirit inspired Joshua to say those words over 3000 years ago, to be recorded for our instruction today.

The Israelites are being commanded to choose between Jehovah, God of Israel, based on evidence of Who He is, as He Himself revealed to them, in stark contrast to the above two types of gods. These gods represent those outside the Promised Land and those from within the Promised Land. There are potential false gods external to us and those of imaginations in our heart.

Man's mind is like a store of idolatry and superstitions, so much so that if a man believes his own mind it is certain that he will forsake God and forge some idol in his own brain (John Calvin).

It shows that regardless of our circumstances: worry or wealth, sickness or health, sorrow or joy, we are always in danger of going after false gods. Adam willfully chose to sin against God by going against His word [Genesis 3]. This was even before sin had entered into the Creation. False gods arise from within our hearts in any form whenever we look on anything as more glorious, worthy, important and desirable than the one true and living God. This is utter foolishness and results from forgetting Who God is and who we are before Him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 27
PSALM 119:49-72

THOUGHT

Whatever your heart clings to and confides in ... that is really your god (Martin Luther).

25 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 24:15c

LESSON

As for me
and my house

VERSE 15c

*... but as for me and my house,
we will serve the LORD.*

Joshua is resolute and bold. Without hesitation and without waiting for the answer of the Israelites, this centenarian declares before the nation, that he and his house will serve the LORD.

He resolved in his heart and declared with his lips his decision to serve God, regardless what they had decided. Why was he so bold? Because he knew personally and intimately, the God he wanted to serve and continue in service of. He had been in obedient service and communing with God since days past as Moses' aide [Exodus 17:9-14, 33:11]. His decision was not going to be made based on what others thought / felt / decided. His assurance was in God with Whom he walked.

His leadership of the nation did not come at the expense of his spiritual leadership of the household. He declared that his house would serve God too. Covenant homes are the training ground of the next generation of faithful men and women to serve God. In Biblical training of our children in our homes, we are being faithful stewards, and in turn are being prepared for service and responsibility in God's kingdom.

This is God's divine plan. The best legacy (indeed, the only one of eternal value) to leave our children is a godly spiritual legacy – fond and deep memories of godly parents leading them in praise of their Saviour, study of God's Word, serving Him in love, joy and humility both at home and in the community of believers. How blessed!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

DEUTERONOMY 28
PSALM 119:73-96

THOUGHT

Public confession of God results from private heartfelt communion.

26 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 24:16-18

LESSON

The people's
promise

VERSE 18

*And the LORD drave out
from before us all the people,
even the Amorites which dwell
in the land: therefore will we
also serve the LORD;
for He is our God.*

The Israelites made a commitment. They promised never to turn away from the LORD nor commit apostasy. This is a vow of loyalty and faithfulness. They promised to serve the LORD. This is a vow of renewed dedication and consecration.

Why did the people choose to follow and serve God when their forefathers failed at Kadesh Barnea [Numbers 14]? Here before Joshua, they chose to recall what God had done for them and let it impact their hearts. This is meditation.

Lest we be conceited, we must realise that we ourselves are frail and vulnerable to the sins of the Israelites in the wilderness. When we look to God, His character and His blessings, as revealed in His word and our lives, and OBEY IN FAITH, we will declare as Joshua and the people. We must ask God to allow His character, actions and blessings to impact our hearts and not merely regard Him as a distant, cold and impersonal God. This is truly knowing and understanding Who God is.

This is personal faith. When we choose to forsake God and look to circumstances around us, rationalise (i.e. make excuses) why we cannot obey, we end up with sin and sorrow. We must make a commitment for the LORD, to believe and follow Him, and Him only, wholeheartedly. The effect would be service with all that we have: our time, talent and treasure.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 29
PSALM 119:97-120

THOUGHT

Far better to learn from the lessons in the Bible than from personal painful mistakes.

27 JUNE

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 24:19-21

LESSON

Joshua's warning

VERSE 19

And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for He is an holy God; He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

Joshua declared that the people could not serve God because God is a holy and jealous God. Did Joshua doubt their sincerity or was he trying to discourage the people? Perhaps the experiences of the past taught him that the children of Israel would have tremendous difficulty keeping their promise to serve God.

God's holiness demands our whole-hearted devotion to Him. Being a jealous God, He cannot share our love with others. The Israelites had seen how God withdrew His blessings when they disobeyed Him and worshipped other gods. God judged and punished them severely [Exodus 32, Numbers 25]. God sent them a clear and unequivocal message that He cannot tolerate sin. Joshua's warning emphasised the gravity of being God's servant and the consequences of sin. Joshua sought to sift out the false from the true seekers by leading the people to examine themselves critically. He hoped to sharpen their resolve and provoke their zeal in serving God.

