

## READ

Amos 5

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

## Our great God

## VERSE 8

*Seek Him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is His name.*

This third message of Amos was a lamentation with reference to the nation of Israel. He urged the people to denounce their wicked ways and seek Jehovah. It was only when they sought the Lord that they would be saved. Otherwise, destruction would befall them.

Our God is an awesome God and there is none like Him. No man can understand the complexities that make the whole of creation work. Sadly, man has not given credit to the Creator but has come up with theories that deny God.

What is our response when we think about God's wondrous works? We should be encouraged by the fact that God is in charge not only of great galaxies but also of our tiny lives. Even the very hairs on our heads are numbered. He values us more than the sparrow and knows our infirmities.

God made each of us unique—our features, our characteristics and our abilities. And He is personally involved in the very details of our lives.

**THOUGHT** God is in sovereign control of all that happens in and around us.

16 NOVEMBER

## READ

Luke 1:1–38

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

## The problem of doubt

## VERSE 18

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

Zacharias had the faith to keep on praying but when the answer came he did not have the faith to accept it. Every thinking person has struggled with the problem of doubt. It is easy to yield to disappointment if God has not answered as we thought He should have, and disappointment can quickly lead to doubt.

The biblical response is not to waver in unbelief when God doesn't answer our prayer our way. God is sovereign. We must believe that He will do what He says, even if His way takes a different form than we had expected. Doubt need never be fatal. We can recover if we will submit to God's gracious discipline.

Luke wants us to see that God is faithful to His promises. The doubts that we have clearly show that we need a Saviour because we are sinners. Only sinners doubt the all-powerful, gracious, sovereign God Who has shown so many times that He is trustworthy.

When you are in doubt, call out to Him to save you from your sin. He is mighty and will save all who cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner" [Luke 18:13].

**THOUGHT** What God promises is so much beyond human ability that it is almost unbelievable.

## READ

Amos 6

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

**The dangers of luxury and false security**

## VERSE 1

*Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!*

Amos reminded both Judah (Zion) and Israel (Samaria) of their sins. The focus here is on their over-confidence in themselves and indifference toward God. They regarded themselves as “chief of the nations” as their geographical locations gave them apparent security. Moreover, they were wealthy and strong in their defence.

However, God thought otherwise of their “success”. Through Amos, God pronounced “woe” to both nations because the people were spiritually corrupt. False confidence and complacency among the people were built on lies and pride. Like the church of Laodicea, the people considered themselves “rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing” [Revelation 3:17] when, in reality, they had lost all that mattered in their spiritual life. The people thought, “It can’t happen here!” In reality, three judgements awaited them—death [v. 9–10], destruction [v. 11–13] and defeat [v. 14].

Complacency is dangerous because it leads us to rely on something besides God. When God sees His people depending on their self-sufficiency, He sends trials to rebuke and remind them that they need Him. God prefers the humble, the broken and even the remorseful.

Our confidence must be built on Christ the solid rock, nothing else.

THOUGHT We have to learn to trust God one day at a time.

## 17 NOVEMBER

## READ

Luke 1:39–80

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

**How to receive from God**

## VERSE 53

*He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away.*

God satisfies the spiritually hungry but sends the self-satisfied away empty. This is the spiritual principle: God humbles the proud and exalts the humble. Most people think that God helps those who help themselves. This is human pride against the biblical principle that God helps those who come to the end of themselves and cast all their cares upon Him.

Many Christians buy into the view that you have to believe in yourself. But Scripture states, “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord” [Jeremiah 17:5]. To trust in yourself is to turn away from trusting God. Trusting in God means that before we can do anything for Him, we must recognise our own inability and rely on Him for His grace and strength, so that He gets the glory. That is the principle Mary expressed in Luke 1:53.

God sends none away empty except those who are full of themselves. He will satisfy the hunger of anyone who acknowledges his spiritual need and seeks Him. Hunger after God and His righteousness and He promises that He will fill you with good things.

THOUGHT The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing. – Psalm 34:10

## READ

Amos 7

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

**God's standard**

## VERSE 7

*Thus He shewed me:  
and, behold, the Lord  
stood upon a wall made  
by a plumbline, with a  
plumbline in His hand.*

The last three chapters of Amos deal with Israel's future and mention five visions of judgement. Chapter 7 deals with God's judgements of famine caused by locusts [v. 1–3], fire [v. 4–6] and the plumbline, leading to utter ruin [v. 7–9].

