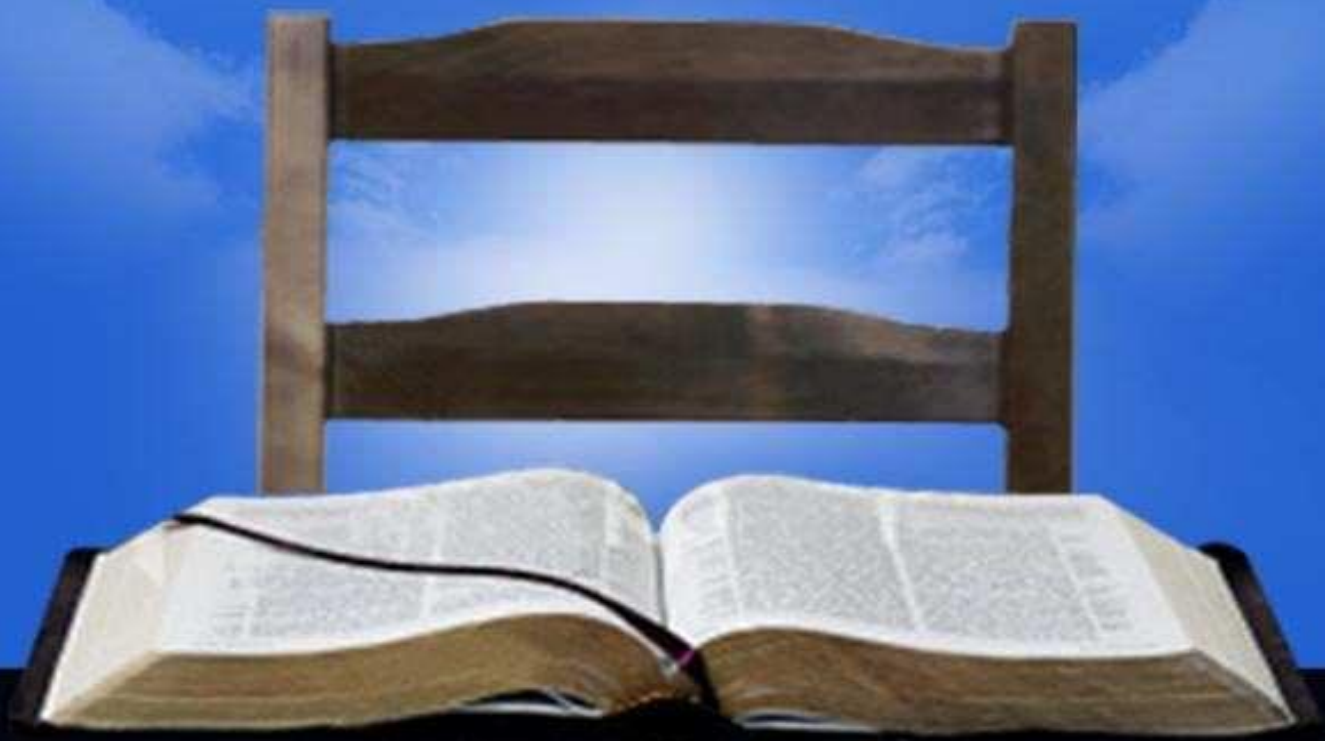




THE BIBLE BOOK BY BOOK



Self Study Guide

THE BIBLE BOOK BY BOOK

OLD TESTAMENT SELF STUDY GUIDE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Permissions	Page 003
Instructions for the Student	Page 005
Lesson 01 The Bible	Page 006
Lesson 02 Genesis	Page 012
Lesson 03 Exodus	Page 017
Lesson 04 Leviticus	Page 023
Lesson 05 Numbers	Page 028
Lesson 06 Deuteronomy	Page 033
Lesson 07 Joshua	Page 037
Lesson 08 Judges	Page 042
Lesson 09 Ruth	Page 046
Lesson 10 1 Samuel	Page 050
Lesson 11 2 Samuel	Page 054
Lesson 12 1 & 2 Kings	Page 058
Lesson 13 1 & 2 Chronicles	Page 062
Lesson 14 Ezra	Page 066
Lesson 15 Nehemiah	Page 071
Lesson 16 Esther	Page 075
Lesson 17 Job	Page 080
Lesson 18 Psalms	Page 085
Lesson 19 Proverbs	Page 090
Lesson 20 Ecclesiastes	Page 095
Lesson 21 Song of Solomon	Page 100
Lesson 22 Isaiah	Page 105
Lesson 23 Jeremiah & Lam.	Page 110
Lesson 24 Ezekiel	Page 114
Lesson 25 Daniel	Page 119
Lesson 26 Hosea	Page 124
Lesson 27 Joel	Page 128
Lesson 28 Amos	Page 132
Lesson 29 Obadiah	Page 136
Lesson 30 Jonah	Page 140
Lesson 31 Micah	Page 145
Lesson 32 Nahum	Page 149
Lesson 33 Habakkuk	Page 153
Lesson 34 Zephaniah	Page 157
Lesson 35 Haggai	Page 161
Lesson 36 Zechariah	Page 165
Lesson 37 Malachi	Page 169
Grading Sheet	Page 174

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

Dear Self Study Student,

You are about to embark on a wonderful study of the Bible. This guide contains complete notes for you to use in learning an in-depth overview of the books of the Old Testament.

It is more than likely that you have never heard most of what you are going to learn in this course. Be patient and take your time as you go book-by-book through this exciting study and you will be greatly blessed by it.

Please make sure and read the **REQUIRED READING** before you go on to the next session. Also, you are strongly encouraged to do the **BONUS READING**. It will not only give you extra points toward your certificate but will greatly help you to better understand and relate to the material.

At the end of the program you will receive a certificate recognizing your accomplishment if you have a passing grade. You will be graded as follows for each lesson:

- 50 points for reading each lesson

- 50 points for required Bible reading

- 50 bonus points for reading the entire book of the Bible being reviewed

There are 5,100 possible points, including the bonus points. 3,650 points are needed to pass the course and earn a certificate. You will be “self-grading” using the included grading sheet and then passing that on to the person in charge of overseeing “The Bible Book by Book” program at your church or organization. Just write in the points that you’ve earned for each lesson.

Most of all, pray each and every day for your progress in this course and for greater understanding. The reward in both knowledge and your spiritual life will be well beyond your expectations.

In Christ,

Bob Stone

Lesson No. 1

LESSON THEME:—THE BIBLE

2 Timothy 3:16, Psalm 119:105, Revelation 22:18-19.

The scriptures are not printed, as one of the purposes of this course is to encourage you to read your own Bible. Please read all of the Scripture references given in each lesson.

- **KEY WORD**—"SALVATION."
- **KEY VERSE**—John 3:16.
- **KEY PHRASE**—"HOW A LOST WORLD MAY HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE."

