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DAILY *manna*

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GENERAL EDITOR

Rev Isaac Ong

Daily devotions for reading through the Bible

Dear *Daily Manna* readers,

Over the next two years, God willing, we will be going through the books of Joshua, Judges and Ruth; tracing the history of God's chosen people in the land that God had promised them. The record in Joshua would represent the beginning of the story. Joshua took over the leadership from Moses, led the people across Jordan and began a campaign to occupy the land. Along the way, there will be ups and downs, victories and failures. In the history of God's people, we see the parallels to our own spiritual life with our own ups and downs. It is my prayer that the lessons from these historical narratives will encourage us to draw near to God.

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 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Numbers 27:18

LESSON

Joshua,
the servant of God

VERSE 18

*And the LORD said unto
Moses, Take thee Joshua the
son of Nun, a man in whom
is the spirit, and lay thine
hand upon him.*

The book of Joshua and the man both mark a major transition in the Old Testament narrative. The first five books of the Bible end with the people standing on the threshold of Canaan. Joshua and Caleb would be the only two persons above sixty that were allowed into Canaan. The rest – twenty years and older – died in the wilderness because of their unbelief [Numbers 14:29].

Joshua means “Jehovah saves”. There are several variations to his name, Oshea [Numbers 13:8]; Hoshea [Deuteronomy 32:44]. The Septuagint – the Greek translation of the Old Testament – renders “Joshua” as “Iēsous,” which is the New Testament name for Jesus.

Joshua is also typically identified as “the son of Nun”. There is nothing known about Nun, but his son Joshua proved himself to be a worthy successor of Moses. Joshua was the one chosen by Moses to lead in the battle against the Amalekites, and he defeated the enemies. Joshua was also one of two spies who urged the children of Israel to enter the land despite what seemed to be overwhelming odds [Numbers 13 and 14].

Joshua began his ministry as a minister of Moses [Exodus 24:13; Joshua 11]. He was known as the servant of Moses [Exodus 33:11; Numbers 11:28]. It was only toward the end of his life that he was known as “the servant of the LORD” [Joshua 24:29], the same title as Moses [see Joshua 1:1].

Although there are differences between Moses and Joshua, the Bible is quite clear that just as God was with Moses, so was He with Joshua. Both men were greatly used of God because they were devoted to Him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS I
MATTHEW I

THOUGHT

Walk in the shadows of a godly man, and you will be walking in the shadows of God. Paul says: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” [1 Corinthians 11:1]

2 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 3:8

LESSON

Canaan –
the land flowing with
milk and honey

VERSE 8a

*And I am come down to
deliver them out of the hand
of the Egyptians, and to bring
them up out of that land unto
a good land and a large, unto
a land flowing with
milk and honey;*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 2
MATTHEW 2

THOUGHT

The book of Joshua begins with the death of Moses. The mantle of leadership has been passed to Joshua, and he would lead a new generation of Israelites across the Jordan River into Canaan. Where was Canaan? Canaan was a region bound by the Jordan on the east and the Mediterranean Sea on the west. It was also known to the patriarchs as the Promised Land.

Perhaps the more pertinent question is: What was Canaan? When the LORD appeared to Moses in the burning bush, He not only promised a deliverance from Egypt but also deliverance to a “land flowing with milk and honey” [Exodus 3:8]. Canaan was the goal to which God was leading His people.

The plagues with which God afflicted the Egyptians forcing Pharaoh’s hand to let the children of Israel go, the Passover, the shedding of blood, the crossing of the Red Sea were all preparatory in nature. Without Canaan, these preliminaries would have been useless. Besides, Canaan was the promise that the LORD made to Abraham.

Yet what is Canaan to the 21st century Christian? In the Bible, Canaan is the place of the fullness of God’s blessings. In the third and fourth chapters of Hebrews, Canaan is portrayed as the spiritual rest which was to be enjoyed by God’s people on earth.

To believers, Canaan is a type of the rest of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Canaan symbolises the experience of being in and with Christ. It is the foundation of our faith that leads to sanctification and holy living. But like the children of Israel, we have a tendency to wander back into the wilderness. We are justified to be sure, but we fail to live with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness. – Hebrews 3:7-8

3 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON Deuteronomy 1:8

LESSON Possession of the land

VERSE 8

*Behold, I have set the land
before you: go in and possess
the land which the LORD
swore unto your fathers,
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
to give unto them and to their
seed after them.*

There are four important themes in the Book of Joshua. They are (1) possession of the land, (2) the prospect of rest, (3) the promises of the covenant, and (4) the practice of holiness. The first twelve chapters of Joshua cover the military conquest of Canaan. Chapters 13 through to 21 cover the allocation of the land. The book ends with admonitions from Joshua (Chapters 21-24).

The land is central to the understanding of Joshua. It was promised to the people when Moses was sent by God to Egypt. Exodus tells us the story of the people's movement from Egypt toward Canaan. Numbers records the continuation of the journey. Deuteronomy marks the end of the forty-year journey as the people stand on the threshold of Canaan.

The land is seen as God's gift to the people of Israel. This idea was made plain to the second generation of Jews who were about to possess the land [Deuteronomy 1:6-8; 4:38; 8:1-10; 11:8-12]. The same thought is rehearsed in Joshua [Joshua 1:2-3, 6,11, 13, 15; 13:8; 22:7; 23:13, 15-16]. As a gift from God, the land belonged to Him. It never belonged to Israel.

The stewardship of Israel of the Promised Land is seen in two ways. First, the children of Israel were required to give the first fruits to God. Second, it is in the dividing of the land by lots. The lots were at the disposal of the LORD [Joshua 14:2]. Nine chapters were devoted to the details concerning the inheritance of individuals and tribes. They are proof that God keeps His promises.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 3
MATTHEW 3

THOUGHT

To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would He not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

– Hebrews 4:7-9

4 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON
Deuteronomy 12:9-10

LESSON
Prospect of rest

VERSE 10
*But when ye go over Jordan,
and dwell in the land which
the LORD your God giveth
you to inherit, and when He
giveth you rest from all your
enemies round about, so that
ye dwell in safety.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 4
MATTHEW 4

THOUGHT

Rest is the second major theme in the book of Joshua. From the day the children of Israel left Egypt, they did not have a time of rest. With the land comes rest. The “rest” like the inheritance is also a gift from God. Speaking to the two and half tribes – the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh – who settled at Transjordan, Joshua reminded them, “Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land” [Joshua 1:13].

This promise of rest is found in Numbers 32:20-22 [see also Deuteronomy 3:18-20], and it is fulfilled in Joshua 21:44, “And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that He swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand” [Joshua 21:44].

What is this rest? The Old Testament concept of rest is typologically translated into the New Testament of rest in Christ Jesus. The writer of Hebrews in the third and fourth chapters writes in detail about this promise of rest.

Hebrews 4 has several quotations from Psalm 95 [Psalm 95:7-11]. Hebrews 4 mentions the rebellious generation in the wilderness that were kept from the Lord’s rest. The offer of rest was made and rejected. Joshua’s generation perished in the wilderness and did not enter the Promised Land. However, the longsuffering of God’s offer is repeated [Hebrews 3:7, 15; 4:7] to every generation, and each must appropriate for itself the promise of rest.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His. – Hebrews 4:9-10

5 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 8:32-35

LESSON

Promise of the covenant
and practice of holiness

VERSE 35

*There was not a word of all
that Moses commanded, which
Joshua read not before all the
congregation of Israel, with
the women, and the little ones,
and the strangers that were
conversant among them.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 5
MATTHEW 5

THOUGHT

The relationship between God and Israel are marked by a covenant. Obedience to the covenant is the key to the people enjoying the blessings of God. This principle applies to all who would occupy the land from the Transjordan tribes [Joshua 22:5] and the Cis-Jordan tribes, tribes that settled across the River Jordan [Joshua 23:6; 24:15].

There are two ratifications of the covenant [Joshua 8] on Mount Ebal. And a second was held at Shechem [Joshua 24]. In the first ratification, Joshua built an altar and offered sacrifices [Joshua 8:34-35]. In the latter ratification, Joshua erected a big stone as a memorial, and the people promised to keep the law [Joshua 24:25-27].

The theme of Joshua is the practice of holiness, which is the very character of God [Leviticus 19:2]. Holiness is rooted in the idea of separation. This is seen in the various ceremonies seen in Joshua, chief of which is circumcision. Joshua resumed the practice of circumcision for those who had not been circumcised in the wilderness [Joshua 5:2-9]. Circumcision marks a person as belonging to the LORD and to the covenant that God had made with Abraham and his sons.

The special emphasis in the time of Joshua was that Israelites were to keep themselves and the land from defilement. God had made known His will to His people as they stepped into Canaan. They were to utterly destroy the inhabitants of the land [Deuteronomy 20:17-18]. It is so important for the Jews to know that as they form a newly constituted nation that they would not be adulterated by pagan worship.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. – 2 Corinthians 6:17-18

6 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 1:3-4

LESSON God's promise

VERSE 3

*Every place that the sole of
your foot shall tread upon, that
have I given unto you, as I
said unto Moses.*

Joshua had been introduced in the book of Exodus as Moses' assistant who was being trained to take Moses' place as the leader of Israel. After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it was time for Joshua to rise and take up the mantle of leadership and lead God's people to occupy the land God had promised to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel).

God's promise to Abraham of the land was vast. The furthestmost boundaries in every direction were described in verse 4: "From the wilderness (*the Negev South*) and this Lebanon (*North*) even unto the great river, the river Euphrates (*East*), all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea (*West*) toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast". (Italics mine)

Abraham believed God's promise. Even though neither he nor his seed completely occupied the land in their life time, Hebrews 11:9-10 says "by faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

We look forward to our Lord's promise that He has prepared for us a home in heaven (John 14:1-3); also, to dwell in the new heavens and earth which God is going to re-create at the end of the age (II Peter 3:1-18). Let us follow Abraham's example by faith and find victory and rest in God's promises.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 6
MATTHEW 6

SING

"There's a land that is fairer than day, And by faith we can see it afar, For the Father waits over the way to prepare us a dwelling place there... In the sweet by and by, We shall meet on that beautiful shore, In the sweet by and by, We shall meet on that beautiful shore."

7 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 1:5,9

LESSON

Assurance of
God's presence

VERSE 9

*Have not I commanded thee?
Be strong and of a good
courage; be not afraid, neither
be thou dismayed: for the
LORD thy God is with thee
whithersoever thou goest.*

How did God prepare Joshua to take over from Moses His servant? Moses had left big shoes for Joshua to fill. It was surely a nerve-wrecking experience even though he had been serving under the tutelage of Moses on many occasions.

God's promise of giving Abraham the land and His appointment of Joshua to lead His people to occupy it is by itself an affirmation of God's own presence and supply. Yet, God Who knows our weaknesses and many fears, has further condescended to Joshua to assure him again and again that He will be with him.

Similarly, God has given us great and precious promises in His Word to assure us of His presence with us. Before His ascension Jesus assures His disciples and believers today saying "... I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." [Matthew 28:20b].

Therefore even as we encounter the storms of life and face the waves of temptation that threaten to capsize our faith, we look to God. He is our Refuge and strength, our anchor in every storm, a very present help in time of need.

To enjoy God's presence, we put our trust in Him. Like Moses (Hebrews 11:27) that "by faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible", we see the Lord by faith through the spectacles of His Word. We experience His loving care, guiding us in His path of righteousness. We follow the Lord every step of the way by obeying His Word to His glory.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 7
MATTHEW 7

MEDITATE

Faith is but believing what God said He will do. He will never fail us; His promises are true.

8 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 1:6

LESSON

Be strong
and courageous

VERSE 6

*Be strong and of a good
courage: for unto this people
shalt thou divide for an
inheritance the land,
which I swear unto their
fathers to give them.*

God gave a very strong charge to Joshua to be strong and courageous – not once but three times. What are some of the reasons for God to command Joshua to be strong and courageous?

First, Joshua had a long drawn campaign of fierce fighting against formidable and powerful armies in the land well-known for their brutality and wickedness. He had to rally all able-bodied men of Israel – young men, husbands and fathers to join him in sacrificing their lives to fight the enemies. This requires faith and courage for him to act.

Second, God's command to Joshua is to give him strong conviction that what he was doing was in accordance to God's will to use him and the Israelites to destroy all the enemies in the land. There was a limit to God's forbearance over sin. According to Genesis 15:16 the time was ripe for God to destroy the occupants of the land because their iniquities were "full" – due for judgement. This strengthened Joshua to act.

Third, it was to prepare Joshua to be courageous to divide the conquered land for the people. Joshua needed wisdom and courage to do that for he had first-hand experience of how the people were prone to complain against God and how God chastised them for their sins.

We realise our weaknesses and also how easily we can be gripped by fears and worries even though we know God's Word. What we need to enjoy victory is to realise that our God who commands us to be strong and courageous is near.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 8
MATTHEW 8

MEDITATE

“Never fear, He is near ... Only trust in the Lord.”

9 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 1:7

LESSON

Be obedient

VERSE 7

Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 9
MATTHEW 9

THOUGHT

God had already given Joshua the promise of His presence to be with him in leading His people into the land. The purpose for God to repeat His command to Joshua that he be strong and very courageous was that he would observe to take heed and put it into practice.

Today God is present with us His blood-bought children in Christ. We have His promises in His written Word, the Bible. We are privileged to have God's Word preached and expounded to us from the pulpit, Bible lectures, Bible studies in locales, fellowship groups at all levels, Sunday School, family worship, daily devotional for adults and children and more.

How much of these truths we have in our heads have affected our hearts to obey? Knowing God's Word shows us what sin is. But it cannot keep us from sin if we fail to obey. Take for instance – knowing that we are saved to worship God does not excuse us from coming together consistently to worship Him. Hebrews 10:25 – “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” We examine ourselves.

“To do according to all the law” tells us that partial obedience is sin. God requires total obedience from a humble contrite heart of love toward Him. Saul was rebuked for disobedience because he substituted animal sacrifices for total obedience to God's Word and God rejected Him [1 Samuel 15].

Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. – 1 Samuel 15:22

10 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 1:8

LESSON

God's formula
for success

VERSE 8

*This book of the Law shall
not depart out of thy mouth;
but thou shalt meditate therein
day and night, that thou
mayest observe to do according
to all that is written therein:
for then thou shalt make thy
way prosperous, and then thou
shalt have good success.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 10
MATTHEW 10

THOUGHT

It was a great task for Joshua to lead the Israelites across the River Jordan into Canaan and settling them there. What made his task even more difficult was that Canaan was not a vacant piece of land for them to walk right in and occupy it. The inhabitants were hostile and stronger than the Israelites. The question on Joshua's mind was, "What is the formula for success?"

This book of the Law refers to the Torah – the first five books of the Bible in existence then. It was the Word of God Joshua had. Today we have the completed Bible – the Canon of Scriptures.

The three steps to success are 1) "Observe to do". Like watchmen we guard against disobedience to God's Word; 2) "Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left" (v. 7). Like a traveller we stay on the right path defined by God's Word; 3) "Thou shalt meditate therein day and night." We ponder prayerfully over the Scripture we read to learn of God, His will and His way in order to commit ourselves to obey Him. If we do this daily personally spending time with the Lord we will enjoy prosperity and success. This is not a promise for temporal financial prosperity and/or material success that the world craves after. This is the spiritual blessing of enjoying the presence of God in our relationship with Him in Christ for now and evermore.

Our spiritual prosperity and success depend on our willingness to draw nigh to God daily to ponder on His Word and submit to Him in humble obedience.

There is only one kind of person that God considers to be a success: The one who is living according to His Word.