Amos interceded for the people in the first two visions and God relented. In the third vision, Israel was out of line and had to be destroyed. The people's sin saw them setting up high places and sanctuaries where they worshipped in ways that were abominable to God. They had failed to match God's standard. Destruction was at their doorstep.

The plumbline is a tool that is used to determine if a wall is vertical. God's Law is the standard by which God measures His people to see how faithful they have been in obeying His Word, and whether they are of good character and conduct [Isaiah 28:17].

God is ever ready to forgive but it does not mean He will always tolerate those who are incorrigible and unrepentant. God has many ways of humbling a wilful sinner. The time will come when those who have always been spared will no longer be spared.

THOUGHT If God were to measure your life today using His plumbline, how would you fare?

18 NOVEMBER

## READ

Luke 2

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

**Don't waste your life**

## VERSE 37

*And she was a widow of  
about fourscore and four  
years, which departed  
not from the temple, but  
served God with fastings  
and prayers night and  
day.*

Anna was married for only seven years before she was widowed. She had been a widow ever since. No doubt Anna had experienced a difficult life. Yet she did not turn her back on God. In fact, God declares that He has a special concern for orphans and widows. "A father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows, is God in His holy habitation" [Psalm 68:5].

Anna took refuge under God's protective care. Her trials drove her to deeper devotion to God, not away from Him. She spent her time worshipping, fasting and praying. Anna filled her life with God. God was enough for her.

Even though the ministry of fasting and prayer may not be your area of gift, you still should set aside time to seek the Lord as Anna did. Spend time in devotion to the Lord. A life devoted to anything else, no matter how noble or how highly praised in the world, is a life ultimately wasted.

Whatever you do for a living, make sure that devotion for Jesus Christ is at the heart of why you are living. To live for anything else is to waste your life.

THOUGHT A life devoted to God is a life well spent.

## READ

Amos 8

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

**Be not deceived**

## VERSE 2

*And He said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon My people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more.*

It was the end of the road for the wicked people of Israel. Amos was shown a basket of summer fruit—symbolising the end of harvest. This is a play on words [v. 2] as the Hebrew word for “summer” or “ripe” is similar to the word “end”. The end of harvest had come for the farmers and so had the end of Israel come, through God’s judgement. Israel was ripe for destruction. For a long time, God had spared them but now His patience had run out.

One of God’s attributes is His long-suffering, as seen in the account of Noah, where God waited 120 years before sending the flood. Despite opportunities to repent of their wicked ways, the people were busy eating and drinking, enjoying themselves. By the time they had realised their folly, it was too late. The door of the Ark had shut.

There is much wickedness in the world today. The Bible warns us that the end times are near; the signs are all around us. When God pours out His judgement, there is no stopping Him.

Do not take for granted the seemingly good times the world is enjoying. God’s judgement will come in due time.

**THOUGHT** When we focus on the wrong things, we miss the main thing that life is all about.

## 19 NOVEMBER

## READ

Luke 3

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

**True and false repentance**

## VERSE 7

*Then said He to the multitude that came forth to be baptised of Him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*

When we see Scripture like this, it is easy to be offended because it hits us directly at our own shortcomings. If we are offended and respond defensively, we will go away like the Pharisees and Sadducees did.

There are three possible responses to a straightforward message like this. Some will be offended and walk away without any repentance. They will face God’s coming wrath. Others will be superficially repentant and will put on the cosmetics of outward change, but they will not honestly face the corruption of their hearts. They, too, will face God’s coming wrath, probably with great surprise. The third response is to be truly repentant, to realise the sinfulness of your heart, to turn to God and appeal to Him for a new heart and a clean conscience through the blood of Christ. These will go on to grow fruits of repentance.

The fearsomeness of the judgement is described by the word “wrath”. Who can endure the wrath of God? Who can be thrown into the Lake of Fire without terrible consequence? Just because His judgement is delayed does not mean that it will not happen.

**THOUGHT** True repentance reveals itself by bearing good fruit.

## READ

Amos 9

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

**The restoration of God's people**

## VERSE 15

*And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.*

The concluding chapter of Amos has three parts: judgement, sifting and blessing. The scene at the sanctuary of Bethel was an abomination to the Lord. The Lord would not let anyone go unpunished. God would sift the false from the true so that not one true worshipper would be lost.