NAME—The word "Bible" from the Greek word "Biblos" means "Book." Christians reverently call it "Holy Bible." Our Lord called it "The Scriptures," Matthew 22:29. Paul called it the "Holy Scriptures," Romans 1:2, also "The Word of God," 2 Corinthians 4:2.

The word "Testament" means "Covenant," so we have the Old Testament which contains the Covenant and its outworking, which God gave to Israel, and the New Testament which contains the Covenant of Grace which came through Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew, with small portions in Aramaic, and the New Testament wholly in Greek.

WRITERS—At least 40 (from the time of Moses 1500 B.C. to John the Apostle 97 A. D.) and the authorship is wonderful. It was written by kings and emperors, princes and poets, sages and philosophers, fishermen and statesmen. By men learned in the wisdom of Egypt, educated in the schools of Babylon, trained at the feet of rabbis in Jerusalem. It was written by men in exile, in the desert, and in shepherds' tents, amid green pastures and beside still waters. The man who wrote one book had no communication with the men who wrote the other books. How did these men, writing independently, produce such a book. 2 Peter 1:21. Other books get out of date in fifty years. Why does this book live on through the ages and keep abreast of mightiest thought? Mark 13:31.

PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE: To record the divine religion which God gave to man. Particularly to reveal the sinfulness of man, the holiness and love of God and the supreme revelation of that love in Jesus Christ. Also to reveal the eternal doom that awaits the wicked and the everlasting state of glory that awaits the redeemed.

GREAT FACTS:—

Great Fact I -- The Books of the Bible.

There are 39 books in the O.T. and 27 in the N.T., 66 in all.

These books are not arranged in chronological order in the Bible, but the very order in which they appear has been divinely overruled.

The Old Testament has the following divisions:

1. The Pentateuch – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy—5 books.
2. Historical—Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther—12 books.
3. Poetical—Job, Psalm, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Songs of Solomon (known as Song throughout)—5 books.
4. Major Prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel—5 books.
5. Minor Prophets—Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zechariah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi—12 books.

The New Testament has the following divisions:

1. Biographical – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John—4 books.
2. Historical – Acts—1 book.
3. Pauline Epistles – Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon—13 books.
4. General Epistles – Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1 & 2 & 3 John, Jude—8 books.
5. Prophetic – Revelation—1 book

There are fourteen books, called the Apocrypha, which are found in the covers of the Catholic Bible. Some of them contain excellent Jewish history, but they have never had a place in the Canon, or inspired and sacred list of the books of the Bible. “The Scriptures have by their own weight crushed all rivals out of existence.”

Great Fact II -- The Inspiration of the Bible.

The Bible was not actually written by the literal hand of God, but Jesus and Paul taught that the scriptures were in the fullest sense inspired by Him. In other words, while God did not take a pen in hand, he oversaw the writing of all Scripture so that it is without error and fully inspired by Him. Matthew 22:29; 2 Timothy 3:16. The spirit of the inspiration breathes in every page and illuminates every word. “Behind and beneath the Bible, above and beyond the Bible is the God of the Bible.”

The Spirit of God so influenced the minds of the writers that they recorded without error a progressive revelation from God to man.

That the Bible is fully inspired, and therefore divine, is seen from the following facts:

1. Hundreds of tablets and ancient records unearthed in Bible lands testify to the accuracy of Bible history.
2. No other sacred writings give such a satisfying scheme of redemption, and such a scientific account of creation. In the words “God hangeth the world upon nothing,” Job 26:7; scripture teaches that this earth is a planet, floating in space, whereas in the writings of the Hindus they claim that the earth rests upon the backs of four huge elephants, and they upon the backs of four huge turtles, and they upon the backs of four huge snakes, so it is when either of these shake themselves that we get earthquakes! Many similar illustrations could be given!
3. Scripture is a testimony to itself. Isaiah 8:20. That the very words of the original Greek or Hebrew were inspired, is asserted again and again. 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16; Matthew 5:18. Also there are no less than 333 prophecies in the O.T. concerning the earthly life of Christ. These were written centuries before they were fulfilled. What a ridiculous display of human ignorance they would have revealed if they had not been inspired! As a contrast, take the many predictions as to the end of the age, made in recent years.
4. The testimony of Christ. He spent the whole of his ministry expounding the O.T. scriptures. That He believed them to be inspired and without error is seen from Matthew 5:18; John 10:35. Furthermore, it is generally admitted that no set of men could have written such a wonderful life in the Gospels of an imaginary Christ. He must have lived and been all that the Bible pictures

Him to be. But if He did live, then the Bible is true for Christ and the Bible stand or fall together!

Great Fact III -- The Plan all through the Bible.

1. The Bible begins, as we would expect it to, with God, Genesis 1:1, but it ends with man, the last of God's creations. Revelation 22:21. But in the middle verse of the Bible, Psalm 118:8, God and man separated by sin so far apart, are brought together. This indicates that the purpose of the written Word, is the same as that of the Living Word (Christ), to bring God and man together.
2. The Old Testament begins with God, Genesis 1:1. The New Testament begins with Christ, Matthew 1:1.
3. In the Old Testament we have chiefly a revelation of God the Father. In the Gospels, of God the Son; in the Acts, of God the Holy Spirit; and in the Epistles, of the full Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
4. The History of the Bible takes us back into what would otherwise be the unknown past. The prophecies take us forward into what would otherwise be the unknown future. The spiritual teaching of the Bible leads us into what would otherwise be an unknown salvation and character.
5. From Adam to Abraham we have the history of the human race, from Abraham to Christ, the history of the chosen race; but from Christ on, we have the history of neither the human race, nor the chosen race, but of the churches of the living God.
6. In Eden we had one law given to man,—but it was broken. At Sinai the whole law was given to man—but was broken. However, the God-man came to earth and perfectly kept the law for man, so that at the judgment it should not be a witness against him.
7. The Old Testament deals chiefly with the law, yet it nevertheless contains much of grace Isaiah 53. The New Testament deals chiefly with grace, yet it establishes the Law. Romans 3:31.
8. The law came by Moses, but grace came by Jesus Christ. John 1:17. In keeping with this first miracle of Moses was the turning of the water into blood, a type of death. Exodus 7:19. While the first miracle of Christ was the turning of the water into wine. John 2:1-11, a type of life and strength.
9. There is a distinct plan in the individual books of the Bible, for example:— In Genesis we have the sacrifice for the individual—Abel. In Exodus, for the household—the Passover. In Leviticus, for the nation. In John, for the world.

10. There is progress also in the teachings of the gospels, for Matthew closes with the Resurrection, Mark with the Ascension, Luke with the promise of the Spirit, and John speaks of His Second Coming.
11. There is a divine order in the epistles, for James is the epistle of **WORKS**. Paul's of **FAITH**, Peter's of **HOPE**, and John's of **LOVE**!
12. Comparing the beginning of the Bible with the end, we have:—

—In the beginning:—

- God created the heavens and the earth.
- End—New heavens and new earth.