11 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 1:10-11

LESSON

Charge to
the people

VERSE 11

*Pass through the host, and
command the people, saying,
Prepare you victuals; for
within three days ye shall pass
over this Jordan, to go in to
possess the land, which the
LORD your God giveth you
to possess it.*

Joshua under the command of God gave the order to prepare the people to cross over the Jordan to take possession of the land God has given to them. By faith Joshua issued this charge to the people based on God's promises.

Two things from this charge tell us how organised the Israelites were as a church in the wilderness [Acts 7:38]: 1) There were the ranks and files of the officers to whom Joshua could convey his order to the rest of the people to comply; 2) The timeline of three days for two to three million people to prepare to break camp and move with their families and livestock shows the state of their readiness to obey and be led.

Today God rules His Church by His Word. He raised His servants – pastors, preachers, elders with the support of the deacons and deaconesses to minister to us from His Word. Through their preaching, teaching, caring for us by example they give us godly counsel and charge us to live sanctified lives for our spiritual good and blessings.

To spiritual leaders, God's charge in 1 Timothy 4:16 is: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

To fellow believers we take heed to God's instructions to continue obeying His Word. Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS II
MATTHEW II

THOUGHT

Jesus said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

12 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 1:12-15

LESSON

Everyone has
a part to play

VERSE 15

*Until the LORD have given your
brethren rest, as He hath given
you, and they also have possessed
the land which the LORD your
God giveth them: then ye shall
return unto the land of your
possession, and enjoy it, which
Moses the LORD'S servant gave
you on this side Jordan toward the
sunrising.*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 12
MATTHEW 12

THOUGHT

Today's reminder from Joshua to the tribe of Reuben, Gad and the half of Manasseh harks back to Numbers 32. The land on which the Israelites now encamped, just prior to crossing the Jordan River into Canaan was desirable pasture for the plentiful cattle these two and half tribes owned. This eastern bank [Gilead], was granted to them by Moses at their request and on their promise they would not leave their brethren crossing into Canaan to do their own fighting, but would stand shoulder to shoulder with them till all the land was possessed. This is a beautiful picture of Christian solidarity, for just as all the tribes of Israel were brethren, so are all members of Christ's body, the Church.

Reuben, Gad and Manasseh staked their lives for their brethren in battle. They would not enjoy the verdant pastures of Gilead till the fighting was done and their kin possessed all the land. Then they would rest, when all could rest.

Likewise, the well-being of Christ's family is the concern of every member. Each one is to care for the rest of the body, providing her needs, pursuing her peace, unity, health and happiness. Like these Jews, we are to care for one another and stand side by side as we sojourn in this world and wage the battles of the spirit and the body.

Thus said the apostle that Christians are "many members, yet but one body. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."

To disregard and neglect our brethren in Christ is to have the spirit of Cain. We are our brother's keeper. – Genesis 4:9

13 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 1:16-18

LESSON
Commitment
to obey

VERSE 16

*And they answered Joshua,
saying, All that thou
commandest us we will do, and
whithersoever thou sendest us,
we will go.*

The two and half tribes allotted the land east of the Jordan River (also known as the Trans-Jordan) had earlier made a commitment to Moses, witnessed by Eleazar the priest, Joshua and the chiefs of the tribes of Israel. Notwithstanding their allotment on this side, they would cross with their brethren to fight for the possession of the land on the other side. And now as the camp prepared to move, they reiterated to Joshua their commitment to do as promised on pain of death. They would honour their commitment made, and obey the Lord's new appointed leader for them, Joshua.

We are instructed from this episode that the Christian's word is his bond. Let us not be loose with our words. What we say, we must do. Commitments we make must be honoured. The Christian represents truth and the world expects as such. Dare we shame our Lord by speaking with a forked tongue? God is the witness. "Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay."

We are further exhorted today to obedience. Every true child of God confesses Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. As Saviour, he has saved us from our sins. As Lord, he is now master of our lives. Our allegiance and obedience in all things is to Him alone. Jesus Christ is the perfect and greater Joshua. May our desire and commitment be as that of the Jews that day, "All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go." Help us, Lord.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 13
MATTHEW 13

THOUGHT

Breaking a promise to man and breaking an oath to God are both serious sins. "That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth." – Deuteronomy 23:23

14 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 2:1-7

LESSON

Rahab the harlot

VERSE 3

And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.

The biblical account of the amazing fall of Jericho is synonymous with the name Rahab. Rahab was the lowliest citizen of a condemned Gentile city, a Gentile who had not known God. She was engaged in a profession of sinful living, but in God's inscrutable providence, she is chosen to be a central figure in the narrative of God's miraculous deliverance of a fortified military stronghold into the hands of an army of slaves. In her act of courage, born of faith in Israel's God, she not only delivered the spies but saved herself and her family from sure destruction and certain death.

Rahab is a picture of everyone of us before and after God is done with us.

Before, we were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, enemies of God and with no hope. Nothing good dwelt in us and our sin condemned us. We were dead in our trespasses, until God's grace touched our hearts, when we heard the gospel and believed.

Rahab received God's grace not because of any inherent good in her. The sovereign God saves whom He will. And a harlot was not only saved, but in God's divine providence, would become the forbearer of King David and a progenitor of the incarnate Christ.

Like Rahab, every sinner who is saved owes it entirely to God who chooses according to the good pleasure and counsel of His will, for His purpose and to the praise of His glory. This is the truth and wonder of God's saving grace.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 14
MATTHEW 14

THOUGHT

And [God] hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. – Ephesians 2:6-7

15 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

James 2:25

LESSON Faith of Rahab

VERSE 25

*Likewise also was not Rahab
the harlot justified by works,
when she had received the
messengers, and had sent them
out another way?*

Rahab, the scriptures clearly say, was a prostitute. This was a life of vice despised in any civil society, and normally regarded as the antithesis of upright and righteous living. Yet, such a woman is commended for her faith. Herein is a wonderful illustration of God's amazing grace. God's grace was extended to an unclean and undeserving harlot, and the little seed of faith sowed in her heart sprang forth in new life. She had heard about the God of Israel and what He had done for them, and she believed. And her faith wrought salvation in her.

Herein is hope for anyone from any walk of life. There is no sin from which God will not save. While you breath, there is hope. Save He will if only we believe and call out to Him in faith. The publican cried, "Be merciful to me a sinner". The thief on the cross said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom". And both were justified [saved] by their faith in God.

We then see the faith of Rahab bearing fruit, for she "received the spies with peace". She hid and saved them from the pursuing soldiers. To be caught for her act was treason and certain death. Yet she was prepared to give her all for her faith. This is faith that works; not idle profession or empty talk. Her saving faith worked savingly in and through her so that she would be an instrument in God's hands, used for His purpose and glory. Faith without works is dead.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 15
MATTHEW 15

REMINDER

God is no respecter of persons. He can and will save a prostitute as much as He can and will save a king. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." – Ephesians 2:8-9

BIBLE LESSON

Hebrews 11:31

LESSONLessons from
Rahab's life**VERSE 31**

*By faith the harlot Rahab
perished not with them that
believed not, when she had
received the spies with peace.*

Not all aspects of Rahab's life are commended to us. Her life before Joshua 2 is unrecorded and we can suppose that it was a life of disapprobation. The vice of harlotry is soundly condemned by God at all times.

But the narrative of Rahab soon brings us to her action of hiding the two spies sent by Joshua to reconnoitre Jericho. Their mission was compromised, and soldiers soon came looking for them. It would have been wholly logical and sensible for Rahab to save herself by betraying the spies. They would have been arrested and life as normal would have resumed for her thereafter. But that was not to be.

Rahab was touched by God's saving grace and she had become a new and different person. A seed of faith had been sown in her heart through the stories told of Israel's God and His deliverance of His people. And Rahab believed this gospel. Now was the proving of her faith. Betray the spies and save herself, or save the spies and jeopardise herself? Rahab chose, and life for her would never be the same again. Offering herself for God's sake, she gained what she would never lose. Rahab found salvation when all around her was destroyed. In time, she would go on to marry Salmon, a prince of Judah, and become the mother of Boaz, and a forbearer of David. Rahab would appear in Christ's genealogy [Matthew 1:5], forever accorded that place of honour. She was prepared to lose her life for God's sake, but instead found it abundantly.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 16
MATTHEW 16

THOUGHT

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it [Mark 8:35]. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." – 2 Corinthians 5:17

17 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 2:2-3

LESSON

Enemies in
high places

VERSE 3

*And the king of Jericho sent
unto Rahab, saying, Bring
forth the men that are come
to thee, which are entered into
thine house: for they be come to
search out all the country.*

To be summoned by the king and spoken to in this manner about the spies must surely be cause for great trepidation in Rahab. Evidently, he possessed information concerning her encounter with these men of Israel. To acquiesce to the king's demand would earn her possibly not only reprieve but reward. Humanistically speaking, courting the king's favour would be pure gain with no loss, but to be found abetting spies was all loss without gain.

Rahab chose but it was against all worldly wisdom and natural inclination of man. Nothing can account for her actions but the working of saving faith in her heart. A giant step of faith because the outcome of events was unknown to her. Everything came down to who she was prepared to risk making an enemy of, man or God.

What would we do if we were in Rahab's shoes that moment? What would we do if we are called to make a stand for our faith? How would we act if we stood to lose our possessions, position, privileges and prestige by standing up for God against the powers that hold sway over our earthly circumstances? Peter declared, "We ought to obey God rather than men." "A friend of the world is the enemy of God," warns James.

Above all, Jesus said, "... fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him [God] which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Rahab chose God and lived. Who will you choose?

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 17
MATTHEW 17

THOUGHT

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Stand in His strength alone; the arm of flesh will fail you, Ye dare not trust your own. Put on the gospel armour, Each piece put on with prayer; Where duty calls or danger, Be never wanting there. – G. Duffield

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 2:4-8

LESSONHelp from
the harlot**VERSE 6**

*But she had brought them up
to the roof of the house, and
hid them with the stalks of
flax, which she had laid in
order upon the roof.*

When God has a plan, there is no way anyone or anything could stop Him. Joshua sent two men to spy on Jericho. However, the king of Jericho got wind of this and commanded that the spies be captured. How could they escape?

When all seem helpless, God provides a solution for those who are working according to His plan. The spies went to the house of Rahab the harlot. Rahab helped the spies to escape arrest when the soldiers came knocking. They were hidden in the attic. When asked, Rahab told the soldiers that the two spies were not at her home.

This was telling a lie. Does God condone a lie? No, He does not. A lie is a lie no matter what the situation is. Then why did Rahab tell a lie? Abraham told a lie too (that his wife was his sister) when he was in Egypt [Genesis 12]. There is untruth in every man except the Lord Jesus when He walked on earth as man. He is God and His Word is Truth. God is great and He forgives, but we should also consciously live a life that is pleasing to Him.

God has a plan for the spies to survive if it is His will. Regardless if there is human help, God's plan will succeed. He created the whole earth and the universe before He created man. It is by His grace that He allows us to play a part in His plan. Claiming glory for work done by man would be likened to the mouse that rode on the elephant crossing the bridge and shouting "we shook the bridge".

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 18
MATTHEW 18

THOUGHT

And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you. – Joshua 3:5

19 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 2:9

LESSON

I know...

VERSE 9

And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

Many at Jericho must have heard the same proclamation on the greatness of the God of Israel. Yes this is the same God Whom Christians worship and adore. Rahab was not only fascinated with what she heard; she had decided to worship God too. She realised that she can only be saved by God and not by the earthly king who ruled over Jericho. She has the faith and can easily make the comparison between God and those idols that they worshipped.

We know many of God's commandments through instructions from both present and past church leaders. We also read about God's commandments in the Bible. We are aware of the do's and don'ts. The question is: Do we carry out obediently God's Word in our lives, or that we simply know God's Word in our heads. If we do what seems right or convenient to us; if we please ourselves more than we please God, this will not be pleasing to God.

Here was a lady who was a heathen and a harlot. The example of Rahab as a heathen would bring us shame. She knew the God of Israel. She wanted to follow and to worship this God. She knew the greatness and the grace of God. He is able to deliver the Israelites. Surely He will be able to deliver her. She made a choice and based on this choice she helped the spies who came to Jericho. She tried to please God even when she knew so little about Him.

Now that we know about God and His teachings, what do you do? Have you been obedient?

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 19
MATTHEW 19

THOUGHT

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

20 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 2:10

LESSON

We have heard....

VERSE 10

For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 20
MATTHEW 20

THOUGHT

The people in Jericho must have heard how God had delivered the Israelites from the Egyptians. How did they hear of the Great God of Israel? There must have been interaction among the people and someone must have spread the good news. This is likened to preaching the gospel. We know that salvation is only through the Lord Jesus. We have been commanded to preach the gospel. Who should preach? Pastors, preachers, missionaries and church workers? The answer is that all who know Jesus and the Gospel are to preach to anyone and everyone.

On reflection, you would realise that someone must have preached to you, and that someone must have heard it from another person. We should be happy and grateful that God gives us an opportunity to be bearers of the good news. Do not feel disappointed that you cannot convert others through your witnessing. Our job is to pray and tell about Jesus and how He can save sinners. God will convict the heart of the hearer.

Firstly, we need to ask God for wisdom and courage. Yes, we need courage to speak to someone because the hearer might challenge you with questions that you might not be able to answer. We need to be sure of our salvation. We need to know that we are all sinners and can only be saved through Jesus. There is eternal life and only those who trust in Jesus go to heaven; the others go to hell. It is as simple as that. However often time we miss the opportunity because we are afraid to be rejected. We should not be because the gospel is not our word or idea. It is God's plan to save mankind.

How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? – Romans 10:14

21 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 2:11

LESSON

Our hearts melt ...

VERSE 11

And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 21
MATTHEW 21

REMINDER

Our Almighty God is ever so gracious. He created the universe. Today with our advanced technologies, we are still unable to number the stars. We can only marvel at the mysterious beauty of the planets and heavenly bodies. We have difficulty to reach even the nearest planet let alone all the others which are billions of times farther. Yet He also created the microbes that are so small that we cannot imagine how they are also living things.

He is indeed a God of infinity! In His greatness and through His grace, God remembers every one of us as individuals. He knows our needs and speaks to each one of us. Rahab's heart melted on hearing of the Almighty God. Who do you think put this fear in her? It is God for sure.

As it were, Rahab was in terror knowing of the power of God. Surely He will also save her and her family. Imagine when she met the spies. She found an opportunity to learn more of this God whom she addressed as LORD. This is the God of Israel but she wished to worship this God too. The spies did not know her and she did not know who they were except that they were Israelites. By faith she trusted that God will deliver her and her family through the spies. She thus found a hiding place for these spies.

Though Rahab was a heathen, not from the chosen group of people, she found favour in God's saving grace. Upon hearing about God Rahab accepted the truth and she desired to worship God. By His grace, Rahab would be saved.

For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. – Hebrews 4:12

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 2:12-14

LESSONPlea for
covenant mercy**VERSE 14**

*And the men answered her,
Our life for yours, if ye utter
not this our business. And
it shall be, when the LORD
hath given us the land, that
we will deal kindly and truly
with thee.*

Rahab knew that she and her family could only be saved by the God of Israel, the same God Whom we worship today. The only way she knew to get close to God was to plead with the spies to adopt her and her family. Rahab thus made an exchange of bargain with the spies. Rahab would help save them from the soldiers and in return the spies would come to get her and her family across the border where God is worshipped. She pleaded for an intercessor.

Thank God that He already knew that man has a desire to worship a Being who is greater than them. Unfortunately, due to the sin of mankind, we lost that communion with God. In trying to reach God, man devised many ways and methods hoping to reconcile with God. Some even worship idols hoping to reach God. All of man's inventions are doomed to fail.