Amos ends his prophecy with the comforting promise that Israel shall be planted, protected and never again pulled out from her land. This prophecy [v. 15] might not have been fulfilled yet. As history shows, Israel had been sacked by the Assyrians, then by the Babylonians, the Medo-Persians, the Greeks and the Romans. Since then, they have been scattered all over the nations. Though the Jewish nation has been restored, they have no king, priest, temple or sacrifice.

But one day, God will establish the kingdom that He has promised. When Christ the Messiah returns, the separation between Israel and Judah will be healed.

Isn't it encouraging to know that God always keeps His promises? One day, He will bring all who are His to be with Him in heaven for eternity. What an encouraging prospect!

THOUGHT "The future is as bright as the promises of God!"

– Adoniram Judson (1788–1850), a missionary to Burma

20 NOVEMBER

## READ

Luke 4

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

**Be wise to the scheme of Satan**

## VERSE 2

*Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days He did eat nothing; and when they were ended, He afterward hungered.*

To live in this world means that you will encounter temptation. Some don't even try to fight it. Others want to be delivered from temptation. If we want to be godly, we must learn to resist the temptations that come at us from the world, the flesh and the devil.

We can be tempted to evil by our own sinful desires from within or by Satan from without. Jesus did not have a sinful nature. So He was never incited to sin in the same way that we are. God never tempts anyone, but temptation is also a test that God uses to reveal what is in our hearts. Here was Satan tempting Jesus from without, but the result proved that Jesus was the obedient Son of God Who would not put God to the test.

Christ conquered Satan in His hour of greatest weakness. This proves that He is the righteous Son of God, mighty to save all who call upon Him. If we trust in Him as Saviour and walk in His strength each day, we can overcome temptation when it hits.

THOUGHT Temptations, unlike opportunities, will always give you many second chances.

## READ

<i>Obadiah 1</i>
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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

**Promise of deliverance**

## VERSE 17

*But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.*

The book of Obadiah is the shortest of all the books of the Old Testament. The first part of this book is an indictment against Edom and their offences against Jacob [v. 1–16]. The second emphasises the eventual restoration of the Jews and their flourishing state [v. 17–21]. It shows the truth of the downfall of pride and the uplifting of the humble.

Thank God for His omniscience in knowing the end from the beginning. God’s children need not despair and give up hope in times of trials. Just remember to rest in the Almighty God for His divine intervention to deliver us. Our Lord always vindicates His own.

Whenever we feel discouraged, the Lord is always there to uplift us. Whatever our problems may be—being bullied in school, facing uncertainty in our job—God will vindicate us in His time.

What is troubling you at this moment? Do not fear any threats from anyone. May all persecutors and the persecuted be warned that the trials of the righteous will soon end. Therefore, be sure to trust in God’s promise of His deliverance because He is a covenant-keeping God Who always protects His own.

THOUGHT He will hold me fast.

## 21 NOVEMBER

## READ

<i>Luke 5</i>
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TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

**Help our friends find forgiveness**

## VERSE 19

*And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.*

Luke draws a contrast between the Pharisees and the men who brought their friend to Jesus. The Pharisees were there for the purpose of finding fault with Jesus. The men came as seekers who realised that they had a friend with a problem that only Jesus could fix. Even though they encountered obstacles, they persevered by faith until they received from Jesus what they had come for. The Pharisees went away empty.

If you come to church as a proud skeptic, watching for something you don’t agree with to pounce on, you will go away convinced that you are right and that Jesus has nothing to offer you. But if you will come to Jesus as needy as the man with palsy, believing that Jesus truly can forgive you of your sins and reconcile you to the Holy God, you will go home forgiven, rejoicing and glorifying God.

An African proverb says, “There is only one crime worse than murder on the desert, and that is to know where the water is and not tell.” We who know Jesus know where the living water is. Let us tell our friends, so that they can find forgiveness.

THOUGHT While we cannot force the Gospel on people, we should communicate the urgency of eternal matters.