- Beginning—Satan enters to deceive.
- End—Satan cast out that he may deceive the nations no more.

- Beginning—Sin, pain, sorrow, death.
- End—no more death, neither sorrow nor crying.

- Beginning—Tree of life, and man driven away from it.
- End—Tree of life, and the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations.

- Beginning—Woman taken from man's side.
- End—Church taken from Christ's side.

- Beginning—Earth purged by water.
- End—Earth purged by fire.

- Beginning—Paradise lost.
- End—Paradise regained.

LESSON—The wonderful inspiration and plan, running through all the 66 books and 1600 years Of the Bible should so impress us with its divine origin, that we should receive it with personal faith, appropriate its messages to ourselves, and put our own names in every promise. Only, as we read it, believe it, and practice it, shall we be wise, safe and holy!

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- ☐—Creation, Genesis 1:1-5 and Genesis 1:26-31.
- ☐—Fall, Genesis 3:1-13.
- ☐—Covenant, Genesis 3:13-24.
- ☐—Flood, Genesis 7:7-24.
- ☐—Beginning of different languages, Genesis 11:19.
- ☐—Abraham chosen, Genesis 12:19.
- ☐—Covenant confirmed to Jacob, Genesis 28:10-22.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

☐ The entire book of Genesis

Lesson No. 2

LESSON THEME:—GENESIS

Genesis 1:1-5 and Genesis 1:26-31.

- **KEY WORD:**—“**BEGINNINGS.**”
- **KEY VERSE**—Genesis 1:1.
- **KEY PHRASE:**—“**MAN IS BORN AGAIN.**”

NAME means **BEGINNINGS**, because it recounts the beginnings of the world and mankind. We can trace in it the beginnings of everything—except God—who had no beginning.

The book of Genesis has an importance and interest that no other document of antiquity possesses. It embraces the world.

The marvelous structure of the Bible is built upon this great majestic book of Genesis!

AUTHOR was Moses. Time of writing 1500 B.C. The first five books of the Bible were commenced by Moses when, for 40 days, he was on the heights of Sinai alone with God. There he was instructed and inspired to begin the Bible. There is no record, no reference, and no remains of any inspired writings prior to the days of Moses.

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK—To show how God began to give a Divine Religion to mankind. In doing this it was necessary to describe man’s primeval condition, and his fall into sin which rendered salvation necessary.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Creation.
2. Fall.
3. Covenant.
4. Flood.
5. Nations.
6. Patriarchs.

STORY OF THE BOOK—God created the world and man. Man fell into sin, but God made a covenant of salvation with him. In the course of 1600 years wickedness so increased that God sent the judgment of the Flood. The different nations sprang from the three sons of Noah—Shem, Ham and Japheth. At the Tower of Babel God confused the tongues of men as a result of their pride, and because they failed to spread out. Thus we have the origin of nations and languages. God called Abraham to found the Israelitish nation and renews the covenant to his son, Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob. The book ends with God's chosen people down in Egypt, and with the death of Joseph, the great-grandson of Abraham.

Genesis covers the period 4004 B.C. to 1635 B.C. or 2,369 years.

Great Fact I -- Creation.

Genesis 1-2.

God created the heavens and the earth, and created man in His own image and likeness. The name of God is mentioned 32 times in 31 verses. The creative act of God is given as the only sufficient cause of creation. Science has no word beyond this. Man is the chief work of creation for which all else is brought into being.

Genesis tells us there is **ONLY ONE** God, and opposes the doctrine of the many gods of the heathen.

Genesis announces the **EXISTENCE** of God, and opposes the doctrine of Atheism. Everything in the universe was created by God and is subject to Him.

Genesis declares that God **EXISTED BEFORE ALL THINGS** and apart from all things, showing that He is independent of matter.

Genesis asserts that **MAN WAS CREATED**, not evolved, thus accounting for the moral and spiritual nature in man.

LESSON. Just as the world was in a state of chaos before God's creation—so was man's heart and soul in a state of darkness and chaos before the new creation and the new birth.

Great Fact II -- The Fall.

Genesis 3.

The author of sin was Satan, acting through a serpent. The nature of sin, was getting man to doubt God's word, His authority and His goodness. When tempted to see if man would freely serve God, he failed in the test and wanted to be as God himself.

The results of the Fall were shame and separation from God. The penalty of sin was sorrow in the heart, and a curse upon the ground and upon nature.

LESSON—Satan is the cause of all evil now. He still influences man to doubt and disobey God. Punishment always has and always will follow sin.

Great Fact III -- The Covenant.

Genesis 3:15.

Although man fell, a Deliverer is promised, who shall bruise the tempter's head. This was fulfilled in John 3:16.

God also made coats of skins for Adam and Eve, a type of the robe of Christ's righteousness provided for sinners.

Great Fact IV -- The Flood.

Genesis 6-9.

Because of man's exceeding wickedness, God sent a Flood that covered all the high hills under the whole Heaven. The waters were on the earth for 375 days. Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their wives and ceremonially unclean animals by twos and clean animals by sevens, by God's direction, entered the Ark and were saved.

LESSON—God always makes an escape from every judgment, if men have faith like Noah, to be saved God's way. There was only **ONE** Ark, and **ONE DOOR** to the Ark. There is **ONLY ONE SAVIOR**, and **ONLY ONE WAY TO SALVATION**—Faith in the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world!

Great Fact V -- The Beginning of Nations.

Genesis 11.

The new race instead of spreading out as God commanded, built a city and a Tower, at the top of which they placed an idol that they wanted the heavens and earth to worship. In judgment for this God confused their tongues and scattered them abroad.

LESSON—Whenever man shuts God out, and places himself or anything else on a pedestal, there is confusion. Prophecy tells us that just before the end of the age, anti-Christ will set himself up against God, but he will likewise be overwhelmed with judgment.

Great Fact VI -- The Patriarchs.

Genesis 12-50.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph-

Out of the mass of idolaters, God selects a man named Abraham, to begin the history of his chosen people Israel. God sets the race, in general, aside for a time, and the blessings He had for it are held over, while He chooses a special people, who are to be a channel of blessing to the race.

First, Abraham was chosen in order that God might have a prepared people to whom to entrust the Scriptures.

Second, in order that God might have a channel through whom the promised Delivery might come.

Third, in order that his chosen people might be a witness on earth to the other nations

God made a sevenfold covenant with Abraham that he should be the father of a great nation and a company of nations and be a blessing to all the world. Genesis 12:1-4; 48:19.

By faith Abraham was about to offer up Isaac as sacrifice but God miraculously delivered Isaac.

Isaac's son Jacob succeeded his father in the Covenant relationship with God. His name was changed to Israel because of his faith and power in prayer. Thus we get the name by which God's chosen people were called viz., Israelites.

God permitted Jacob's son Joseph to be sold into Egypt, and Jacob's family to later follow him there in order that when a great famine prevailed, the Israelites might find food, and at the same time, keep themselves as a separate people for God to use later.