God provided a way through Jesus (who Himself is also God) through His life and death. Christ died for us and His blood covers our sins before the eyes of God. We have no merit but since we are covered with the blood of Jesus we are counted righteous. God came to man. We only need to believe in Jesus. It is that simple. In so doing we are adopted to be His children. We do not need any other intercessor as Rahab has perceived.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 22
MATTHEW 22

THOUGHT

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

23 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 2:15-16

LESSON

The escape route

VERSE 16

*And she said unto them,
Get you to the mountain,
lest the pursuers meet you;
and hide yourselves there three
days, until the pursuers be
returned: and afterward
may ye go your way.*

Moses, while leading the people out of Egypt, faced such a desperate situation. In front of them was the Red Sea; behind them were Pharaoh's mighty army. Humanly speaking there is no way to escape. They could not fight against the soldiers and they could not cross the sea. Amazingly God opened the Red Sea and got rid of the Egyptian soldiers who pursued the Jews. Thus the Israelites were saved. This news must have gone viral around the region (that's what Rahab heard too). Now the spies were greatly out-numbered by the enemy. They were under pursuit. They were performing a mission for God's chosen people. It is not by chance that they met Rahab. It is also not by chance that Rahab found a perfect hiding place for them. They could have ended in the house of someone else. The hiding place could have been discovered. They were saved through the intervention of God. Everything fitted in so perfectly.

Often times we are desperate and find ourselves heading to a dead end. We are helpless and the situation seems hopeless. We need look upwards to pray for deliverance. God will deliver.

Our life on this earth is limited and some day we would have to die. Once we die, we cannot have any more choice nor can we make any decisions. There are only two ways to go, upwards to heaven or downwards to hell. We are desperate facing death and hell. All human ways will lead to hell as heaven is only reserved for those who have no sin. God provides a way of escape through Jesus. We can only go to heaven through Jesus our Saviour.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 23
MATTHEW 23

ASSURANCE

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

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 2:17-21

LESSON

The scarlet thread

VERSE 18

Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 24
MATTHEW 24

THOUGHT

The attack on Jericho by the Israelites was imminent. In fear, Rahab pleaded with the two spies to save her and her household. To repay her kindness, they agreed but spelt out three conditions that Rahab had to fulfil:

First, Rahab is to tie a “scarlet thread (rope)” at her window to identify her house as a “house of safety”. Consequently, the Israelite soldiers would pass over her house and spare the inhabitants; Second, she is to bring her household into the house and remain inside; and lastly, she must not betray the spies but protect them.

The colour of the rope is a picture of the blood of Christ, the Passover Lamb, whose blood smeared on the doorposts [Exodus 12:7] conferred divine protection and saved the Israelites on the night of the Passover. The scarlet rope that delivered the spies to safety would also save Rahab's household. The blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ is efficacious unto salvation for all who believe in it – irrespective of Israelite or Canaanite, Jew or Gentile [Revelation 5:9].

Rahab was saved because she truly believed the testimony about Israel's God. She demonstrated true faith by obeying the instructions of the spies. She renounced her sinful past of worshipping pagan gods, separated herself from a wicked and idolatrous nation, to identify with the people of the True, Living God, even Israel.

We, too, must trust in the blood of Christ, repent, separate ourselves from this sinful world and live holy and righteous lives. Our eternal safety is in God – “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” [Psalm 46:1].

Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

– Romans 5:9

25 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 2:22-24

LESSON

The Lord's
deliverance

VERSE 24

*And they said unto Joshua,
Truly the LORD hath
delivered into our hands all
the land; for even all the
inhabitants of the country do
faint because of us.*

The whole land of Canaan was God's gift to Israel. When Lot separated from Abraham, God made a covenant with Abraham "... unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" [Genesis 15:18].

The people of the nations around, on hearing God's mighty acts in delivering Israel, were struck with fear and terror [Isaiah 33:13]. Rahab told the two spies that "our hearts did melt" and their men had no more courage to fight "because of you: for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" [Joshua 2:11].

Truly, Israel's God, our God, is faithful and keeps His covenant. He was, step by step, fulfilling His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. With the children of Israel on the verge of entering the Promised Land, the Canaanites were all but ready to surrender without a fight. God had prepared the ground for Israel's eventual victory. Thus the spies reported to Joshua, "Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land." God had covenanted with Abraham and even Moses, surely He will deliver.

In His mercy and grace, God has chosen us. In His divine plan of salvation for us, His Son, Christ, died on Calvary's cross and rose again from the grave that we may have redemption and everlasting life. Jesus has promised, "In my Father's house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you" [John 14:2].

What blessed assurance! What amazing grace!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 25
MATTHEW 25

THOUGHT

Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.
– 1 Thessalonians 5:24

26 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 3:1-3

LESSON

The Lord
always leads

VERSE 3

And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 26
MATTHEW 26

Through all their wanderings in the wilderness, the children of Israel were led by God. His presence was manifested by the Pillar of Cloud by day and the Fire by night. During the marches the Cloud always preceded the people, demonstrating God's leading [Exodus 13:21], while the Ark of the Covenant was carried along in the middle.

The children of Israel now encamped on the eastern side of the River Jordan saw its swift flowing, turbulent and swelling waters. The officers commanded the people that as soon as they saw the Ark of the Covenant carried by the priests move forward, they "shall ... go after it" [v. 3]. By now, the Cloud had removed and the Ark, symbolising God's presence, would lead the people across the Jordan to possess the Promised Land. The people, by faith, were to follow.

When Moses ran before the Lord, his human effort to deliver his brethren ended in utter failure. But when God led, Moses overcame the whole of Egypt [Exodus 14:30-31]. David, at Baal-perazim, did not go forward to battle until he knew the Lord went out before him. [2 Samuel 5:20]. The Apostles had to tarry in Jerusalem for the promise of the preceding presence of God to lead before they could launch their ministry.

In our service for the Lord, we need to wait upon Him, seeking His will and direction, asking Him for grace, wisdom and strength. Jesus said, "Without Me ye can do nothing" [John 15:5b]. And when we hear Him call, "Follow me", may we, by faith and in obedience, take up the cross and follow Him.

THOUGHT

Lead on, O King Eternal.

27 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 3:4

LESSON

Come not near
the Ark

VERSE 4

*Yet there shall be a space
between you and it, about two
thousand cubits by measure:
come not near unto it, that ye
may know the way by which ye
must go: for ye have not passed
this way heretofore.*

In following the Ark, the people were commanded not to come near the Ark but to keep a distance of a thousand yards. This was to teach them that there ought to be an awe and reverence for God [Psalm 89:7].

The reassuring presence of God gives comfort and security. However, the spirit of familiarity can creep in and lead to contempt as God's people can forget His mercies and blessings. The Psalmist exhorts, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits" [Psalm 103:2]. Having a holy awe and reverence for God will stamp in the heart an enduring attitude of worship, praise, thanksgiving, repentance and humility.

A second lesson is that God Himself can defend and protect His glory [Psalm 89:13]. The Ark, spearheading the crossing, carried only by a few weak priests, with the people a distance away, did not need the protection of armies of men. God by His own power and might will hold back the flood waters and defeat the enemies ahead.

Third, everyone needs to have God clearly in sight [Hebrews 12:2]. Keeping well away from the Ark would allow those behind to see and follow the Ark. We need a clear perspective of God through our lives. Our sojourn through this world must be a walk of faith even as Abraham's was. Satan will tempt us sore as a "roaring lion seeking whom he may devour" [1 Peter 5:8]. In our service for God, our eyes must ever be fixed on God and our hearts attuned to His will – "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" [Hebrews 12:2a].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 27
MATTHEW 27

THOUGHT

Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. – Psalm 33:8

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 3:5

LESSON

Sanctify yourselves

VERSE 5

And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

Standing on the eastern bank of the Jordan River, the Israelites saw the beautiful Promised Land across the water. However, crossing the swift-flowing, turbulent flood waters would be humanly impossible. Then Joshua commanded, “Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.” Joshua knew that God would do wonders to bring the people across, but the people must do their part to prepare themselves to behold the display of God’s power by sanctifying themselves.

While awe and reverence is imperative, one needs holiness to “see God” [Matthew 5:8]. The people needed to be sanctified because “the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee” [Deuteronomy 23:14]. Sanctification means separation unto God. They had to fix their minds on God, reflect on past transgressions, repent and re-dedicate themselves to serve Him. Sanctification would result in a better and deeper appreciation of God’s power and love. Sanctification would be proof of their faith in God’s promises and enable them to follow their leader into the land to fight till victory was won.

God by His grace and wondrous act has saved us. Our Saviour bought us with His blood and sanctifies us with His Word. God commanded, “Be ye holy; for I am holy” [1 Peter 1:16]. We need to draw nigh to God daily in prayer, study and obey His Word. We are to be “transformed” and “renewed”, leave the cares and busyness of this world and consecrate our lives to Him [Romans 12:1-2]. May God help us to be yielded to Him, to be instruments for His use.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 28
MATTHEW 28

THOUGHT

If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work. – 2 Timothy 2:21

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 3:6

LESSON

Obedience

VERSE 6

And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the Ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people.

And they took up the Ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

The people had come a long way and had gone through a lot. For their faithlessness, they had lost a generation in the wilderness. For their murmurings, they had been chastised to become who they were. Now the new generation of which most had not seen the miracles of the 10 plagues and the parting of the Red Sea stand before a river they did not know how to cross. What could they be thinking of then?

Perhaps most had no idea. But they could hold on to one promise from God – that God would be with them as they enter the land beyond the Jordan. They were ready to see how God would do wonders among them. They were to sanctify themselves, and they did [v. 5]. Then they were told to take up the Ark of the covenant, an order they followed exactly. They obeyed God’s instructions through their leader one step at a time.

This applies to us as well. Many a time we do not know what lies ahead of us. We are perhaps faced with a project so huge we do not know where to start. But let us learn to follow God’s leading and do things according to His way and in His time. We need not preempt God with our own devices. Neither should we doubt ourselves if we are abiding by God’s commandments.

Do our best in every work under our stewardship. Be faithful even in the little things. With God before us, He would surely show us the way – one step at a time.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 29
MARK 1

SING

Heav’nly peace, divinest comfort,
Here by faith in Him to dwell!
For I know, whate’er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well.

30 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 3:7

LESSON God's promise to Joshua

VERSE 7

*And the Lord said unto
Joshua, This day will I begin
to magnify thee in the sight of
all Israel, that they may know
that, as I was with Moses, so I
will be with thee.*

Joshua was the man chosen by God to lead the Israelites into Canaan, but it was only here that God told Joshua that he would be magnified in the sight of his people. By that, it means he would be in the position highly esteemed by the Israelites. They would look up to him for instructions and guidance. He would even become their standard for moral conscience.

Note that Joshua was not in this position overnight. God had prepared him over the years as he followed Moses. He was one of the 12 spies to have first reconnoitred Canaan and to come back with a good faithful report. He was commanding the army, even fighting the very war against the Amalekites, while Moses was interceding for God's help through a lifted rod. When Moses died, God Himself encouraged Joshua to be strong and of a good courage. Now that Joshua was ready to lead the people to cross Jordan, God further assured him with the wonderful promise – that he would be magnified; not for his own glory but so that God's glory could be shown through him and his work.

Such a promise cannot be given to a man who is not ready for it. Alas, how many church leaders, once useful vessels in God's ministry, have so subtly slipped into the sin of robbing God of the glory that is due Him alone! But Joshua was blessed – He had God's promise that God would be with him. In areas where he would stumble and fail, God would be there to lift him up.

Pray for ourselves. Pray for our leaders. May God help us!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 30
MARK 2

PRAYER

O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.

31 JANUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 3:8

LESSON

Stand still
in Jordan

VERSE 8

*And thou shalt command
the priests that bear the Ark
of the covenant, saying, When
ye are come to the brink of the
water of Jordan, ye shall
stand still in Jordan.*

God gives further commands on what the Israelites should do, especially for the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant – they are to lead the Israelites by being the first to step into Jordan. And after doing that, they are to stand still in the river while Joshua declare to the people, the words of God.

Let these four words be a source of strength to us – “stand still in Jordan”. As we face life’s challenges, may we learn to be still as we tread into them, inclining our ears to the comfort of God’s Word. The billows may rage; we may not even know why God allows us to be in such trouble, but rest assured that if God’s will is so, surely He has a plan for us. Be still, and follow God’s guidance.

Yet perhaps the priests then weren’t that jittery at all – for they were men chosen to bear the Ark of the covenant. These were perhaps the godliest of the priests. Despite much fear and trembling, they should be conscious of the fact that they were bearing the very emblem of God on their shoulders, and that with the presence of God with them, they would be firmly anchored to the ground.

As Christians, we bear testimony to the world, the very presence of God in our lives. It is indeed a heavy responsibility upon our shoulders. Yet on the other hand, we should be honoured and all the more stand firm in the faith, and be still in this otherwise troubled world.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 31
MARK 3

PAUSE

Be still and hear the voice of God.

1 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 3:9-11

LESSON God's promise

VERSE 11

*Behold, the ark of the covenant
of the Lord of all the earth
passeth over before you
into Jordan.*

The priests bearing the Ark of the covenant had stepped into Jordan. The crossing into the Promised Land had begun. At this critical juncture in Biblical history, Joshua declared unto the multitude the very words of God – His promise that He would be with them if they faithfully followed His instructions to wipe out the inhabitants of Canaan.

Everyone must have kept still as Joshua repeated God's promise of old – behold, there were near two million people listening intently there. Yet even more blessed are we, for we have the full revelation of God's Word before us. In God's plan, He has intended for His children to live in this Promised Land of milk and honey. That was the covenant given to Abraham when he left Ur of the Chaldees. It was the hope given to the Israelites when they left the bondage of Egypt. It would be the call to the exiles even more than a thousand years after Joshua when they hung up their harps on the Babylonian willows. What Joshua declared at the bank of Jordan was a rendition of the same promise that our faithful God has given to His children through the ages.

Even today, God is calling us to repent and return – to put a stop to our murmuring and straying and to go back to Him – to enter into His rest. The sins in our lives, in all the different names and genres, will be driven out without fail if we abide by God and ask Him to help us. With God's leading, surely we will overcome. Be strong and of a good courage – hold fast to God's promise.

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

CONSIDER

Think of Moses' regrets on Mount Nebo in Deuteronomy 34.

2 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 3:12-13

LESSON Knowing God

VERSE 12

Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man.

Every tribe was to choose a representative; the work to be done by them would later be disclosed in Joshua 4: they were to each take a stone from River Jordan and bring it across as a memorial of the miracle they were going to witness soon. God then described what He was going to do. Like how He had parted the Red Sea, God was going to lead the Israelites through River Jordan by opening a dry path for the Israelites to walk through.

Yet this revelation might not be enough to prepare the people for what they were to see. Knowing a miracle is after all different from experiencing it. Knowing that the waters would part is far from personally walking through the parted waters.

This is just like our Christian walk. Through God's narration of what had happened throughout Biblical history, we find assurance of His grace to come. Yet it is only when we truly abide by Him and let His grace be showered upon us in our daily lives that we could be said to have known God.

Biblical knowledge is important for it is the foundation of our beliefs. But on these grounds, seek a close and personal relationship with God. Wrestle with God and ask for His blessings. Pray to God and ask for His guidance. Intercede for others before His throne of mercy. See how God parts the waters in your life and those of others around you. Let God lead you onto higher ground.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 33
MARK 5

PRAYER

Seek deeper to go further.