This warning is still relevant to us today. We cannot serve God in sincerity and truth if idols, physical or intangible, occupy our time and thoughts. Is there something or someone that prevents us from attending church meetings, praying to Him or reading His Word? The rich, young ruler who obeyed all the commandments from his childhood, thought his works were sufficient to win salvation. Yet his love for material possessions prevented him from being a true follower of Jesus [Luke 18:18-25]. God wants our hearts, we must surrender everything and worship God alone.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 30
PSALM 119:121-144

PRAYER

Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid,
your heart does the Spirit control?
You can only be blest
and have peace and sweet rest,
as you yield Him your body and soul.

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 24:22-25

LESSON

Covenant ratified

VERSE 24

*And the people said unto
Joshua, The LORD our God
will we serve, and His voice
will we obey.*

God had appeared to Abraham at Shechem, promising to give Abraham's descendants the land of Canaan [Genesis 12:6-7]. Jacob and his household "put away the strange gods" under an oak in Shechem, purging heathen practices from his family [Genesis 35:2-4]. The children of Israel worshipped God nearby at Mt Ebal and Gerizim on first entering Canaan [Joshua 8:30-35]. They also renewed their oath to God here after the battle at Ai. Shechem was where God's people had dedicated themselves to Him in the past, so Joshua chose this venue to ratify the covenant for its spiritual significance.

This was not a new covenant to be ratified but Joshua wanted the Israelites to renew their personal commitment to obey God. Each and every individual had to renounce his old ways of sin and idolatry and enter into service of God. By yielding in submission to God, they would enjoy the blessings of being His chosen people.

Joshua bound them by a "statute and ordinance" to demonstrate the solemnity of their promise and the strength and perpetuity of their obligation. It was not a casual agreement, they were accountable to themselves and to God.

Now that God had fulfilled His covenant with Abraham, they were to offer themselves in service of Him out of gratitude and love. Similarly, God has given us His only-begotten Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to save us from our sins. Through Jesus, we have eternal life in heaven, our Promised Land, so we ought to give ourselves to serve and obey God out of our love for Him.

REMINDER

Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by His name. – Deuteronomy 6:12-13

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 31
PSALM 119:145-176

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 24:26-27

LESSON

The stone of witness

VERSE 27

And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which He spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.

Joshua wrote down the covenant to record the promises made by the Israelites to obey God. Like a written contract between two parties stating the exact terms and conditions agreed upon, it would be a permanent reminder to them and would hold them accountable for their actions. Our God is a covenant-keeping God, He never forgets. In contrast, Man always forgets and often breaks his promises.

The great stone set under an oak would be an additional memorial for the nation to remember the covenant between God and Israel. It stood as a witness of the declarations of obedience made by the children of Israel. The stone, unlike memories and verbal promises, was not easily misplaced or lost. Set in a prominent location, it was a visible sign to all the people. Unlike paper or fabric, the stone was not easily corrupted by moth or worms, or damaged by water or fire. It was a lasting witness of the covenant that would reproach them for their disobedience and carelessness in serving God. This memorial would also be a lesson to posterity that Man is prone to wander from God and is unable to remain faithful to Him.

God's Word records many instances of His chosen servants' lapses in obedience resulting in sin. God knows we are forgetful and require frequent reminders to obey Him and do His will. Thank God for sending us these reminders through the preaching of His Word, our daily Bible reading and devotions and the encouragement from God's people. May we heed these reminders sent from God and always keep close to Him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 32
PSALMS 120-122

THOUGHT

Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons. – Deuteronomy 4:9

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 24:28-33

LESSON

The death of Joshua

VERSE 29

And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old.

Joshua led the people after the death of Moses; he himself died at 110 years old. Always brave, unquestioning in his obedience to God and zealous for God's glory, Joshua was called "the servant of the Lord".

Joshua was a good leader and a great example to his people. He was not self-seeking and his holy influence became an abiding power to hold the elders and people steadfast in their faith. The Israelites were faithful to God through the years of Joshua's leadership and beyond his life – such was the lasting effect of his testimony.

Joshua has sometimes been described as a type of Christ. Both Joshua and Jesus were faithful and obedient to God, courageous to the end. They were mild-mannered but firm in persuading others to serve and obey God. Joshua was a warrior leader who fought and defeated Israel's enemies of flesh and blood. Jesus Christ, our King, conquered sin and Satan with His death on the cross and resurrection. Joshua led the Israelites into their inheritance in Canaan, though they had still many more enemies to overcome and expel. Through His redemptive work on the cross, Jesus leads us into "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you," [1 Peter 1:4] where we have no enemies.

May Joshua's example teach us to be a godly influence on our family and those around us, encouraging them to be faithful and obedient to God. May we yield our lives to be God's instruments, ever ready to bring Him glory and honour.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
DEUTERONOMY 33-34
PSALMS 123-125

THOUGHT

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. – Hebrews 11:13