LESSON. God is choosing some and setting aside others.

Idolaters are put behind God's back but believers are trained in His hand for nobler service.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Bondage,—Exodus 1:7-22.
- []—Moses Call,—Exodus 3:1-10.
- []—First Plague,—Exodus 7:14-25.
- []—Passover,—Exodus 12:1-14.
- []—Ten Commandments,—Exodus 20:1-17.
- []—Tabernacle,—Exodus 25:1-9.
- []—High Priest,—Exodus 28:1-14.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Exodus

Lesson No. 3

LESSON THEME:—EXODUS

Exodus 1:7-14.

- **KEY WORD**—“REDEMPTION.”
- **KEY VERSE**—Exodus 3:10.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“MAN IS REDEEMED OUT OF THE WORLD.”

NAME means **DEPARTURE**, or going out. The book is given this name because it relates the deliverance of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt. They had been in Egypt 215 years, and in bondage about 140 years of this time. They entered as a family of 70 people, and left as a nation of two million. Exodus may well be called “Israel’s Birthday book!” God calls Israel “My first-born.” Exodus 4:22.

AUTHOR—Moses. Place where written Sinai. Time about 1490 B.C. Book cover period 1635-1490 B.C. From death of writings to birth of Moses was 63 years, from birth of Moses to Israel’s departure from Egypt 81 years, from departure to erection of Tabernacle, one year.

PURPOSE—To give the history of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and the establishment of Israel as God’s chosen nation, and the nation is set apart to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, Exodus 19:6.

The patriarchal Dispensation ends and that of the Law begins.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Bondage.
2. Moses.
3. Plagues.
4. Passover.
5. Law.
6. Tabernacle.
7. Priesthood.

STORY OF THE BOOK—After the death of Joseph in Egypt, a new king arose who oppressed the Israelites. Under these conditions Moses was born. His Parents defied the king’s edict that male children should be destroyed, and they hid Moses

three months. After being raised as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses forsook Egypt, went to the Arabian desert as a shepherd, and after 40 years there he was called at the Burning Bush to lead Israel out of Egypt. Because of the obstinacy of Pharaoh, power was given Moses to send 10 plagues on Egypt. The tenth plague was the climax, when the first born of man and beast was destroyed among the Egyptians. The Israelites, to commemorate their merciful deliverance instituted the Passover feast. The Israelites were led through all their difficulties to Sinai, and God provided manna and clothing for His people in the wilderness. At Sinai God gives the Ten Commandments, the Ceremonial Laws and certain civil laws that were to be the basis of their social life. God also instructs them in the building of the Tabernacle, and sets up the Priesthood.

Great Fact I -- Bondage.

Exodus 1-2.

The Israelites entered Egypt while their kinsman Joseph, was a ruler there. While he lived they were happy and prosperous, but later, a change of dynasty took place, and the new government viewed their increasing numbers with alarm and jealousy. They were oppressed in every way by hard labor and cruel taskmasters. They were used as slaves to construct great monumental buildings and cities, the ruins of which may be seen today. An attempt was made to destroy all male children of the Israelites. Satan who is a murderer from the beginning showed his cunning and power this way. He desired to destroy the seed of Abraham, so as to make the coming of the Promised One impossible. The murder of Abel was the first attempt. Here is an effort on a larger scale, which was followed by many others.

LESSON—Egypt is a type of the world. Pharaoh is a type of the prince of this world. The bondage of sinners still undelivered is pictured here. God is ever listening for the sighs for deliverance. A hatred of bondage opens the way for redemption by blood and power.

Great Fact II -- The Birth and Call of Moses.

Exodus 3-4.

Moses was a descendant of Levi, the third son of Jacob. Moses was in danger of death, but his mother prepared an Ark of bulrushes, which reminds us of the salvation provided by Noah's Ark. Thus Moses is saved by faith which depended upon God's Word and God's power. Name Moses means "Saved from water."

The devil is foiled again, for while Satan using Pharaoh to destroy Israel God was using Pharaoh's daughter to raise up a deliverer

After 40 years in Egypt, Moses became an exile in the desert of Midian, and in the quietness of the desert, and beneath the majesty of the mountains, he was prepared to be a vessel fit for the Master's use. Thus all great men in communion with their Lord, are trained for service.

At Burning Bush near Sinai, God called Moses to be the deliverer of Israel. It was a thorn bush, and thorns being the result of sin it typifies the sinfulness and worthlessness of the people. Fire is a symbol of their suffering and tribulation. All the fires of persecution could not consume Israel. This is true of the Bible, the church and the Christian.

Great Fact III -- The Plagues.

Exodus 7-11.

Because of Pharaoh's refusal to let God's people go, and because he hardened his heart, God sent 10 plagues upon him as follows:—

1. Water turned into blood.
2. Frogs.
3. Lice.
4. Flies.
5. Murrain.
6. Boils.
7. Hail,
8. Locusts.
9. Darkness for three days.
10. Death of first-born.

The book of Revelation tells us that, after believers have been caught up at Christ's second coming that another state of plagues will come upon the earth—also that the rejecters of Christ, like Pharaoh, will harden their hearts, and thus ripen for the day of wrath.

Great Fact IV -- The Passover.

Exodus 12.

In the dreadful night when the angel destroyed the first-born of man and beast among the Egyptians, the blood of a slain lamb on the door-posts of the Israelites was the sign for the death-angel to pass over and spare those homes. In commemoration of this merciful deliverance, Israel ever afterwards celebrated the Passover Feast.

It is the fullest type of Redemption in the Old Testament. It meant:—

1. Escape from death.
2. Deliverance from bondage.
3. Entrance into Canaan—symbolizing our salvation, both from the guilt and power of sin, and rest in the tidiness, of Christ. It was not character, but the application of the blood, that was required. Titus 3:5.

Great Fact V -- The Law.

Exodus 19-24.

Israel, numbering two million souls, now assembles in the wilderness at Sinai to worship Yahweh, and to receive the law.

The Law is divided into three parts:—

1. The Moral Law in the Ten Commandments.
2. The Ceremonial Law in the ordinance and priesthood. Together they form one religious system, called the Law.

The Ceremonial Law was a provision of Grace for the violation of the Moral Law without which the sinner would have met with instant death. In the sacrifice, the sinning Israelites had a cover for his sins until Christ, the great Antitype of all these sacrifices, should appear to put away sin once and for all by the sacrifice of Himself at Calvary, Hebrews 9-12; Hebrews 10. Since Calvary, God's people are not required to keep the ceremonial law.

3. Civil laws were given which were the basis of their social life, and of our modern statutes. These cemented the nation together.

Great Fact VI -- The Tabernacle.

Exodus 25-27.