3 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 3:14-17

LESSON
Obedience is
faith in action

VERSE 15

*And as they that bare the ark
were come unto Jordan, and
the feet of the priests that bare
the ark were dipped in the
brim of the water, (for Jordan
overfloweth all his banks all
the time of harvest).*

The Israelites had followed Moses through the exodus in the desert. They had witnessed many wonderful miracles such as the crossing of the Red Sea. They had eaten manna and quail, had obtained water from unlikely sources, and had fought and won battles because the Lord was on their side. Even now as Moses had passed away and the Israelites had declared that they would follow Joshua as their new leader, they would be given the opportunity to see that God was still with them.

We also see in Joshua 2:24 that the spies that were sent had very strongly declared their faith in God. Now, they would be put to the test. The Jordan river was overflowing, and had a very swift current flowing through it. Yet, at the word of their God, through their new leader, the Israelites were commanded to prepare and pass through it. Despite all the apparent dangers, we see that the Israelites rose to the challenge – they packed their tents, and the priests bearing the ark went toward the Jordan first. Notice that it was only when the priest's feet touched the water that the water ceased, and the people were able to pass through on dry ground.

Similarly, when being obedient to God's Word makes the road ahead seem arduous and fraught with danger, would we continue to abide by Christ? And perhaps even after we have taken the first few steps in obeying it, do we continue trusting that God will see us through the tough times even when everything seems to be falling apart?

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 34
MARK 6

HYMN

God has not given us the spirit of fear, But has given us the strength to obey. With power and sound mind, with love, the unfailing kind, O be not ashamed of His way.

4 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 4:1-7

LESSON

Leaving
a legacy of faith

VERSE 6-7a

That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them.

By faith, the Israelites had followed Joshua through river Jordan, walking on dry ground, just as how they had followed Moses across the Red Sea. We see how Joshua then ordered the Israelites to set up a memorial for this event, so that there would be a visible sign for all to see, and to remember what the Lord had done for them. Furthermore, Joshua charged the Israelites to be ready to answer their children, and to recount the Lord's goodness when the children asked them about the memorial.

The Israelites had priests. In fact, it was the priests who played a larger role in the crossing of Jordan, having to bear the Ark of the Covenant and stand in the middle of Jordan until all the others had passed. However, we see that the commandment to instruct the children was not given to the priests. Instead, it was the duty of the individual fathers to give the reply and to teach them of the Lord's goodness.

Fathers, as head of the household, are you bringing up your child in the way of righteousness? Is the reading of the Bible and family worship a priority in your house? Just as it was the Israelites' duty to teach the next generation, so it is your duty to ensure that your children are brought up in the household of faith. The miracle of the crossing of the Jordan was not just to prove the faith of the Israelites of that time. It was also to be a testimony of God's goodness to future generations.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 35-36
MARK 7

THOUGHT

Even before I can teach others to have faith in God, I must demonstrate this living faith first.

5 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 4:3

LESSON

Remember
the event of faith

VERSE 3

*And command ye them,
saying, Take you hence out
of the midst of Jordan, out
of the place where the priests'
feet stood firm, twelve stones,
and ye shall carry them over
with you, and leave them in the
lodging place, where ye shall
lodge this night.*

The Israelites had demonstrated their faith in God and had been obedient in walking through Jordan according to His commands through Joshua. What further use was there in making a memorial for remembrance? Why recount such miracles to their children? At this point of time, the Israelites had not yet fully entered into the rest in the Promised Land. There would still be many trials ahead that would continue to try their faith. In the immediate future, that would be the conquering of Jericho.

When we experience God's goodness and grace in our lives, do we merely thank God for seeing us through that particular hardship and then relegate the entire incident to the back of our minds, never to be brought up again? Let this not be the case. We are put through trials, just as the Israelites were, to build us up in the faith.

As we encounter future challenges in life, it would be useful to recount how God has already seen us through previous trials, and continue to trust that the eternal God who changes not will continue to strengthen us and see us through our journey through the wilderness of life. Our God condescended to promise the Israelites in Deuteronomy 12:10-11 that He would first take care of their needs before allowing Himself to dwell in a temple. Similarly, by remembering all that He has already seen us through, coupled with knowledge of how He has been a haven for the saints of old, let us meet each trial with confidence in our God.

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

MEDITATE

Psalm 63:6-7

6 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 4:6-7

LESSON Rehearsing God's mercies

VERSE 7

*Then ye shall answer them,
That the waters of Jordan
were cut off before the ark of
the covenant of the LORD;
when it passed over Jordan, the
waters of Jordan were cut off:
and these stones shall be for a
memorial unto the children of
Israel for ever.*

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

MEDITATE

Throughout their journey in the wilderness, the Israelites had been given many different memorials to remember different aspects of God's goodness. From the Passover [Exodus 12:14] to the covering of the Altar [Numbers 16:38], the Israelites were repeatedly given many very visible signs that would point them toward God and so that they would remember Him. Remembering God does not mean merely being aware that He exists. Rather, it implies a conscious awareness of God while we go about our daily lives. Remembering God means that we are to live in a manner that is pleasing unto Him.

Yet, we see that despite the amount of memorials that the Israelites had, they time and again forgot their place. They murmured against God in the wilderness, and even after entering the Promised Land, they entered into a cycle of rebellion, retribution, repentance and finally restoration during the period of the judges.

As humans, we are forgetful. Even as we read about the Israelites' shortcomings, let us remember that we are no different as well. Hence, like the Israelites, we are given memorials as well.

1 Corinthians 11:24-26 is a very familiar passage to all of us. Every first week of the month, we take a sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and this is a memorial of the Lord's mercies in sending His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Let us strive to ensure that our remembrance of the Lord and His sacrifice is not merely confined to just that monthly occasion. May it govern our entire lives.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. – Romans 12:1

7 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 4:8-9

LESSON

Mark the spot

VERSE 9

And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day.

There were two sets of stones erected as a memorial for the Israelites. One set was located at where the Israelites lodged the night after crossing the river Jordan [Joshua 4:3], while the other was located near the brink of the Jordan [Joshua 3:8, 14, 17]. This would be a very obvious memorial for the future generations. They could see the two sets of stones and marvel at how God allowed their forefathers to go from one set (nearer one side of the river) to the other set (on the opposite side) on dry ground!

These memorials highlighted God's power and ability to see His people through whatever may come. As we sojourn on Earth, we have already and also will encounter many difficult trials. We acknowledge God for what He has already seen us through and thank Him for His grace and strength!

Let us also try to aim to remember His goodness in a way that points to God, and not ourselves. Often times when recounting past trials, our acknowledgement of God is a simple "Thank God for seeing me through" – sometimes uttered without a sincere gratitude. Hence, others listening to what we say may not really see the goodness or grace of God. Perhaps, if we were to journal down our feeble-minded thoughts, our weak attempts at solving the problems with our own strength, and then contrast it with how marvellously the Lord provides His grace, mercy and strength, we will be better able to "mark the spot" and give Him the glory.

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

HYMN

Roll back the curtain of memory now and then, show me where You brought me from, and where I should have been. Lord, I'm weak and human, and humans forget, so remind me, remind me O Lord.

8 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 4:10-12

LESSON

The right focus
– the Ark

VERSE 10

For the priests which bare the Ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until everything was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hasted and passed over.

The priests obeyed the Lord and were the first to march into the water of river Jordan. Before the priests stepped into the water, the raging river was at a flood stage. They had to cast away their fear, and needed to have total trust in the Lord in order to move ahead. They faithfully stood still in the middle of the river, carrying the ark of the covenant, waiting for all the people to cross the river. The Israelites also needed to have the similar faith. About forty thousand of them passed over before the Lord.

Similarly, in our daily life, we will face obstacles in life and we need to pray, believe in God's providence and obey His instructions before we could enter the Promised Land and live peacefully.

Do we walk by sight or by faith? Do we obey God's commandments wholeheartedly? Do we really believe that the things which are impossible with men are possible with God [Luke 18:27]? It is clear that we are to focus on the Ark, which is the Old Testament equivalent of Immanuel, God with us. The Israelites are told to follow the Ark.

Today, we need to be led by God, to pursue God's words, to be in the presence of the Lord. Hebrews 12:2 states that we are to look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith... We must do what Peter did when he walked on the water, to fix our eyes on Jesus and not to be shaken by the rowdy waters surrounding us.

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

MEDITATE

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. – Matthew 7:24

9 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 4:13-14

LESSON

Prepared for war

VERSE 14

On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.

We learnt from Joshua chapter 3 that the Israelites were to perform a consecration ceremony before entering the Promised Land. These outward signs of purification illustrate the importance of approaching God with a pure heart. Joshua also wanted the people to listen to God's instructions carefully (Joshua 3:9) before they were allowed to cross over Jordan to conquer the Promised Land and to drive out all the people of Canaan, who were wicked, evil and idolatrous.

We ought to be "well-prepared for war" and to consecrate ourselves as we live in a wicked dark world. At times, we may be too eager to make decisions relying on our own wisdom without discerning the will of God. It is too easy to be tempted and to fall into the trap of sinning against God. We may even backslide in our faith unless we seek the Lord diligently. As children of God, we must walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Do take Joshua as our role model. He had an obedient faith and had set a good example to the people. Joshua was honoured by God in the eyes of the people. They know that God is with Joshua, just like when God was with Moses, as God performed the miracle by keeping the river dry for thousands of Israelites to cross over to the land of Canaan safely. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; ...if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour" [John 12:26].

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

PRAYER

Dear God, help me to be well prepared for spiritual war and be Your faithful servant. Amen.

10 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 4:15-18

LESSON

The Ark of testimony

VERSE 18

And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before.

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

QUESTION

The Lord commanded Joshua to ask the priests to come out of the Jordan river after all the people crossed it. It was a miracle for the people to see how the waters dried up for them to cross over safely and how the waters were immediately released by God back to their place the moment the priests reached the dry ground on the land of Canaan. They were amazed. Their personal experience of God's power served to build their hope in God and courage to face the uncertainties in the new land. The strong testimony of God's presence with His people gave them a strong reputation among their enemies.

God also exalted Joshua in the eyes of His people. They revered Joshua and knew clearly that he was the divinely appointed leader to lead them. Joshua's authority was firmly established as much as his predecessor Moses. Joshua was magnified in the sight of all who witnessed the great miracle on how God brought them to cross the river into the Promised Land. The Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years and now they finally arrived at the destination. The people were rejoicing and excited.

For believers today, we too are rejoicing as we are saved and have received His eternal salvation. Let us all live a consecrated life that pleases God and be good witnesses for the Lord. Be bold and share the good testimonies about our Lord, conveying to others our personal experiences with the Lord and spread the gospel of Christ far and wide.

Am I a good testimony of the Lord? How often have I been witnessing for the Lord?



11 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 4:19-20

LESSON

The memorial
at Gilgal

VERSE 20

*And those twelve stones, which
they took out of Jordan, did
Joshua pitch in Gilgal.*

Jesus would not pander to their wilful disbelief disguised as interested inquiry. He had made sufficient statement of His identity in His many verbal exchanges with the Pharisees before. Many people had heard and believed His authoritative teaching but not the self-righteous religious leaders. Moreover the miracles Jesus had performed amongst the people were incontrovertibly supernatural and genuine, proving His divinity as the creator and controller of nature and even life.

What does it take to convince man? Why do so many still reject God in the face of such evidence? The reason is that these are not the sheep of the Good Shepherd and it is a tragic indictment. Such will be the case until the Lord returns.

God has spoken. He is speaking to us through His inspired Word. We have seen His works too, for mankind is surrounded by all the evidence that God exists and is sustaining His creation. But many will still deny Him because of obstinate, wilful unbelief born out of unregenerate hearts. These do not believe because they do not belong.

But there is yet hope, because Jesus is still calling men and women today. The offer of salvation is for whosoever will believe in Him [John 3:16]. And Jesus is inviting all to come to Him for that rest and deliverance from the guilt and burden of sin [Matthew 11:28]. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. That is the crux of the gospel and you alone are responsible for that decision.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

GENESIS 43

MARK 14

PRAYER

God, strengthen us with power through Your Holy Spirit. Use us as channels of blessings to others, let us be good witnesses of the Lord and share Your good testimonies. Surely He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.





12 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 4:21-24

LESSON
Let your
children know

VERSE 24

*That all the people of the
earth might know the hand
of the Lord, that it is mighty:
that ye might fear the Lord
your God for ever.*

During the journey to the Promised Land, the Israelites faced many challenges but had also experienced the presence and power of God. As they marched into the land God had given them, they were actually embarking into a journey of increasing faith, as they learnt their faithful God is the Provider of all things. They had also learnt the importance of obedience in God's commandments.

Once the memorial of 12 stones at Gilgal was constructed, Joshua called all the people together to give thanks to their almighty God. They were reminded to share about God's strength and His wondrous works with their children and grandchildren. The generation of the Israelites that followed Joshua into Canaan kept their faith strong in the Lord. They "served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel." [Joshua 24:31].

We are responsible to teach our children diligently about God's words and His instructions so that they may learn to fear God all the days they live on the earth. We need to be the good role models to our children, be the faithful servants of the Lord and to fear Him. We need to constantly remind our children the blessings and privilege we receive as God's children.

Do not forget to share the goodness of God with others. Tell others how you came to trust in Christ alone as your Lord and Saviour. Share with others how God has worked in our lives. Through our testimonies, God's name is praised and honoured.

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

PRAYER

Dear God, help me to seize the opportunity every day to share with others Your gospel and goodness. Let Your light shine through me. Amen.





13 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 4:22-24

LESSON

The hand
of the Lord

VERSE 24

*That all the people of the
earth might know the hand of
the LORD, that it is mighty:
that ye might fear the LORD
your God for ever.*

Here is a descriptive account of the miraculous crossing of River Jordan by Israel. Note that it was meticulously laid out according to God's command. The people were commanded to erect a memorial in remembrance of this miracle. Twelve stones were set up in Jordan and another twelve stones taken out of Jordan to preserve this memorial. Added on to this is the directive to relate this incident to their children for posterity.

Such a miraculous wonder is also seen in the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea. The Jews themselves should not be amazed. Both Caleb and Joshua were witnesses of the two miracles.

It has been said that remembrance is the hallmark of gratitude. When you are thankful for something, you definitely will remember the person who has been kind to you. The Israelites had a lot to be thankful for. However, they conveniently forgot God's deliverance the minute they were delivered out of danger. The Amorites and the Canaanites were no better. They were still defiant of God's power even after witnessing His power at work there and then.

Godly fear is reverential fear. This is the outcome of knowing the work and hand of the Lord. Our loving Lord does not want to see us cower in fear of Him. He is delighted when we approach Him in love, fear and gratitude. The best response He wants from us in gratitude to God's greatness is an undivided heart of loving fear for Him only. To do this, we must worship God and Him only.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 45
MARK 16

THOUGHT

The Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad.





14 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 5:1-2

LESSON

Demoralised
and defeated

VERSE 1

And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 46
LUKE 1:1-38

The Amorites inhabited the mountainous region and the Canaanites were on the seacoast of Palestine. They were mentioned for their power and courage. The word “westward” distinguished them from those Amorites eastward from Jordan whom Moses had already subdued. The river was known to overflow its banks quite often. No doubt they assumed that they were safe by this sure barrier of defence.

Now that Israel had crossed over Jordan, they must prepare to conquer the rest of the cities. Before doing that, they had to obey God’s command to renew the covenant of circumcision. That was the right moment to circumcise the people – when their enemies were in fear of Israel.

Imagine a powerful enemy reduced to such a state – “their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more”. Tragically, the battle was lost even before it was fought. The native chiefs had lost the will to continue the war. Those enemies were instruments of Satan who knew the power of Jehovah. In fact, the enemies were already fearful before as attested by Rahab in Joshua 2:9. This shows the powerful hand of God at work in His people.