## READ

## Jonah 1

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

## Jonah running

## VERSE 16

*Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.*

Chapter 1 opens with Jonah's disobedience against God's calling. Instead of heading for Nineveh, Jonah fled to Tarshish [v. 1–3]. To admonish Jonah, God sent a storm to stop his flight [v. 4–7]. The mariners' discourse with Jonah revealed their religious background [v. 8–12]. Jonah was miraculously preserved from imminent death [v. 13–17].

Jonah's miraculous preservation in the belly of the fish is a type of Christ. Divine grace towards sinners can be seen in God's dealings with the Ninevites. Throughout Scripture, we read of God's grace upon men. Beginning right from His judgement during the time of Noah to the end times, God's grace is given freely to all who will receive it.

We also read of the goodness and mercy of God as contrasted with the rebellious and peevish impatience of His servant, Jonah. We may wonder at Jonah's affront to disobey God's direct and clear command. However, there may be areas in our lives where, like Jonah, we choose to go our own way and do what we like.

Divine providence may seemingly have opened doors for Jonah, yet "the ready way is not always the right way" (Matthew Henry). How do you respond to God's will?

PRAYER Help me to do Thy will readily.

22 NOVEMBER

## READ

## Luke 6

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

## Obedience is not optional

## VERSE 46

*And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*

Christianity is not a system of rules that you have decided you will start working on. It is a personal relationship. You must hear Jesus' words, which is growing in your knowledge and understanding of His teachings, as revealed in the Bible. If you are not daily feeding on God's Word, you are living according to the desires of the flesh.

As you read and study your Bible, your aim should not be simply to fill your head with knowledge. The bottom line for biblical knowledge is that you will please God by loving Him and loving others as He commands. You apply Scripture to your life. It means continually examining ourselves in soul-searching obedience, down to our very thoughts, motives and attitudes.

How then should we live? If you know that a flood will certainly hit your area in the near future, you check the foundation of your home. If you are living in daily obedience to Jesus on the heart level, your house will stand. However, if you call Him "Lord" but you are living for self, you had better start building on the rock!

THOUGHT We are saved by grace through faith, but the faith that saves always results in good works.

## READ

Jonah 2

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

## Jonah praying

## VERSE 9

*But I will sacrifice unto  
Thee with the voice of  
thanksgiving; I will pay  
that that I have vowed.  
Salvation is of the LORD.*

Verses 1–9 show us when and where Jonah prayed. Take note of whom Jonah prayed to, as well as the content of his prayer. Verse 9b is a quotation from Psalms 3:8 and 37:39, emphasising the central theme of the Bible. Verse 10 reveals the power of God in miraculously delivering Jonah from certain death.

When a believer is out of the will of God, there is only one way for him to go—down. This was what happened to Jonah. Notice the words “went down” in Jonah 1:3, 5 and Jonah 2:6. It must have been a horrible experience for the prophet.

However, it is not too late when we remember to turn back to the Lord. God forgave Jonah’s rebellion and was willing to use Him to minister to the Ninevites.

This change of Jonah’s attitude from running to praying is an indication of God’s power at work. Do you realise the impact of God’s enabling when you leave everything to Him? How is your prayer life? Praying does to the spirit what breathing does for the physical body.

PRAYER Teach me to be more prayerful, O Lord.

## 23 NOVEMBER

## READ

Luke 7

TO COMPLETE THE BIBLE IN TWO YEARS

## LESSON

## Compassion for the lost

## VERSE 14

*And He came and  
touched the bier: and they  
that bare him stood still.  
And He said, Young man,  
I say unto thee, Arise.*

This account of Jesus raising the young man to life shows us that the life-giving word of Christ is a message of hope and power in a world of despair and weakness. The Gospel of Jesus Christ offers true hope and real power in this hurting world. Many, even Christians, struggle with personal problems. A preacher said, “Preach to the suffering, and you will never lack a congregation. There is a broken heart in every pew.” Sometimes we feel like the guy who saw some light at the end of the tunnel but then he realised that it was a train coming at him. That is false hope! We need true hope.

We must always go about doing our Father’s business. The Gospel is the life-giving word of Christ, a message of hope in a world of despair, a message of power in a world of weakness. Be an effective witness for Christ. You never know what can come from God imparting life to a single sinner through your witness. Our job as witnesses is to cut holes in the darkness of this hopeless world with the good news that Jesus came to give new life through His Word.

THOUGHT Evangelism is not the job of a salesman who persuades people to believe in Christ.