Yahweh gave Moses plans for a Tabernacle that was to be the centre of Israel's worship for 400 years, until the erection of Solomon's temple. It was 185 feet long by 91 1-2 feet wide, and was made up of the:—

1. The Outer Court, which contained the **BRAZEN ALTAR** for Burnt Offerings, which typifies our Justification, and also the **LAVER**, where the priests were ceremonially cleansed before entering upon their sacred duties. This typifies our Baptism.
2. The Holy Place, whose was the table of show-bread representing Christ, the Bread of Life, as our spiritual food, the **GOLDEN ALTAR** of incense, symbolizing Christ's intercession for us, and the **SEVEN BRANCHED CANDLESTICK**, representing Christ as our Light.
3. Holy of Holies, containing the ARK which was sprinkled with the Blood of Atonement, once a year, thus making the Ark a **MERCY-SEAT** instead of a Judgment-seat.

Great Fact VII -- The Priesthood.

Aaron was the first High Priest. The priests were to come from the tribe of Levi, and be the descendants from Aaron.

They were in holy garments, and consecrated to the service of the Tabernacle. The support of the High Priest was a tithe paid to him by the Levites from the tithes paid to them by the people. The people gave one-tenth to the Levites, and the Levites gave one-tenth of what they received to Aaron.

Aaron wore upon his heart the names of the twelve tribes engraved upon precious stones. Here we have a blessed type of how Christ carries all His people upon His heart of Love!

With the precious stones, were two called the Urim and Thummim, which names mean Lights and Perfections. When the High Priest wanted to know God's will about a matter, he would put on the Urim and Thummim, go to the Holy Place, and if God was willing to hear him a cloud would hover over the Tabernacle.

The Holy Spirit is the believer's Urim and Thummim, guiding and directing all our steps.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Burnt Offering, Leviticus 1:1-8.
- []—Consecration, Leviticus 8:1-12.
- []—Pure Food, Leviticus 11: 1-8.
- []—Walk of God's People, Leviticus 19:1-18.
- []—Day of Atonement, Leviticus 23:26-38.
- []—Conditions of Blessings, Leviticus 26:1-17
- []—Things which are the Lord's, Leviticus 27:26-34.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

- [] The entire book of Leviticus.

Lesson No. 4

LESSON THEME:—LEVITICUS

Leviticus 1:1-8.

- **KEY WORD**—“**HOLINESS**” (Mentioned 87 Times).
- **KEY VERSE**—**Leviticus 19:2.**
- **KEY PHRASE**—“**MAN’S HOLY WALK WITH GOD.**”

NAME—The book is called Leviticus because it gives fully the functions of the Levites, who ministered about the Tabernacle.

As soon as the Law, which shuts out man from God was given; provision was made for access to God apart from the Law altogether. In this book the way of access is set before us. Therefore it might also be called “the book of access to God.”

AUTHOR—God is the author of this book through Moses. More than any other book in the Bible it consists of the words of God. Fifty-six times in the twenty-seven chapters in the declaration made, “And God spoke to Moses.”

Time of writing, about 1490 B.C. Written at Sinai. Covers a period of a month, when Israel was at Sinai.

PURPOSE—To record the laws concerning the sacrifices and ordinances, which were to govern the priests in the service of the Tabernacle. Ceremonies were prescribed that were to teach the guilt of man, and the holiness of God. The food and sanitary regulations were to be distinctive marks of a chosen people. Everything in the book has a spiritual significance. The Epistle to the Hebrews should be read in connection with it, for there we learn that the Law was a shadow of good things to come—the Gospel realities!

STORY OF THE BOOK—Here the Lord gives His people instructions concerning the different sacrifices and offerings. An account is given of the consecration of Aaron and his fellow priests, and how they began their priestly functions. Then comes the judgment upon Nadab and Abihu for presenting strange fire—a sin of presumption. God demands holiness from His redeemed people, so the record is given of the Day of Atonement, Different feasts are divinely appointed, and the Sabbath, Sabbatic Year and the Jubilee Year are instituted.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Sacrifices.
2. Consecration.
3. Holiness.
4. Feasts.
5. Institutions.

Great Fact I -- Sacrifices.

Leviticus 1-7.

The Burnt, Meal, Peace, Sin and Trespass

Offerings.

1. The Burnt offering presented the idea of an atonement, and provided the way for reconciliation with God.
2. The Meal offering was a Thanksgiving offering.
3. The Peace offering represented fellowship and communion with God.
4. The Sin offering suggests Christ on the Cross in the sinner's stead.
5. The Trespass offering reminds us that Christ also atoned for the trespasses we commit against others.

All of the offerings of the Old Testament fall under one of these five heads. The offering of bullock, sheep, goat, turtle dove or pigeon, was determined by the ability of the offerer.

These sacrifices did not in themselves satisfy God. They were object lessons to a people in spiritual youth, and pointed to the person and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

LESSON—Because of the holiness of God man in his sin is excluded from His presence and can be accepted only on the ground of the shed blood of the divine sacrifice.

Great Fact II -- The Consecration of the Priests.

Leviticus 8-10.

No one was permitted to bring his own offering to God, it was necessary for a priest to stand between man and God. Neither could the priest consecrate themselves, it was done by Moses, acting for God. All that the priests could do was to present themselves. So with us, see Romans 12:1.

When the priests presented themselves they were cleansed, clothed, anointed, their hands filled, and food given them, the very experience of the believer.

LESSON—Christ is not only our Savior, but our High Priest. He and He alone, is the only one appointed to stand between the sinner and God. We approach God today, not by means of any priest on earth, but through our great High Priest, even Jesus, who is now at the right hand of the Father.

Great Fact III -- Holiness Demanded.

Leviticus 11-22.

The word “Holy” occurs 87 times, and has reference to:—

1. Food.
2. Disease
3. Personal Habits.

One reason for those laws concerned the health and morals of the people. Only that which was clean in the divine estimate was to be their food. So God prescribes His Word as the most suitable spiritual food for His redeemed people.

Another reason points to the design of God to keep Israel a separate nation. The Holy One demands that His people, whom He has redeemed and made high, must be a holy people.

Leviticus 16; is the great Atonement chapter of the Bible. On the Day of Atonement, and only on this day of the year, the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies, He also transferred the sins of the people to the scapegoat, which bore them away into the wilderness—a type of the work of Christ. He not only lays down his life for our sins, but bears them away, so that they can nevermore be found, Isaiah 43:25.

Great Fact IV -- The Feasts.

Leviticus 23.

1. Feasts of Passover,
2. Pentecost,
3. Tabernacles, and
4. Trumpets.

The Passover was held in the spring, and commemorated the saving of the first-born in Egypt. It lasted one day and was immediately followed by the feast of Unleavened Bread (seven days), making together one feast of eight days.

The Passover typifies redemption and the Unleavened Bread a Holy Walk, Galatians 5:7-9.

Pentecost was observed 50 days after the Passover, and was a kind of Harvest Home service. The first-fruits were then laid upon the altar, Leviticus 23:21. It was 50 days after Christ's resurrection, that the early Christian had the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the church.