It was God who caused the Canaanites to be fearful and dispirited. Likewise, those who stubbornly oppose and reject God’s saving grace do so at their own peril. Remember how Pharaoh kept on resisting God’s command to let His people go. How receptive were you when you heard the gospel for the first time? Did you believe it immediately or refuse to do so?

THOUGHT

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



15 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 5:3-4

LESSON
The mark
of the covenant

VERSE 4

*And this is the cause why
Joshua did circumcise: All
the people that came out of
Egypt, that were males, even
all the men of war, died in the
wilderness by the way, after
they came out of Egypt.*

Obedying God's command, Joshua proceeded with the rite of circumcision. The fear of their enemies provided the opportunity to do so. They were about to celebrate another Passover. Therefore, it was important for all the males, that is, men of war to be circumcised. Without this they could not be considered within the covenant, and could not keep the Passover, which was the seal of that covenant. All the circumcised males were then able to rest in safety because the enemies were held in check.

This rite of circumcision was to prepare the people for the Passover. Before the next step of conquest, their obedience in being circumcised took away the reproach of Egypt. This group belonged to the new generation of males 20 years and below. Those above that age died in the wilderness because God was not well-pleased with them [1 Corinthians 10:5].

The sins of idolatry, lust, fornication, murmuring, etc. committed by all the men of war in verse 4 were meant as a lesson to the group just about to enter the Promised Land. The covenant of circumcision was renewed before the new generation of Israelites could enter the Promised Land.

May this be a lesson and warning to believers even at this present time. God who took care of His own people did not hesitate to discipline them when necessary. The Israelites had disobeyed God; we are no better. Let's remember that the Lord who loves us will definitely chastise us too when we disobey Him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 47
LUKE 1:39-80

THOUGHT

Those who belong to Christ would be sealed to Him forever by the blood of the Lamb.

16 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 5:5-8

LESSON

Failure
in obedience

VERSE 7

And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way.

Due to the 40 years of wilderness wandering, the Israelites had neglected to circumcise those born during that time. However, Joshua righted this disobedience by doing so at this time. The two great ordinances of circumcision and the Passover revived the faith and fortitude of the people. The obedience of the people to this rite was a proof of their faith despite the enemies' panic.

Circumcision was a sign of the people's reconciliation to God. It was a testimony that God would not impute their parents' rebellion to them any longer. Though those men of war would not be physically fit after being circumcised, they were expected to join the Feast of the Passover. This would also distinguish them from the Canaanites.

Above all, this revival of the two great ordinances – circumcision and the Passover – at that moment was most timely. It confirmed God's promise made to Abraham. Moreover, this submission to God's command exposed them to the danger of attack by their enemies. In obeying God's command, Joshua could have been misunderstood for putting his military men in an unfit condition. If you recall, the Schechemites had been attacked by Levi and Simeon in a similar circumstance [Genesis 34:24-26]. Above all, God's anger had elapsed and they were allowed to enter into His rest.

The lesson here is that God always forgives His children when they repented of their wrong-doing. Let's be like Joshua in exhibiting the courage of faith despite all odds. Are you fearful to follow God all the way?

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 48
LUKE 2

THOUGHT

God's children who have already received Him as Saviour must obey His command to be baptised as an indication to others that they are His.

17 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 5:9-12

LESSON

Rolling away
the reproach

VERSE 9

And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.

It was very apt that the feast of the Passover was celebrated at this juncture. The place was called Gilgal, meaning “rolling away”. The Israelites had neglected this rite while under the bondage of the Egyptians. They were ridiculed and taunted for their long wanderings in the desert. That reproach of Egypt finally ended when they entered Canaan, with the restoration of the covenant. They were reconciled nationally to God.

Other blessings followed. During the 40 years of wilderness wanderings in the desert, God supplied manna as their physical sustenance. Though considered angels’ food, it was no longer required now that they had a permanent place to dwell in. The Lord saw to it that they would not go hungry. After the Passover the children of Israel enjoyed the fruit of the land. Corn then replaced the supply of manna.

Henceforth, Gilgal became a place of importance in the history of Israel. To name a few, it was here that the camp rested the first night of their entering Canaan, the land which had been promised to their fathers since the time of Abraham. It was also the place where they celebrated the first Passover they kept in the Promised Land. Saul, the first king of Israel, was also proclaimed here.

Is there a “Gilgal” in your life? Do you remember any significant station in your life that made a big difference for you? That life-changing decision would be the turning point, just like the Israelites’ obedience in circumcision to prepare them for life in the Promised Land.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 49
LUKE 3

THOUGHT

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



18 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 5:13

LESSON

“Art Thou for us ... ?”

VERSE 13

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a Man over against him with His sword drawn in His hand: and Joshua went unto Him, and said unto Him, Art Thou for us, or for our adversaries?

The Israelites amazingly and miraculously crossed the Jordan River by God’s almighty power. They encamped at Gilgal not far from the fortified city of Jericho. Joshua took steps to reaffirm his people’s covenantal relationship with God. The rite of circumcision and celebration of the Passover was duly kept. With this the manna of the desert was exchanged at last for the produce of Canaan. Next came an experience for Joshua alone.

He went out to reconnoitre the seemingly impregnable city of Jericho. He lifted his eyes and met a Man over against him with a sword drawn in his hand. We need those uplifted eyes. Too often we keep our gaze fixed on the ground and miss the celestial vision that awaits us all around.

This represented a real test to Joshua’s valour. God had given him an assuring promise: “Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” [Joshua 1:9]. Joshua did not panic and flee but boldly advanced unto Him and inquired, “Art Thou for us or for our adversaries?” Previously the Lord had spoken to Joshua but had no visible manifestation of Himself. It was one of the pre-incarnate appearances of the Son of God in human form.

When a need strikes, our task is to get alone with God just as Joshua did. God will meet us if we just get alone and seek His face. God will help us; He will give us His power and guidance. He will be our Helper in time of need.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
GENESIS 50
LUKE 4

THOUGHT

So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. – Hebrews 13:6



19 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 5:14-15

LESSON

“Nay!”

VERSE 14

And He said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto Him, What saith my Lord unto His servant?

Joshua seems to have been privately reconnoitring the formidable fortress city of Jericho. He was meditating over his next move against the enemy citadel. He walked slowly, his eyes cast down upon the ground. What should his strategy be? He needed wisdom and skill far beyond his own devising.

Pondering these heavy thoughts, Joshua saw a mysterious warrior at some distance in front of him with a drawn sword in His hand. Joshua straightaway confronted Him, “Art Thou for us, or for our adversaries?” The answer was simply, “Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come.” Those words, together with the majesty of His bearing, led Joshua to prostrate himself before Him saying, “What saith my Lord unto His servant?” The Man then tells Joshua that Jericho is due to fall, not by military skill and valour, but by divine power.

Who is this wonderful military stranger? It was Christ Himself who had come to visit Joshua as He had appeared in patriarchal times to Abraham, Jacob and Moses. Now He appears as the Heavenly Leader of Israel in the conquest of the land of Canaan.

Joshua responded immediately to the command to remove his sandals in holy reverence. By removing his sandals he gladly acknowledged that this battle and the entire conquest of Canaan was God’s conflict and that he was merely God’s servant. Indeed, Joshua was not fearful but was strengthened in every way. You can be too when God is on your side.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS I
LUKE 5

THOUGHT

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

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 6:1

LESSON

Jericho

VERSE 1

Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

The statement in verse 1 shows a great potential obstacle that was effortlessly overcome by the all-powerful God. Jericho was a frontier town and key city to western Palestine. It was strategically located as a fortress to guard against invading armies coming across Jordan River into the hill country of the Canaanites. The news of the advance of the Israelite army across the Jordan had resulted in the people of Jericho shutting the city gates permanently – no one went out and no one came in.

Its capture was indispensable before any progress could be made by Israel in conquering and occupying the Promised Land of God. It was strongly fortified and tightly shut up by the obstinacy and resolution of the inhabitants. Defeating a city like Jericho was an unimaginable task but with God nothing is impossible. Its destruction would not only be a great encouragement to Israel; it must still further dismay the remaining Canaanites.

Joshua 6:1 describes the seemingly hopeless situation confronting Israel, a people unskilled in the kind of warfare that was now required. Israel's destruction of Jericho was no private vengeance but divine because the Canaanites' iniquities and wickedness was filled to the brim; their "cup of iniquity was full", overflowing with evil [Leviticus 18:25-28].

Faith, obedience, courage, trust and patience must be exercised if they would obtain victory over their enemies. The Lord stood forth as their Captain, to command and lead them in battle. All of us can strengthen our own faith by acknowledging that all things are possible with God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 2
LUKE 6

THOUGHT

The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. – Luke 18:27



21 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 6:2-3

LESSON

God works,
men work

VERSE 2

And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.

The work of God referred to in our text is a special grace. It is work done only for those who have a certain disposition, “neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him” [Isaiah 64:4]. He magnified His greatness by coming down to work for His covenant people, the Israelites.

The plan was laid out precisely for Joshua and his people. Simple, implicit cooperation on Israel’s side was essential for success. Their work consists of a daily procession around the walls of Jericho for six days. The priests are to exercise their functions. The Ark of the Covenant must be carried upon men’s shoulders – symbol of the Lord’s presence with them as their Leader and Commander [Isaiah 55:4]. The men of war are to defend the Ark, to clear the way and also to follow in the rear to guard it against any sudden attack from the city. They were to work in faith, obedience, with patience and courage, and in silence. The priests bearing the trumpets were to sound the trumpets and strike terror into the hearts of the Canaanites, inspiring courage and confidence among the people of God.

On the seventh day the circuit of the walls was repeated seven times. At the close of the seventh, Joshua’s voice rang out, “Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.” The priests blew a blast upon the trumpets, the people shouted with a great shout and the walls of Jericho came crumbling down.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 3
LUKE 7

THOUGHT

The victorious life – conquering the enemies that try to keep us out of the Promised Land – comes through faith; a faith that believes God’s Word.



BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 6:4-5

LESSON

God's strategy

VERSE 4

And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

The city of Jericho looked impregnable and impossible to conquer. Sharp, intelligent and well-thought-out strategy is an absolute essential in warfare. No significant victory can be won without a well-planned military strategy.

During Noah's time, when humans rebelled against God, He singled out Noah to build an ark which was God's strategy for bringing judgement upon sin yet preserving an ongoing human race. During Gideon's time, God also used a different plan by reducing 32,000 Israelites to 300 to conquer the Midianites. Similarly, God's command for Joshua was not any typical military strategy. It would be equally unique. Thus no one person could possibly claim credit for it.

Jericho's walls collapsed not because of Israel's strength. It was God's divine act. The strategy outlined to Joshua was a method of faith, trust and obedience [Zechariah 4:6; 2 Corinthians 10:4]. Joshua and his armed men were to march round the city of Jericho once a day silently for six successive days with seven priests blowing trumpets preceding the Ark of the Covenant. On the seventh day they were to compass the city seven times, and then the priests would blow trumpets and the people shout with a loud voice. The walls of the city then collapsed giving them a glorious victory.

The battle strategy was God's and the success would be God's. The remarkable victory was summed up in one short statement: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" [Hebrews 11:30]. Surely then "all things are possible to him that believeth" [Mark 9:23].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 4
LUKE 8

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for fighting our spiritual battle for us and equipping us for spiritual warfare. May we always commit the strategies and the outcomes of our daily struggles in Your hands.



23 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 6:6-10

LESSON

A time to keep silent

VERSE 10

And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.

Following Jesus physically seemed easy for the great multitudes, and they loved to do that. In an age where there was little entertainment, the coming of a great teacher, and for that matter, one who could perform great miracles, was probably the highlight of one's otherwise mundane life. It was time for these easily-impressed people to understand what it meant to truly follow Jesus. And thus Jesus turned and taught them. We could imagine the multitudes stopping in their tracks. What is the Great Teacher going to show us now?

The doctrines taught are far from entertaining. Firstly, Jesus told them one cannot be His disciple if one does not "hate" his loved ones and his own life. What does that mean? "Hate" here means to "love less". In other words, it is to put Christ above all, and not to deem anyone or anything more precious than Jesus. Secondly, one must deny oneself, bear one's cross and go after Christ if one desires to be a follower of Jesus.

The two conditions point us essentially to the First Commandment. In fact, the whole Bible exhorts us to love God whole-heartedly. When we love God, we would not allow other idols to come before Him; we would be willing to bear the trials and cost of discipleship.

One wonders how many continued to follow Him after those solemn instructions. Blessed is he who perseveres, for he who honours God, God will also honour him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE

IN 2 YEARS, READ

EXODUS 5

LUKE 9

THOUGHT

It takes faith to be silent before God.





24 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 6:10

LESSON

A time to shout

VERSE 10

And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.

We are soldiers in God’s army and are engaged in a war where many enemy strongholds need to be conquered. There are fortresses in our own lives; things that may seem insurmountable – grief, anger, unforgiving, addictions, failures. When we least feel like proclaiming a shout of praise and victory about our trials and circumstances, that is the time to do it. We must say what God has said and speak to that wall or mountain in our lives and watch it crumble. Speaking and shouting are the actions we need to do. It is our response to what we believe in our hearts to be true. It is the key to seeing the walls fall.

The Israelites were doing what you and I have to do today. They shouted the shout of faith, and we will have to be doing the same thing if we want God to move on our behalf. With the walls of sickness, disease, poverty, lack, mental stress, demonic oppression, sin, or whatever staring you in the face, do you shout the shout of faith? Don’t stand in front of those walls and let what you see discourage you. Shout to God with the voice of triumph.

The voice of triumph is the shout of faith! Those walls in your life can come down. Just open your mouth and give God the praise! Give God the glory! Shout to the Lord with the voice of triumph! It is time for the walls of Jericho to fall in your life! It is time to move forward to victory!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 6
LUKE 10

THOUGHT

Faith does not wait for the walls to fall down. Faith shouts them down.





25 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 6:11-16

LESSON

The seventh day

VERSE 15

And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

This strange procession went around the city once each day for six days and seven times on the seventh day. On both sides of the wall, they knew in their hearts something was about to happen, but they did not know what. The Lord could have brought the walls down as they walked the first day, but He did it in His time. This may be the hardest lesson for any of us to learn.

Have you noticed how many sevens there are in this chapter? Seven priests, seven trumpets, seven days. After six days of faithful obedience to the Lord, the seventh day finally arrives. On the seventh day, Israel marched round the city in the same manner seven times. A seven is just a seven. We must be cautious about attaching symbolic meanings to any text, especially when Scripture is not explicit about such meanings. There are times, however, when it seems that God is communicating the idea of completeness and perfection by means of the number seven. The seventh day appears to imply the triumph of completion over Jericho. This is going to be God's perfect judgement. The city is doomed to destruction, it and all who are in it.

The fall of Jericho reminds us that the Lord often seems to work slowly, day by day, sometimes year by year. There is a time to wait patiently before acting. The Lord often tests our faith and in the process builds our character and our relationship with Him. Similarly the endurance at Jericho produced the perfect result. Regardless of the nature of our Jericho, we must realise victory always comes through God's plan of deliverance – never ours.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 7
LUKE 11

THOUGHT

It is His seventh day and not ours.





26 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 6:17-19

LESSON

The accursed thing

VERSE 18

And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

Throughout the Old Testament God told the Israelites many times to put away the strange gods and return to Him. Just as the Lord warned Israel, He gives the same warning to us today – “keep yourselves from the accursed thing.” He specifically tells us many things that we are to have nothing to do with.

The accursed thing means something that is banned and marked for utter destruction; anything that causes you to be separated from God. There are many things in this world we would love to own. Having accursed things in your house actually harbours ungodliness and it is an offence to God. There are some who are serving and worshiping idols and not God! There are some who are serving their wealth and not the Lord! There are some who are serving their great possessions and not God!