The Feast of Trumpets was the New Year's day of the civil year, and began about the first of October. This feast is prophetic and points to the future regathering of dispersed Israel.

The Feast of Tabernacles was held in the Fall and lasted 7 days. It commemorated the 40 years spent in the wilderness. It was observed by living outdoors in booths and huts, and by special offerings. The feast looked forward to the Millennium, when Israel will keep the feast with rejoicing, Zechariah 14.

Great Fact V -- The Institutions.

Leviticus 25.

1. The Sabbath was the seventh day of the week, and was a day of rest and worship, celebrating the finished work of creation. Christians keep the first day of the week, because our Lord rose from the dead on that day, we thus celebrate the finished work of redemption.
2. The Sabbatic Year was every seventh year, which was to be a Sabbath of rest for the land. Leviticus 25:4. It did the land good to lie fallow one year in seven. It reminded Israel of God's ownership and their stewardship. It quickened their trust and thanksgiving. The neglect of this law was cue of the causes of captivity.
3. The Jubilee Year was every fiftieth year, Leviticus 25:10. Individuals who had gotten into bondage were freed and land that had been seized from its

rightful owner for debt had to be returned. No syndicate was to own vast tracts of land.

This typifies the final restoration of Israel, their lands, and the restitution of all things at the coming of the Lord, Acts 3:21.

ALL THROUGH THIS WONDERFUL BOOK we see that sacrifice alone is the basis and holiness the garment, necessary for the sinner in his approach to God.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Numbers 9:15-23, The Guiding Cloud.
- []—Numbers 13:26-33. Reports of Spies.
- []—Numbers 16:1-11 Gainsaying.
- []—Numbers 20:1-13. Water from Rock.
- []—Numbers 21:1-19. Brazen Serpent.
- []—Numbers 22:1-12. Balaam.
- []—Numbers 35:6-15. Cities of Refuge.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Numbers

Lesson No. 5

LESSON THEME:—NUMBERS

Numbers 1:18-20.

- **KEY WORD**—"JOURNEYINGS."
- **KEY VERSE**—Numbers 32:2.
- **KEY PHRASE**—"MAN GOES TO SCHOOL TO GOD."

NAME—This book is called Numbers because it is an account of the double numbering of the people, first at Sinai,—Numbers 1, and afterwards at Moab,—Numbers 26. It is also the book of the wilderness journeyings of Israel. It is the story from Sinai to the plains of Moab.

AUTHOR—Moses. Time of writing about 1450 B.C. Covers period from 1490 to 1450 B.C. About 40 years.

PURPOSE—To give an account of the providential care of the Almighty over the Israelites during their wanderings in the wilderness and the temptations and murmurings there, by which they provoked and offended their Heavenly Protector so that at length He swore that they should not enter the Promised Land.

STORY—In this book Moses numbers and marshals the tribes, dedicates the altar and the Levites and gives sundry laws about the Passover. The guiding cloud comes down over the Tabernacle and then begins the journey from Sinai to Moab. At Kadesh-Barnea Israel murmured and lost faith in God, bringing upon themselves 38 more years of wandering. Korah, Dathan and Abiram rebelled against Moses and were destroyed by an earthquake. Miriam dies in the desert of Zin. Moses smites the rock instead of speaking to it thus forfeiting his right to enter Canaan. In judgment for bitter murmurings, God sent fiery serpents among the people, the sting of which was healed by looking at the Brazen Serpent. Balaam, false prophet, was the cause of Israel falling into idolatry. A new generation of Israelites was numbered. The law of vows was given. Six cities of refuge were set up for slayers to flee to and find shelter.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Preparation.
2. Unbelief.

3. Gainsaying.
4. Water.
5. Serpent.
6. Balaam.
7. Refuge.

Great Fact I -- Preparation.

Numbers 1-10.

The covenant has been made, the law given; the Tabernacle set up, the priests consecrated. The nation must now be schooled in the law and be prepared for its great work.

Hence in the beginning of Numbers we have the numbering and arrangement of the Tribes and assignment of special Tabernacle duties to the Levites.

Israel is moving again towards the Promised Land. There is to be hard fighting and every male from 20 years old upward able to bear arms is enrolled in the army and trained for Holy War.

Then every Israelite must know his own tribe and family for the time when the land of Canaan should be divided among the tribes. Also that the genealogy of the promised Messiah might be known.

Again an orderly host could march more conveniently and would be better prepared for conflict with enemies.

LESSON—The types of Numbers all bear on Christian walk and service. Genesis is the book of the Creation and Fall. Exodus of Redemption, Leviticus of Worship and Fellowship, and Numbers of that which should follow, Walk and Service.

Christians are walking through the wilderness. In Ephesians 4:1-3 we are exhorted to walk worthy of our calling in all lowliness and meekness with long suffering, thus making known to all around us the excellence of Him who has called us from darkness into His marvelous light.

Great Fact II -- Unbelief.

Numbers 10-12.

Israel was now facing the Land which was only a short distance away. Their history now, however, is marked by murmurings and rebellions, justifying Psalm 95:10. “Forty years long was I grieved with this generation.”

There was judgment by lightning (fire of the Lord) because of the people’s complaining. Then Israel murmured again because of the monotony of the daily manna, so the Lord sent a flock of quails, flying three feet above the earth, that they might slay them for food. Miriam and Aaron became jealous of Moses, and Miriam was smitten with leprosy for seven days.

Twelve men were sent to spy out the Promised Land, but they, (Caleb and Joshua excepted) brought back such an evil report, that the people, discouraged and faint of heart, lost faith in God and refused to enter Canaan. See Hebrews 3:19. This brought about another 38 years of wandering in the wilderness.

LESSON—The people had faith to come out of Egypt (the world) but had not faith to enter their Canaan of rest, yet the wilderness of unbelief is a hard place for Christians to wander in. God opens doors to nations and to individuals. If they fail to discern their opportunity, or take prompt advantage of it, they are either shut out altogether, or enter after long delay and heavy toil. To know when to go forward is no small part of Christian wisdom and virtue.

Great Fact III -- Gainsaying of Korah.

Numbers 14.

Korah, Dathan and Abiram then rebuked Moses and Aaron, saying that the children of Israel were kept in spiritual subjection and were denied their rights. Korah was doubtless sincere, but he blasphemously intruded upon the Priest’s office. Moses referred the matter to the Lord, and God sent an earthquake so that the earth swallowed up all who rebelled.

LESSON—We must learn the peril of discontent and of unholy ambition. All assaults made upon Christ’s salvation and Christ’s priestly work must fail. Christ is the only mediator between God and man and if anyone shall set himself up in Christ’s place he is a revolting rebel and will be punished.

Great Fact IV -- Water from the Rock.

Numbers 20.

Israel gets in distress because of the shortage of water and bitterly murmured against Moses and Aaron. God recognized their need and bade Moses to speak to a rock and it should give forth water. Moses, however, stung by the reproaches of the people, and in fit of anger and unbelief, called the people rebels and smote the rock. He therefore was forbidden to enter the land of Canaan and died later on Mt. Nebo.

LESSON—Even saints do not stand every test, the best of men make mistakes. But God is so impartial that even “friends of God” like Moses are punished for their sins. Christ, like the rock, was once smitten for our sin and like this rock needs not be smitten again.

Great Fact V -- The Brazen Serpent.

Numbers 21.

Israel now battles with the Canaanite; and fretful because they have to march around the land of Edom instead of through it, and loathing the manna again they spoke against God and against Moses

In judgment for this, God sent fiery serpents among them and many people died. When they repented, the Lord caused Moses to make a brass serpent and set it upon a pole and everyone that was bitten, when they looked upon it, lived.

LESSON—The whole human family has felt the serpent’s sting which results in death. The sufferers are helpless, no human remedy avails. In man’s extremity God sends a Savior in the likeness of the sinner, as the brazen serpent was in the likeness of the fiery serpent. Then by simple faith; healing, life, and happiness came to the sinner. See John 3:14 and John 15.

Great Fact VI -- Balaam.

Numbers 22.

Moab was sore afraid of Israel. So Balaak, its king, plotted to get Israel under a curse. He therefore sought the services of Balaam who was originally a heathen magician who had been deeply impressed by the wonderful deeds of God for Israel. He resolved to serve Yahweh and to perform his own enchantments henceforth in Yahweh’s name. Such a combination of heathen magic with the service of Yahweh could not last long.

At first Balaam refused to go the help of the king of Moab. When he did go an angel appeared in the path and stopped the ass upon which Balaam was riding. He got angry and smote the ass, then the Lord opened the mouth of the ass and it rebuked Balaam.

Balaam refused to curse Israel, but according to Num. 31:16 and Rev. 2:14 he was the cause of Israel falling into fornication and idolatry with the people of Moab.

LESSON—Balaam is a type of men who will sell their Christian influence for social and political prestige.

Great Fact VII -- Cities of Refuge.

Numbers 35.

Order having been given, the land of Canaan is divided among the tribes. Six cities are to be set aside as the cities of refuge for any man that killed another unawares. A kinsman would pursue a slayer to the city of refuge, which would shelter him. The death of the High Priest resulted in the liberty for all those who were in these cities and they could return to their possessions. Thus God impressed upon them the sanctity of life.

LESSON—Israel's history can be read in connection with the cities of refuge. The cities of refuge, like salvation, were of divine origin, were a great necessity to sinful man, were near to every man, and were sufficient shelter.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Orders to March,—Deuteronomy 1:6-13.
- []—God's Care,—Deuteronomy 1:29-40.
- []—Instruction,—Deuteronomy 6:6-18.
- []—Separation,—Deuteronomy 7:1-8.
- []—God's Requirements,—Deuteronomy 10:12-22.
- []—The Covenant,—Deuteronomy 30:1-10.
- []—Song of Moses,—Deuteronomy 32:1-10.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

- [] The entire book of Deuteronomy

Lesson No. 6

LESSON THEME:—DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy 11:18-28.

- **KEY WORD**—“OBEDIENCE.”
- **KEY VERSE**—Deuteronomy 11:26-28.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“BLESSINGS COME THROUGH OBEDIENCE.”

NAME—Means Second Law or second giving of the Law. It is a summary of the whole law and wisdom of Israel, but omitting the things which relate to the priests and Levites, includes only such things as the people generally are required to know. The book might be called the Book of Review. Deuteronomy is noteworthy because it furnished our Lord with the three scriptures with which He defeated Satan in His wilderness temptation, (Matthew 4:4) viz., Deuteronomy 8:3; 6:16; 10:20.

AUTHOR—Moses. (The last chapter relating Moses’ death is by Joshua.) Place: The Plains of Moab. Date about 1450 B.C. Time covered in the book is about two months, including thirty days of mourning for Moses.

The first five books of the Old Testament are called the Pentateuch, meaning five books. They were all written about 1450 B.C. Moses was the writer but not the author. Over five hundred times in the Pentateuch occur such expressions as “The Lord spoke,” and “God said,” etc. The divine author was the Holy Spirit.

PURPOSE—To review the journeyings of the children of Israel to a new generation of the people, to rehearse the covenant laws and to impress upon the people the blessing of obedience and the curse of disobedience.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Remembrance.
2. Teaching.
3. Pleading.
4. Covenant.
5. Farewell-

Great Fact I -- Remembrance.

Deuteronomy 1-3.

Israel is still in the wilderness, but the forty years of wanderings are almost ended. In a month they are to cross over the Jordan. Moses realizing that he must soon die, called the people together and gave them five wonderful addresses to prepare them for possessing the land.

In the first address Moses reviews their wanderings and reminds them of God's faithfulness in that the Lord God has been with them and that they lacked nothing, Deuteronomy 2:7.

In tender language he likens God to a Father and a nurse who carried His children as little ones, lest they should be hurt in the wilderness, injured by the heat or lost in the darkness. Thus to them God was a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. In spite of their frequent faults and failures, God's constant care embraced every need of their lives for He led, fed, clothed, kept, and brought them to their desired haven.

LESSON—No one can review the history of Israel without being impressed with this thought. How man tries God and how God bears with man.

Precious verses: Deuteronomy 1:11; Deuteronomy 1:3-31; Deuteronomy 2:7; Deuteronomy 4:2.

Great Fact II -- Teaching the Law.

Deuteronomy 4-26.

In Moses' second address he teaches the Ten Commandments to the new generation and shows that they are the basis of right living (Deuteronomy 5-6). He then impresses the duty to avoid all idolatry and the need of humbleness before God that they may not fall into the sin of self-righteousness and be destroyed as were their fathers, (Deuteronomy 7-11). He then reminds the people that there is only one sanctuary and warns them against false prophets. Laws as to clean animals and tithing are given. Feasts of the Passover and the Tabernacles are emphasized, because they speak of the redemption and regathering of God's people.

The priest's due from the people is given, Deuteronomy 18:13. Rules as to who should go to war, inquests, divorce, social and domestic relations, and as to crimes against society are all proclaimed.

LESSON—The world could not be run without God and His laws. So long as Israel sought to keep God's law He watched over them for good and prospered them. God's laws are meant to keep us from harming ourselves and hurting others. Obedience to them creates moral and spiritual uprightness and gives peace, hope and power.

Great Fact III -- Pleading for Obedience.

Deuteronomy 27-28.

In Moses' third address he pleads for obedience because,

1. It will magnify and perpetuate God's law;
2. Enable them to enter into a larger inheritance. Every day they tarried outside the land there were more enemies to overcome and more blessings would be missed;
3. Provide cause for rejoicing. "Thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God." Active co-operation with the divine will is necessary to our soul's salvation.