Have the riches of this life become your God and master? Is the accursed thing ruling your life? Sometimes we love the world around us in a way that draws our hearts away from God. Now, of course you can love the people in the world in the right sense and have your heart drawn toward God. But we need to guard against loving the corrupt cultural elements that appeal to our sin nature, pride and independence. These things are not pleasing to God. So we should ask ourselves, “Is anything more important to me than God?” If it is, it is an idol and it is accursed, and should be taken down.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 8
LUKE 12

THOUGHT

Could Christians have the “accursed” items that the Bible condemns in their homes unknowingly?





27 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 6:20-21

LESSON Jericho is fallen

VERSE 21

And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.

The wall fell down flat. We were not told that Israel knew this would be the result of their obedient marching and final shouting. They might have been as surprised as the people of Jericho were at the way God decided to deliver Jericho into their hands. They utterly destroyed all that was in the city except Rahab and her family. Why was Israel commanded to practise such complete destruction? Because the greatest sins of the Canaanites were spiritual. Such judgement seems harsh to us – but we must recognize that God has commanded it.

Have you come to the place where you can identify the strongholds that are in your life, and God, by His power brings those things down for you? You must rise up and make sure that every trace of those things is forever eliminated from your life. Some things must not be allowed to continue. If we defeat them today and don't do away with the root of the problem, that stronghold will rebuild itself and be stronger than ever. Next time, it will be harder to bring down.

What is it that is keeping you from going forward with God? Is it lust? Is it hatred? Is it envy? Is it unforgiveness? Is it a bitter, critical spirit? Whatever it is, that stronghold needs to be conquered. Will you bring it to the Lord and defeat it His way? So, whatever it takes to root out the strongholds in your life, do it now. God will enable you to see those things put to death forever.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 9
LUKE 13

THOUGHT

Without studying, relying on and obeying the Scriptures, there is no hope of being saved eternally.





28 FEBRUARY

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 6:22-25

LESSON Rahab is saved

VERSE 25

And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

What a turn of events! The ones who were once fleeing out of Jericho for their lives had become the victors storming into the city. With the approval from their commander-in-chief, the two spies entered Jericho in search of the ones who had previously hidden and saved them - the ones who had made the right choice of following Jehovah. The fate of Jericho was sealed; no one could escape alive. That is, no one except Rahab and her household.

Strictly speaking, it was Rahab alone who braved the risk of hiding the spies; not her family. She was the one who, in providing a scarlet line for the spies to be delivered, changed her life and destiny as well as those of her loved ones. However, not only she but her whole household would be spared from the wrath of God.

Indeed, how many lives are saved because of God's covenantal love to the family of those who have believed! The first-fruit acts as a channel of blessings for the gospel message to be extended to the family - less by word than by the daily behaviour of such a privileged one. Blessed it is indeed to be used as God's means of grace to spread the good news to our loved ones. Yet a solemn reminder it is too, for our conduct to be consistent with our faith, so that the light of salvation may shine even at home.

Rahab believed on the Lord and she was saved, and her house.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 10
LUKE 14

CONSIDER

But with thee will I establish My covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. – Genesis 6:18



1 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 6:26-27

LESSON

Jericho is cursed

VERSE 26

And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.

A great miracle had been wrought in the city of Jericho. It was an excellent testimony of God's power and might. Before the crumbled walls, Joshua had pronounced a curse perhaps to make everyone remember Israel's conquest of the first city in Canaan - no one was to rebuild Jericho; if anyone was to do so, he would lose all his children, beginning from his eldest when he started and ending with his youngest when he finished.

This indeed was fulfilled in 1 Kings 16:34 when Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho in the dark years of king Ahab 500 years later. What could have caused Joshua to curse Jericho? Perhaps, before we could even ask this, did Hiel the Bethelite lose all his children because of Joshua's curse? Or was Joshua merely being a mouthpiece for God, prophesying what would happen 500 years into his future? We do not know. However, what we do know is that God allowed the woes pronounced on the re-builder of Jericho to come to pass even generations after the conquest.

This should serve as a reminder of God's wrath upon the unrepentant. God's standard never changes. He will tear down the firmest strongholds that work against His sovereign will. Man may attempt to rebuild but they always have a price to pay. Man so often does not realise the consequences of his wrongdoings. It is only by God's grace and mercy that He softened our hearts and instill in us the fear and love for Him.

Blessed indeed is the man who hears God's words and abide by them.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 11
LUKE 15

THOUGHT

Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

2 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 7:1

LESSON Achan's sin

VERSE 1

But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerab, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel.

Joshua 6 has ended with a triumphant sound of victory. Israel has secured her first win. Yet it would be a mistake to think that she would be as successful for subsequent victories. In fact, the victory might even become a snare for them - overconfidence is one [Joshua 7:3]; covetousness is, unfortunately, another. This root for Israel's first defeat in the land promised to them was clearly identified in the very first verse of Joshua 7: spoils from the past victory had come back to haunt one of them; Achan fell and as a result, all had to pay.

We can learn at least two things from this episode to come. For one, the accursed thing is like transgressions in our lives. Having been saved from the bondage of sin, we ought to sever ourselves from our old conduct and mentality. We should be separated from the world. The call is one of total commitment. We ought to, by God's grace, commit every part of our lives to Christ, asking Him to cleanse us of all unrighteousness. As Christians, we are to shine like Christ. Let not sin stop us from having a deeper relationship with God.

For another, we are also reminded that Christians are not individuals. We are accountable to one another. God sees His children as His Church. And that is exactly the meaning of ekklesia - being called out. We are called out of darkness into God's marvellous light. As part of God's chosen, let us strive to keep the testimony of His people.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 12:1-20
LUKE 16

REMINDER

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. – Galatians 5:9

3 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 7:2-3

LESSON

Failure at Ai

VERSE 3

And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few.

We look at another factor for the failure of the Israelites today - overconfidence. While the triumphant shouts were still ringing in the ears of Joshua, he sent men to spy Ai. The men came back with good reports that might have further boosted his morale. They then recommended that not all Israelites needed to be involved in the taking of Ai; the reason is simple; “for they are but few”. Joshua did not stop them.

The Israelites failed by several counts. For one, they were mistaken to think that the number of enemies mattered most. They failed to understand that even for Jericho, it was God who helped them win the battle. So often so do we, after seeing how God had worked in our lives, then claimed the victory as our own!

Secondly, they thought that they could conquer the city by their sheer power. They judged by sight and saw Ai as an easy win. Do not be deceived by looks! Alas, how many have fought great battles against giants only to fall in the hands of seeming mediocre. Ignore not the small sins in life for it was the small foxes that spoil the vine.

Thirdly, the Israelites failed to see God’s pleasure for unity among His children. God’s people had entered the Promised Land together and they ought to fight as a people. Even if the work seems simple and small, a united heart in accomplishing it brings glory to God and encouragement to His church.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 12:21-51
LUKE 17

CONSIDER

Compared to their fathers forty years ago who were stopped by the giants of Canaan, Israel before Ai made the same mistake - walking by sight and not by faith.

4 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 7:4-5

LESSON

The price of defeat

VERSE 5

And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

The fate of the Israelites was sealed by verse 3 even before their battle. There was a hidden sin; the people were relying on their own strength. Their defeat was unavoidable. It reminds us to get our motives and orientation correct before doing any work for God. Are we fearing God and leading lives which are consistent with our faith? Are we relying on God for all we need to overcome any challenge that may come our way? Remember to get our first step right.

Of the three thousands who went forth, 36 were killed. In the grand scheme of things, these might seem like a small number. But the price paid was far more than that. The momentum of the conquest was disrupted. The Canaanites saw that the Israelites were not that strong after all. God's children were chased. The name of the Lord was tarnished. The morale of the people was affected - their hearts melted before the defeat.

We seldom calculate the magnitude of how our actions affect others. We so often stopped at what could be seen by sight. But we need to keep in mind that our words and actions can have more disastrous impact than we thought. Let us therefore be watchful. We might have paid the restitution when we are punished but the testimony that we lose is difficult to be replaced. The hearts we discourage and the minds we disillusion are often the debts we are answerable to before the throne of God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 13
LUKE 18

REMEMBER

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

5 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 7:6

LESSON
Joshua's
discouragement

VERSE 6

*And Joshua rent his clothes,
and fell to the earth upon
his face before the ark of the
LORD until the eventide, he
and the elders of Israel, and
put dust upon their heads.*

Hitherto Joshua had been eminently successful, and his people too. Not a hitch had occurred in all the arrangements. The capture of Jericho had been an unqualified triumph. It seemed as if the people of Ai could hardly fail to be paralysed by their fate. After spying on Ai, Joshua saw that there was no need for mustering the whole host against so poor a place – a detachment of two or three thousand would be enough.

The three thousand went up against Ai confidently as if success were already in their hands. The men of Israel were not prepared for a vigorous onslaught, and when it came thus unexpectedly they were taken aback and fled in confusion. As the men of Ai pursued them down the pass, they had no power to rally or retrieve the battle; the rout was complete, some of the men were killed, while consternation was carried into the host, and their whole enterprise seemed doomed to failure.

And now for the first time Joshua appears in a somewhat humiliating light. He rends his clothes, falls on his face with the elders before the ark of the Lord till evening, and puts dust upon his head. Every step in the conduct of Joshua on this occasion deserves attention. He was unconscious of the cause, and for the moment, in the extremity of his distress, had forgotten to reflect, that it must have been some offence which induced it.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 14
LUKE 19

THOUGHT

We can't fight in God's power and presence unless we walk in obedience to God.

6 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 7:7-9

LESSON

Joshua's complaint

VERSE 7

And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

Joshua and the elders of the people were also deeply affected, not so much at the loss of thirty-six men, rather because Israel, which was invincible with the help of the Lord, had been beaten, and therefore the Lord must have withdrawn His help. In the deepest grief, with their clothes rent and ashes upon their heads, they fell down before the ark of the Lord until the evening, to pour out their grief before the Lord.

Joshua's prayer contains a complaint and a question addressed to God. The complaint, "Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us?" almost amounts to murmuring, and sounds very much like the complaint which the murmuring people brought against Moses and Aaron in the desert; but it is very different from the murmuring of the people on that occasion against the guidance of God; for it by no means arose from unbelief, but was simply the bold language of faith wrestling with God in prayer – faith which could not comprehend the ways of the Lord.

The prayers of Joshua involved the most urgent appeal to the Lord to carry out His work in the same glorious manner in which it had been begun, with the firm conviction that God could neither relinquish nor alter His purposes of grace. Joshua pleads, as the strongest and best of all arguments, the glory and honour of His name.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ

EXODUS 15

LUKE 20

THOUGHT

You and I may, therefore, plead with our God upon all occasions, as Joshua did, the glory and honour of Jehovah's name, as the most certain security for the accomplishment of all His promises in Jesus. Lord! If the enemy triumph, where is our confidence in Jesus?

7 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 7:10

LESSON

Get thee up

VERSE 10

And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

Now it is God's turn to speak: "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?" In other words, God is saying, Why do you turn on Me as if I had suddenly changed, and become forgetful of My promise?

This is indeed a sobering question. How often is God slandered by our complaints? How often do we feel and even speak as if He had broken His word and forgotten His promise, as if He had induced us to trust in Him, and accept His service, only to humiliate us before the world, and forsake us in some great crisis? How quick are we to jump to conclusion that our faithful God has changed?

No wonder God speaks sharply to Joshua, and to us if we go in Joshua's steps. Do not be surprised when He refuses to be pleased with our prostration, our wringing of our hands and sobbing. He calls us to change our attitude. "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?" O ye of little faith!

Observe how instantly the Lord answers prayer. So Daniel found it while he was yet speaking [Daniel 9:21], and also, as Moses pleaded with the Lord [Genesis 33:13-14]. It is even so, when we lodge our sorrows and complaints before God. Here lies all the mighty difference between the carnal and the awakened. Carnal men in their crosses complain of God. Gracious souls pour their worries before God and commit everything to Him.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 16
LUKE 21

THOUGHT

Not just only prayer, but action is part of the duty of the soldier of Christ. If we feel defeated or our prayers are unanswered, there is usually a reason. And, with God's help, the cause must be promptly found out. The sin or error once discovered and put away, the issues can be dealt with successfully.

8 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 7:11-12

LESSON

Reasons for failure

VERSE 11

*Israel hath sinned,
and they have also transgressed
my covenant which I
commanded them: for they have
even taken of the accursed
thing, and have also stolen,
and dissembled also,
and they have put it even
among their own stuff.*

Israel has sinned grievously. The sin of one man was resting as a burden upon the whole nation in the manner explained before [Joshua 7:1]. This sin was a transgression of the obligation into which the people had entered in their covenant with the Lord, to keep His commandments [Exodus 19:8; 24:7].

It was agreed that God should have all the spoils of Jericho, and they should have the spoils of the rest of the cities of Canaan; but, in robbing God of His part, they transgressed this covenant. As all that had been stolen was a property consecrated to the Lord, the theft of it to private use was the height of wickedness. They did it secretly, as if they could conceal it from the divine omniscience, and they were ready to say, "The Lord shall not see," or "will not miss so small a matter out of so great a spoil." But they were wrong. They had put the accursed thing among their own goods, as if they were entitled to it, never expecting to be called to account, nor designing to make restitution.

On account of this sin the Israelites could not stand before their foes, because they had fallen under the curse [Joshua 6:18]. And until this curse had been removed from their midst, the Lord would not help them any further.

We have in Achan a lesson which professing Christians sorely need. Covetousness was the sin. It is the sin of the Church today. People are estimated by their wealth. The great aim of life is to get money, or to keep it, or to gain influence and notoriety by spending it. Did anybody ever hear of church discipline being exercised on men who committed Achan's sin? He was stoned to death, but we set our Achans in high places in the church.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE

IN 2 YEARS, READ

EXODUS 17

LUKE 22

THOUGHT

Let not God's blessings and our prayers be impeded by our sins and presumptuousness.

9 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 7:13

LESSON

Sanctify the people

VERSE 13

Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.

Joshua was to take away the curse from the nation. He was to direct the people to sanctify themselves for the following day. And then to cause them to come before God according to their tribes and families, households and men, that the guilty men might be discovered by lot; and to burn whoever was found guilty, with all that he possessed.

What a curse that sin is, in ways and forms, too, which we do not suspect! And yet we are usually so very careless about it. How little pains we take to ascertain its presence, or to drive it away from among us! How little tenderness of conscience we show; how little burning desire to be kept from the accursed thing! And when we turn to our opponents and see sin in them, instead of being grieved, we fall on them savagely to upbraid them, and we hold them up to open scorn. How little we think if they are guilty, that their sin has intercepted the favour of God, and involved not them only, but probably the whole community in trouble!

How unsatisfactory to God must seem the bearing even of the best of us in reference to sin! Do we really think of it as the object of God's abhorrence? Just like how we would cleanse ourselves of a spot of spill we discover on our new clothes, let us waste no time to rid ourselves of the transgressions that are displeasing in the eyes of God.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 18
LUKE 23

THOUGHT

Behold, the Lord's ear is not heavy that it cannot hear, nor His arm shortened that it cannot save. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God.

10 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 7:14-15

LESSON
Personal
accountability

VERSE 15

And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.

The abominable crime had been committed, its dismal and damning effects rippled across the unknown innocents and lives were taken in their unsuccessful attempt to take on Ai. Joshua charged God for the defeat and destruction because all their past victories were clearly and manifestly evidenced by the intervening presence of God, and the impossibility of conquering nations greater and mightier than Israel. Joshua wished he had never crossed Jordan.

The just God had commanded and warned in Joshua 6:18 and now fiery judgement awaits to devour the transgressor for taking the accursed thing, by which he had transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and committed folly in Israel. No room for sympathy with transgression is to be left. The transgressor and all that he had were to be destroyed. No opportunity was left to mourn with “the bereaved” and thus get gentler thoughts of the sin in fellowship with the sufferers. The transgressor and his family, who might have been privy to his guilt, were to be alike stoned with stones, and burnt with fire.

God demanded the guilty one to own up for the crime and cause of trouble, but he hides to escape shame and judgement. The drawing of a lot was the means employed (on all important occasions for appointment to positions of honour or shame) until “the troubler of Israel” was identified, and he stood before all the people as the cause of a national disgrace.

How shall we escape, if “every one of us shall give account of himself to God, but if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” [Romans 14:12; 1 John 1:9]

THOUGHT

God may advance slowly, but His step is sure. Delay is no presumption of final impunity.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 19
LUKE 24

11 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 7:16-19

LESSON

Make confession

VERSE 19

*And Joshua said unto Achan,
My son, give, I pray thee, glory to
the LORD God of Israel, and
make confession unto Him; and
tell me now what thou hast done;
hide it not from me.*

Achan, “the troubler of Israel”, refused to acknowledge his crime, until his sin had found him out. Joshua was ignorant that Achan had secreted spoil, but the searching glances of God went deeper than the most watchful oversight of the leader. Every sin is known to God. Now he has nowhere to hide his sins but to acknowledge them.

It was a notable scene. The people of Israel assemble in solemnity and silence, beholding the national offender, and waits to hear his doom. Whilst every eye is bent upon Achan, Joshua addressed him in affectionate tenderness, grieving over the offence rather than severely censuring it, calling the criminal “my son”, and inviting a full disclosure from his own lips. Out of his own mouth was Achan to be condemned.

All sin is committed against God. To acknowledge, this is the least reparation the sinner can make. It is a sign of a right disposition which indicates that the basis of God’s government remains firm within the sinner’s bosom, though transgression had clouded it for a time. Confession magnifies the broken law and makes it honourable. To confess is, in truth, to “give glory unto God” as the all-seeing God, the revealer of secrets, by an open confession before men of what is already known to Him, though not for His information, yet as essential to His character and law [Pulpit Commentary].

Achan is the type of impenitent sinners. He persists in his sin till the great moment of unveiling comes, as sinners persist in their sin until they are brought to the bar of God’s judgement. Then it is too late to cry for mercy, when it is the time of judgement. We must learn to confess and forsake our sin in time.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 20
JOHN 1

THOUGHT

If thou callest to mind the errors of the day, sleep not without a confession to God, and a hope of pardon. Thus, every morning, and every evening, make up thy accounts with the Almighty God, and thy reckoning will be the less at last (John Bunyan).

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 7:20-21

LESSON

I saw ...I coveted ...

I took ...

VERSE 21

When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

The temptation of Achan is one of upward progression, increasing in strength. First sight is the goodly garment, then the silver, followed by the gold. His greed and lust increased in strength as his look at the spoils increased in riches. "First, it enters by the eye, then it sinks into the heart; then it actuates the hand; and finally, it leads to secrecy and dissimulation, making his whole family partakers of it. 'I saw,' etc. 'I coveted,' etc. 'I took and hid them in the earth.' Thus saith James: 'When lust [evil desire] is conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and when sin is finished, it bringeth forth death'" (Adam Clarke).

Covetousness is a subtle sin, a sin that many cannot so well discern in themselves; as some have the scurvy, but do not know it. This sin can dress itself in the attire of virtue. It is called the 'cloak of covetousness' [1 Thessalonians 2: 5]. It is a sin that wears a cloak, it cloaks itself under the name of frugality and good husbandry. It has many pleas and excuses for itself; more than any other sin: as providing for one's family. The more subtle the sin is, the less discernible it is (Thomas Watson).

Note that the first look is not a sin but to entertain or to continue to look, it is. Therefore, it is our wisdom to suppress the first emotion of sin and to leave it off before it be meddled with. It is easier to suppress the first thought of sin than in the process of it.

 TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE

IN 2 YEARS, READ

EXODUS 21**JOHN 2**

REMINDER

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

– Colossians 3:5-6

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 7:22-25

LESSON

Dreadful consequences
of sin

VERSE 25

And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

The wages of Achan's covetousness was building castles in the air! How different from what he had dreamt of! There was no comfort; no luxury, no farm, no castle ever came of it – only shame, disappointment, death.

By his sin, the two attacks on Ai were rendered necessary, many lives were lost needlessly. The heart of the people was discouraged, and the success of their enterprise imperilled. Then there is the probable corruption of the man's family by his covetous act, the digging and hiding being hardly possible without their knowledge. The disease of covetousness, like a fretting leprosy, spreads immediately to his closed and loved ones. It was an awful penalty of a parent's sin that tends so directly and strongly to corrupt the children. Then, it involves all his family in the penalty of death. The law of Moses was explicit that the child should not be put to death for the father's sin. But here the family was made partakers of his crime, and therefore, they were made partakers of his death, the family share his fate.

How dearly he paid for his greed for silver and gold! How commonly men do this; how much they part with to get what sometimes only hurts them when they gain it! Let not greed be our ruin. Let us also see that those whom God has given us be not harmed by what they see in us. Here the parent's fault involves the family in ruin. Such is too often the case. Let us guard against the possibility of it.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 22
JOHN 3

THOUGHT

Why do the wicked prosper, and the ungodly increase in riches? ... "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end."
– Psalm 73

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 7:26

LESSON

A memorial of sin

VERSE 26

And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

A monument of a great heap of stones was raised, called the valley of Achor (trouble), testifying to a divine abhorrence of sin and its fiery judgement. It was expedient for one family to die, rather than that the whole nation should be disobedient and suffer extinction. Care was taken to preserve the remembrance of it, for warning and instruction to posterity.

Here the side of divine character is revealed. He is shown to be a jealous God, hating sin and taking vengeance upon those who disregard His precepts. "The fierceness of God's anger" may not be such a pleasant object of contemplation as the exceeding riches of the love of God, but it is good for us to think of it in connection with evil, and is part of our notion of a perfect character. The meek and lowly Jesus could kindle into holy indignation at the sight of the hypocrisy and oppression of the scribes and Pharisees.

More than six centuries later the Lord stirred again the pulse of the national feeling by crying through Hosea, "I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope." Still later, Isaiah was taught to sing: "And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for My people that have sought Me."

So careful is Divine mercy ever to leave a place to which sinful men may return in tears, and from which they may presently sing in joy, "We are saved by hope." Note, God leaves the fastenings of the "door of hope" well within reach of the hand of penitence.

THOUGHT

As a memorial of solemn warning, men should read here: "So speedily may sin be committed, so certainly does God behold it, so unerringly may it be revealed, and so bitter and shameful is its end."

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 23
JOHN 4

15 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 8:1-2

LESSON

Fear not ...
Take all the people ...
Arise

VERSE 1

And the LORD said unto Joshua, 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.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 24
JOHN 5

SING

Joshua 8 records the account of the second assault and the conquest of Ai. Joshua and the Israelites had just been defeated in battle by a small city that had only 12,000 residents. But confession and repentance had been made, and now God wanted to remove the fear of the enemy as they prepared for a second attack. He told Joshua, "Fear not, neither be thou dismayed (discouraged)". He assured Joshua of victory. At this time, Joshua must have recalled the same reassurance from Moses in Deuteronomy 31:6, "for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

In our Christian walk, especially in our service for the Lord, we too will face ups and downs, victories and failures. Even giants of faith like Joshua and David encountered failures. But God is faithful. He will not permit His servants to be tempted above that we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it [1 Corinthians 10:13]. Hence, even if we fall, we shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth us with His hand [Psalm 37:24].

As a further assurance; think of the Lord's final words to His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" [John 16:33].

Fierce may be the conflict,
strong may be the foe.
But the King's own army,
none can overthrow.

16 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 8:3-4

LESSON

Be ye all ready ...

VERSE 4

*And he commanded them,
saying, Behold, ye shall lie in
wait against the city,
even behind the city:
go not very far from the city,
but be ye all ready.*

In the battle to retake Ai, Joshua's first manoeuvre was to position an ambush force of thirty thousand soldiers behind the city. He instructed them to be ready; no doubt to spring into action when he gave the command.

Those of us who have gone through national service in the army know that this is a basic requirement of all soldiers. We have to respond immediately to our superior's command. There is no time to argue or debate in the heat of the battle. Likewise, as soldiers in Christ's army, we too need to adopt a posture of readiness. This readiness to obey the Lord's commands is best summed up by the words of the boy Samuel in 1 Samuel 3:10: "Speak; for Thy servant heareth". Think also of the apostle Paul's encounter with the Lord on the road to Damascus. His first words were; "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" [Acts 9:6].

Such an attitude is especially important in these last days before the Lord's return. Shortly before His departure, the Lord spoke several parables to His disciples; such as the parable of the faithful servant in Matthew 24, and the parable of the 10 virgins and the parable of talents in Matthew 25. All have the same message: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" [Matthew 24:44]. So let us heed the words of that famous Fanny Crosby hymn – *Will Jesus Find Us Watching?*

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 25
JOHN 6

THOUGHT

Oh, can we say we are ready, brother?
Ready for the soul's bright home?
Say, will He find you and me still watching;
waiting, waiting when the Lord shall come?

17 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 8:5-17

LESSON

Set up
the ambush

VERSE 7

Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand.

With Achan's sin behind him, Joshua now looked to the future. His dependence on God did not lead him to complacency, expecting victory without effort or risk. He mobilised his troops and followed a careful strategy. It was a different strategy from that used in the conquest of Jericho.

Joshua chose thirty thousand elite soldiers and marched them at night. He positioned a force of five thousand men west of the city between Ai and Bethel as an ambush party and personally led the main force against the city from the north. He explained that he would retreat when the enemy marched out against him – luring them away from Ai. Hoping to wipe out the Israelites, the King of Ai would summon all his troops from the city to give chase. The ambush force would then rise up and take the now unprotected Ai and burn it. This was the command of God, and they were to obey the commands, both God's and Joshua's [v. 8].

The lesson for us is that a victorious life is achieved through obedience; by doing exactly what God instructs. It is not enough to hear the Word of God: a person must obey God. Unlike Joshua, many of us only listen but do not hearken. We frequently hear, and agree with the pastor's exhortation to serve in the church; or to go to the mission fields. Yet, sadly only a small fraction will obey. May today's lesson provoke us to "rise up" and be doers and not just hearers only.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 26
JOHN 7

REMINDER

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. –1 Samuel 15:22b

18 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 8:18-23

LESSON

Trapped
and powerless

VERSE 22

*And the other issued out of
the city against them; so they
were in the midst of Israel,
some on this side, and some on
that side: and they smote them,
so that they let none of them
remain or escape.*

When the men of Ai saw the smoke from the city, they realised that they had been tricked; but “they had no power to flee this way or that way” [v. 20]. They were caught in a classic pincer movement. At just the right time signalled by God Himself, Joshua’s army turned around and attacked from one direction, and the ambush force emerged from the city to attack from another. Thus the Lord gave Israel total victory. The army of Ai was completely annihilated.

Ironically, one of the reasons that contributed to Ai’s defeat was their over-confidence resulting from their earlier victory. Remember this was the same pride that led to Israel’s defeat after a spectacular victory at Jericho. Thus when the army of Ai saw Joshua’s troops retreating, they abandoned caution and gave chase, so falling into the trap that God had laid for them.

As Christians, we are aware that Satan does often appear to win some battles. He tempts believers to sin, causes families to break up and destroys the witness of many. To the watching world, and even to some Christians, it appears that he is on a winning streak. Like Ai’s troops coming out of the city, Satan is on the attack, fragmenting the Christian church and causing us to lose ground. But even while he is enjoying our plight, God is planning his demise. If we could see the big picture, we would realise that God is moving His troops into position to someday wipe out Satan’s evil forces. That surely is cause for rejoicing.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 27
JOHN 8

SING

Faith is the victory!
Faith is the victory!
O glorious victory
that overcomes the world

19 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 8:24-27

LESSON

Finish the job

VERSE 26

For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

This last part of Joshua's mission was probably the most difficult. But as any faithful lieutenant, he had to carry out his commander's orders. In this case it was to kill all twelve thousand inhabitants of Ai. It is only natural for the reader to ask why a loving God would issue such a cruel decree. But we must not forget that the God we worship is a merciful and longsuffering God. But He is also a righteous God who hates sin. Centuries earlier, He had told Abraham that his seed, the Israelites, would be in Egypt for 400 years because "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" [Genesis 15:16]. Now, as the Israelites returned under Joshua, these people had finally reached the point where they were irredeemably wicked; beyond repentance, beyond ever turning to God.

Remember what God's Word says about Him and our relationship to Him. He is the potter and we are the clay. The clay cannot question what the potter does. His ways and thoughts are higher than ours; so we can never fully comprehend them. This is not the first time that He is judging sin and rebellion. During the flood of Noah's day, millions died; and in the coming Great Tribulation many more will be judged. As God's people, we just need to "trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean not unto our own understanding".

Finally, we ought to view the battle at Ai as our war with sin. Just as Joshua would not compromise with his mortal enemy, we mustn't either.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 28
JOHN 9

THOUGHT

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. – Isaiah 55:7

20 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 8:28

LESSON

A heap of ash

VERSE 28

And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day.

After Israel had meted out judgement against Achan and his family in the valley of Achor, the Lord gave Ai into the hands of Joshua. Even though Ai was a small city, and appeared to be easy to conquer, the king of Ai was able to defeat the Israelites the first time. The king was indeed a cunning person, but most importantly, the Israelites failed because of Achan's sin, which needed to be dealt with. Once this had been done, and Joshua was again ready to conquer Ai, God gave Joshua the wisdom to lure the people of Ai from their fortified city, by pretending to be running from them, and catching them by surprise from the rear.

After the victory, Joshua burnt Ai and made it a heap for ever. In Deuteronomy 13:12-16, God commanded the Israelites that if any of their cities were to go after other gods, the city is to be destroyed by fire, down to a heap, and never to be built up again. Such is the severity of the wrath of God upon those who sin against Him.

We can glean a precious lesson here and apply it to our walk with God. While we dwell in this sinful earth, we are not perfect even though we are chosen by God to be His children. There will be occasions whereby sins may darken our lives. The only thing to deal with it is, cast it into the fire, so to speak, and never to revisit it again. Get right with God and He will "shew thee mercy, have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee".

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 29
JOHN 10

THOUGHT

"O to grace how great a debtor, daily I'm constrained to be! Let Thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to Thee." – Robert Robinson.

21 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 8:29

LESSON

A memorial
of defeat

VERSE 29

*And the king of Ai he
hanged on a tree until eventide:
and as soon as the sun was
down, Joshua commanded that
they should take his carcase
down from the tree, and cast
it at the entering of the gate
of the city, and raise thereon
a great heap of stones, that
remaineth unto this day.*

After defeating Ai, Joshua hanged the king of Ai upon a tree, and left his body there until sunset. Afterwards, Joshua cast the king's body at the city gate, and placed upon it a great heap of stones, as a memorial of Ai's defeat. But it is not just a memorial of the defeat of the king of Ai. It is also a memorial of the Israelites' initial defeat at Ai's hands. It serves to remind Joshua and the Israelites the consequences of sinning against God, of going against God's commandments, not to take of the spoils of war if God does not allow it.

Having said that, it is also a memorial of God's mercy to the Israelites. God has commanded that if the Israelites sin, they will suffer the consequences, but if they repent, He will show them mercy, and have compassion upon them. He will even multiply them, if they turn back to Him again. Such is the love of our God who gave His only Begotten Son to redeem us from our sins.

We can glean precious lessons from today's reading. We should never forget God's warnings against sin, and we should never give in to the temptations to sin. What are the sins that you have defeated? Let them be a memorial to yourself of this. And let it be a reminder also of God's faithfulness, mercy and love toward us. He knows our weaknesses and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but with the temptation make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 30
JOHN 11

MEDITATION

Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 8:30-31

LESSON

Worship and sacrifice

VERSE 30

*Then Joshua built an altar
unto the Lord God of Israel
in mount Ebal.*

The victory against Ai was a major milestone for Joshua and the Israelites. After their first military defeat, they experienced the renewal of God's succour and the blessings after dealing with their internal sins and strife. Joshua commemorated this victory by building an altar unto the Lord God of Israel on Mount Ebal. The altar was built according to the specifications given by Moses. It was to be built from whole stones, which have not been worked on by any man's hands. Once the altar was completed, they worshipped the Lord by sacrificing burnt offerings and peace offerings, also according to the book of the law of Moses.

In the midst of the joy of victory, Joshua did not forget that it was the Lord who gave them the victory. It is therefore appropriate that he should build an altar for worship and sacrifice. Just as Jacob built altars where he met with the Lord, so did Joshua. And Joshua made sacrifices of burnt offerings and peace offerings, a token of his love for the Lord for all that He had done for him and the Israelites.

We can glean lessons on worship and sacrifice from Joshua. He put God first in all his achievements, and attributed them to the Lord. In Joshua's heart, only the Lord God is worthy of his worship and adoration. We should also put God first above all else. Let God be our Master in the altar of our hearts. Trust also that in everything that we do, in our sacrificing of our time and talents, God will greatly multiply them for the glory of His name.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 31
JOHN 12

SING

Perfect submission, all is at rest.
I in my Saviour am happy and blest.
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.
This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.

23 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 8:32-35

LESSON
Recommitment
to the Law

VERSE 32

*And he wrote there upon the
stones a copy of the law of
Moses, which he wrote
in the presence of
the children of Israel.*

After building the altar and worshipping the Lord, Joshua wrote a copy of the Law of Moses upon the stones. This he did in the presence of all the children of Israel. And he began to read all the words of the Law, including the blessings and cursings that were within the written Law. It was noted that Joshua read every one of the Law, and not a single one was missed. Such is the faithfulness of Joshua in keeping every word of the Lord and teaching them to His people.

It is good for Joshua to re-establish the Law after successfully completing his military campaign. The Law of Moses as given by the Lord God is the heart of the nation of Israel. After falling into sin and facing defeat in the hands of the enemy as a result of sin, the Israelites regained victory by dealing with their sins and returning to the worship of the one true and living God. Joshua built a memorial of their defeat and an altar of worship to fix the hearts of his people upon God again. And a close walk with God is impossible without the reading of God's Word regularly.

We can glean precious lessons from Joshua's example. Let us keep close to God through regular and daily reading of His Word. Without them, we are like a ship without a rudder, a kite without a string, going whichever way that the wind blows. Let us therefore make it a priority to re-commit ourselves to God and to walk close to Him every hour of every day.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 32
JOHN 13

THOUGHT

“Thy Word is like an armory, where soldiers may repair. And find, for life's long battle day, all needful weapons there.” – Edwin Hodder.

24 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 8:32, 34

LESSON

Joshua wrote
and read all

VERSE 34

*And afterward he read
all the words of the law,
the blessings and cursings,
according to all that is written
in the book of the Law.*

Joshua's building of the altar to the LORD was Moses' clear instruction in his farewell speech to the Israelites [Deuteronomy 27:1-8]. Moreover, Joshua has now marched them to Shechem, which is between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, for the purpose of rededicating themselves before the LORD. This special service of renewal of their covenant to the LORD must certainly be a dramatic one.

In building the altar, Joshua was careful to heed God's specific command not to apply any tool to the stones picked up in the fields [Exodus 20:25]. No human work was to be associated with it for that would immediately contaminate any sacrifice laid upon it. It would lose its purity and thus would not be accepted by the holy God. As such, it would be a plain uncut stone without any human design and decoration.

And on this same stone, Joshua wrote the Law which Moses had earlier written to the children of Israel. This will serve as a reminder to them of their commitment with God, Who had hitherto proven Himself faithful and true to His promises. In fact, just as God had promised Abraham long ago, He has now brought them into this Promised Land. Thus, it is only right that they obey Him fully and unreservedly as to all His commandments.

God will not deny Himself but will always show Himself trustworthy and faithful. He will never fail in the things that He has promised to do for us when we obey and trust Him [2 Timothy 2:13].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 33
JOHN 14

PRAYER

Holy Father, thank You that You have never failed us in all that You have promised in Your holy Word. Amen!

25 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 8:35

LESSON

Giving attendance
to the Word

VERSE 35

*There was not a word of all
that Moses commanded, which
Joshua read not before all the
congregation of Israel, with
the women, and the little ones,
and the strangers that were
conversant among them.*

The people were divided into two parts. On mount Gerizim, we have the descendants of Rachel and those of Leah. On the other mount Ebal were placed the posterity of the two secondary wives, Zilpah and Bilhah, with those of Reuben and Zebulun, Leah's youngest son [Deuteronomy 27:11-13]. The former was assigned the more pleasant task of pronouncing the benedictions; while the latter was committed the painful but necessary duty of pronouncing the maledictions.

Joshua then read the Law to the people, together with the blessings and curses, every word that were commanded of him by his predecessor Moses [Deuteronomy 27:1-5]. This must have been a much larger portion of the Law that Joshua read than the brief summary inscribed on the stone tablets. Thus, both the eyes and the ears of the people were bombarded with the Word of God. This was with the intention to leave an indelible impression upon their minds and their hearts.

It is to be noted in this service that among the Israelites there were also all the foreigners, both adults and children. None should be exempted from hearing of the Word of God, whether young or old, man or woman. All who are capable of learning must come to be taught out of the Word of God.

Let every one of us seek to improve with every opportunity available to acquaint ourselves with every counsel of God's Word, so that we may do all of His holy will in our life.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 34
JOHN 15

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, incline our ears and eyes to Your holy Word so that we may seek to fulfil Your will daily. Amen.!

26 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 9:1-2

LESSON

Confederation
of the wicked

VERSE 2

*That they gathered themselves
together, to fight with Joshua
and with Israel,
with one accord.*

The victories of Israel over Jericho and Ai must have been blazed abroad to the many inhabitants living in this region of Canaan. They must have felt threatened by the hostilities of the Israelites. These Canaanite kings have reasons to fear when they realised that their God had delivered Jericho and Ai to them. The varied expressions here of the inhabitants of the land included those to the utmost western and northern borders. Thus it was obvious, that this was a very great confederation of nations and people. All are set against the people of God!

These heathenistic nations are now ripe for God's vengeance, therefore they are left to be hardened and blinded so that their destruction would be of their own accord [Genesis 15:16]. God has made it very clear to the Israelites through Moses that these idolatrous inhabitants are His enemies and therefore they will suffer His wrath. Thus, He will send His "Angel (who) shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off" [Exodus 23:23].

God's enemies are also His people's enemies, and if they hate God, they will also hate us. No matter how divided these nations may be among themselves, they will unanimously oppose God and His truth. And when we see the world so joined together against the truth, surely the believers should also overlook their own trivial differences in non-essentials, and laying their disputes aside, join hearts and hands to fight against their common enemy.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 35
JOHN 16

PRAYER

Holy Father, help us to join our hearts and hands with You to resist Your enemies who fight against You and us. Amen!

27 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 9:3;
2 Samuel 21:1-9

LESSON The Gibeonites

Joshua 9:3
*And when the inhabitants of
Gibeon heard what Joshua had
done unto Jericho and to Ai.*

The Gibeonites were a group of people, descended from the Amorites [2 Samuel 21:2]. It was a large city a few miles north-west of Jerusalem. It was also one of the royal cities which is far greater than Ai. It was said that all the men thereof were mighty men. Yet as the Israelites made rapid conquests, these Gibeonites found it more expedient to submit to the power and the terms of their invaders. And so while the nearby Canaanites united to form a large army to fight Israel, they chose an approach of submission and humility. They realised they could not fight against the God of Israel.

And in their allying with the Israelites, the city was later besieged by a coalition of five other Amorite kings. However, they appealed to Joshua for help, who led the subsequent victory over the Amorites amid miraculous circumstances until the Amorites were completely defeated [Joshua 10:1-15]. Thus the Gibeonites survived but they have to serve as slaves to the Israelites for generations to come.

Later, we see how God blessed them richly. It became a priestly city where the Ark of the Covenant once stayed there during the days of David and Solomon [1 Chronicles 16:39-40; 21:29]. And at least one of David's mighty men was a Gibeonite [1 Chronicles 12:4]. God spoke to Solomon at Gibeon [1 Kings 3:5]. They were among those who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem with Nehemiah [Nehemiah 3:7; 7:25]. These are examples of the great things God can do with people who are sinners, but who come to Him in humility and love.

PRAYER

Holy Father, may we always come to You in total reliance and humility, for without You we are nothing and can do nothing. Amen!

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 36
JOHN 17

28 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 9:4-13

LESSON The deceit of the Gibeonites

VERSE 9

*And they said unto him,
From a very far country
thy servants are come
because of the name of the
LORD thy God: for we have
heard the fame of Him, and
all that He did in Egypt.*

Being alarmed by what they heard in the destruction of Jericho, these Gibeonites will try to deceive Joshua into making a peace treaty with them. A delegation came and tried to make Joshua think they had come on a journey of hundreds of miles. In reality, Gibeon was no more than 20 miles away from the Israelite camp at Gilgal. The ruse was elaborate, even down to carrying dry, mouldy bread. And it worked.

Plainly, the Gibeonites had lied to Joshua. But despite their lies, they have a proper admiration and honour for the God of Israel. They heard of the fame of the LORD and that He fights for Israel, they knew it would be useless to oppose this nation. They knew that Israel, with God's help, could wipe them out, and so they preferred slavery to death. And although Israel was forbidden to make peace with any of the tribes of Canaan [Exodus 23:23-24], the leaders of Israel looked at the evidence and trusted their own judgement – without asking the Lord what to do. The result of Israel's hasty decision was that they couldn't fulfil God's command concerning all the inhabitants of the land.

Nevertheless the rulers knew they had to do what was right and honourable before God: keeping their oath, even if it was a bad oath. This is a mark of godliness to hold to an oath, even when it is difficult. God honours those who fear Him and swear to their own hurt and do not change [Psalm 15:4].

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 37
JOHN 18

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we come to You as needy people and there is nothing we can offer to You but our heartfelt gratitude for Your mercies and grace. Amen!

29 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 9:14-15

LESSON

The result of
prayerlessness

VERSE 15a

*And Joshua made peace
with them, and made a league
with them, to let them live.*

By trusting what their physical senses and human logic told them, Joshua and the princes of Israel made a covenant to let these men live. The Israelites had been told to destroy the inhabitants of the land God had promised to them. This was on the basis of the evil lives and practices of the Canaanites. The God-ordained destruction was to protect the Israelites from adopting the idolatrous living of the Canaanites [Deuteronomy 7:1-6]. Such is God's holiness and His desire that His chosen be holy [1 Peter 1:16].

Yet the Israelites fell victims to a cunningly devised plan of the Gibeonites. How could this have happened? Did not the God of Israel promise He would be with them and guide them?

Joshua made peace on circumstantial evidence instead of asking "counsel at the mouth of the LORD" [v. 14] who would surely have unmasked the deception. The error of Joshua and the leaders of the congregation was in prayerlessness. In trusting their eyes, ears and head more than the Almighty God who gave these faculties to them, they entered into deception. Prayerlessness led to a presumptuous sin.

Do we sometimes enter in sin because we trust our God-given faculties and talents and not God Himself? This can happen even if we sincerely do not mean to disobey God. God wants to guard us against deception and lies by our continually submitting everything to Him in prayer [1 Thessalonians 5: 17] and examination before His Word [1 Thessalonians 5:21]. When we forget how good and great God is and how weak we truly are, we forget to pray.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 38
JOHN 19

THOUGHT

Seek the LORD and His strength, seek His face continually. – 1 Chronicles 16:11

30 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 9:16-21

LESSON

The scam exposed

VERSE 18

And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes.

Imagine the horror and shame among the Israelites on discovering they had been fooled. Their self-confidence resulted in being unable to fulfil God's command. Such is sin: having entered into it, it wants to draw you in further and multiplies itself. All sorts of sins may hide away in one sin (Spurgeon). The fall of Adam and Eve illustrates this [Genesis 3]. Eve had an imperfect knowledge of God's instruction, was tempted by the seed of pride placed by the serpent and had coveted the forbidden fruit. Idolatry! [Colossians 3:5]; the false promise of power (elevating self to be like God) caused her to consume the fruit, and to give to her husband who ate. This in turn resulted in sinful mankind blaming a holy and just God and in death.

Praise and thank God that His grace is greater than our sin [Romans 5:20-21]! Only through Christ's work at Calvary's cross and God's continuing grace can we overcome sin. Joshua and the leaders stood fast against the murmuring congregation. God's Word is silent but they must have repented and turned to Him for wisdom for the situation.

Having made an oath in God's name, to then attack the Gibeonites would be swearing falsely and profaning the Almighty's great name [Leviticus 19:12]. Keeping the oath honoured God. Oaths are binding [Numbers 30:2] and to be feared [Ecclesiastes 9:2].

They were vindicated. About 400 years later, King David learnt from God, that a famine was punishment for King Saul violating this oath [2 Samuel 21:1-6]. Seven of Saul's family paid with their lives.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 39
JOHN 20

THOUGHT

Have we honoured our oaths? Marriage vows? Church membership vows?

31 MARCH

BIBLE LESSON

Joshua 9:22-27

LESSON

Keeping the promise

VERSE 25

*And now, behold,
we are in thine hand: as it
seemeth good and right unto
thee to do unto us, do.*

The Gibeonites, fearing destruction by God's people, tried to seek peace with God by coming before God's mediator, Joshua (whose name means "Jehovah is Salvation"). They recognised their doom without a covenant to identify with Israel. They knew their need for mercy. However, their methods were deceitful, and contrast with Rahab's frank confession of faith in God which was an open plea for mercy in submission [Joshua 2:11]. Nonetheless, God is merciful to those who come to Him even without a perfect faith [John 6:37].

Note Joshua's godly example: how he sought to [1] protect and honour God's name, [2] avoid God's wrath and judgement (by keeping the oath), and now [3] rebuked those who deceived the Israelites and guarded against future deception.

He publicly rebuked the Gibeonites and meted out judgement. Their deception had made them enemies and they would suffer the judgement of subjection and service. They would serve in menial duties of the Tabernacle. This was also God's plan to protect the Israelites from further lies and deception. Daily serving in the Tabernacle, the Gibeonites were confronted with God's presence, and to focus their lives and tasks upon the LORD and His worship. They were prevented from spreading false worship among the Israelites. God's righteous influence would influence them instead.

Scriptures do not indicate the Gibeonites giving the Israelites any further trouble. Some returned from the Babylonian Exile with the Jews [Ezra 2:43-58] and later helped rebuild the walls of Jerusalem [Nehemiah 3:7, 7:25]. This suggests they had become followers of the true and living God.

THOUGHT

We worship a merciful, gracious, all-wise and all-powerful God Who has not judged us according to our sins, and can work things to His glory despite man's sins.

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE
IN 2 YEARS, READ
EXODUS 40
JOHN 21