LESSON—God's obedient people have a clear conscience, they know they are pleasing God. They enjoy what they have as the loving gifts of a father's hand. They delight to use what they have for Him. They know that being shaped by His providence they are becoming better, wiser and holier.

Great Fact IV -- The Palestine Covenant.

Deuteronomy 29-30.

Moses now reminds the people of the Covenant God gave to Abraham and renewed at Sinai, that they should inherit the land. However, he warns them, and foretells that disobedience would bring dispersions, but if when dispersed among the nations, they should repent, then God would gather them again. The conversion of the Jews and the restoration of their land are both guaranteed in the covenant, and judgment will be meted out to Israel's oppressors and natural prosperity restored to Israel. All of this at our Lord's second coming, Acts 15:16.

LESSON—Let us pray for the restoration of God’s people to their land. Watch the movements of God’s province and heed the cautions of Romans 11:12-15. The casting off of Israel has meant the reconciliation of the world, but the Gentiles must exercise humble faith or they too may be cast off.

Great Fact V -- Moses’ Farewell and Benediction.

Deuteronomy 31-34.

The final words of Moses are full of tenderness and affection. He stood, 120 years old, a witness to the grace of God.

Before he goes up on Nebo’s quiet mountain to sleep in the Everlasting Arms, he encourages the people to trust in the Lord and assured them of triumph, for “He it is who doth go with thee, He will not leave thee nor forsake thee.” Joshua is called and Israel is told that he should bring them into the land. Moses then utters a great song which is full of prophecy. He tells of the future failures of Israel, also of their future glories.

He then pronounces sacred and precious blessings upon the tribes.

LESSON—Moses is one of the supremely great men of the world whose life will inspire us to find salvation in the sacrifice God provided, to be Holy as God is Holy, and to let all love issue in obedience.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Joshua Commission, Joshua 1:1-9
- []—The Spies, Joshua 2:9-18.
- []—Crossing the Jordan, Joshua 3:9-17.
- []—Conquering Jericho, Joshua 6:17-20.
- []—Retreating, Joshua 7:1-12.
- []—Renewing the War, Joshua 10:1-14.
- []—Joshua’s Charge, Joshua 24:13-21.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Joshua.

Lesson No. 7

LESSON THEME:—JOSHUA

Joshua 1:1-9.

- **KEY WORD**—"CONQUEST."
- **KEY VERSE**—Joshua 1:6.
- **KEY PHRASE**—"POSSESS YOUR SPIRITUAL POSSESSIONS."

NAME—This book is named for its author, the principal character—Joshua. He was born in Egypt in slavery and came out at the Exodus. All through the journeyings he was the co-laborer of Moses, ever loyal to his leader, and one of his most trusted and valiant captains.

AUTHOR—Joshua. The elders who outlived him wrote the account of his death. Time of writing about 1425 B.C. Events cover period 1450-1425 B.C.-25 years. From the crossing of the Jordan to the death of Joshua and the dividing of the land among the tribes.

PURPOSE—To give an account of the settlement of the children of Israel in Canaan thus proving the faithfulness of God in fulfilling the covenant with Abraham, that his seed should possess the land

It stands in somewhat the same relation to the Pentateuch as The Acts of the Apostles to the Gospels. While the Pentateuch gives the origin and principles of Judaism and the Gospels those of Christianity, in the books of Joshua and of Acts we see these principles in action.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Spying.
2. Crossing.
3. Conquering.
4. Retreating.
5. Renewing.
6. Dividing.

Great Fact I -- Spying the Land.

Joshua 1-2.

After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness because of unbelief, the Israelites came to the east side of the Jordan, and are about to cross over and possess the land. Joshua has succeeded Moses and is a man of great faith, courage and fidelity in the discharge of his leadership.

The Canaanites were the descendants of Canaan, one of the sons of Ham. They occupied Canaan and were utterly wicked and depraved and had fallen into heathenism and vice. God warned them in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah but they did not heed. He is now about to destroy them and give their land to Israel. Their destruction was both a punishment to them and a protection to other peoples around them.

Joshua, who had been one of the twelve spies, now sends two spies to view the land and particularly Jericho. Rahab, who had heard of the wonderful miracles wrought for Israel, prayed for mercy for herself and her father's house, hid the spies, helped them over the city walls and placed scarlet rope in her window so that her home might be identified and spared when the city was destroyed.

LESSON—The scarlet line speaks of safety through sacrifice, Hebrew 9:19-22.

Rahab living in a condemned city was not saved by her character but by her faith.

Great Fact II -- Crossing the Jordan.

Joshua 3-4.

Guided now, not by the pillar of fire, but by the Ark (God's presence remains with them although the sign of it has been withdrawn). Israel prepares to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land. It was a momentous crisis in her history, so God, as at the Red Sea, dams back the water and the people pass over dry shod. As a memorial of this divine favor, Joshua commanded a man of each tribe to take a rack from the bed of the river and set up the stones as a monument of thanksgiving.

LESSON—Gratitude in the Old Testament was testified by outward signs. There was circumcision, Passover, etc.—all memorials of God's love. Memorials stir our questions and prevent past history from sinking into oblivion. Thus our Independence and Thanksgiving days. The Lord's Supper is our spiritual stone of

remembrance. It was ordained to refresh our memories of, and warm your cold hearts to, Calvary.

Great Fact III -- Conquering Enemies.

Joshua 5-6.

Before advancing on Jericho, Israel was commanded to renew the covenant of circumcision with Yahweh, and to keep the Passover. How the blessed memories of this feast must have assured them of God's presence and power against their present foes. Jericho is now besieged for seven days. Each day for six days the city was marched around by the fighting men preceded by the Ark carried by the priests.

On the seventh day the city was compassed seven times. The priests blew the trumpets, the people shouted, the walls of the city fell down and all of the inhabitants were destroyed except Rahab and her family. All Israel did was to carry out simply and faithfully the directions of God and they won a complete victory.

LESSON—Spiritual victories are won by ways and means that seem utterly foolish to the wisdom of the world, 1 Corinthians 1:17-29. The walls of Jericho like the hindrances in our life are terrifying but they cannot withstand the Lord and His power.

Great Fact IV -- Retreating from Ai.

Joshua 7-8.

Joshua now sends his men against a much smaller and weaker place—Ai, only to retreat in sore confusion. There is a traitor in the camp—Achan who, although forbidden to do so, had taken a goodly Babylonish garment, 200 shekels Of silver and a wedge of gold from the spoils of Jericho, bringing disaster upon himself and others.

LESSON—Unjudged and unforgiven sin in the believer or in the churches causes much weakness and injury. We need to pray, Psalm 139:23-24.

Great Fact V -- Renewing the War.

Joshua 9-12.

The second time in battle, Israel triumphs over Ai, makes a treaty with the Gibeonites who played a trick on them, and routs the allied army of five kings with the help of a great hail storm and miraculously prolonged daylight. When Joshua said the sun stood still it is his way of stating the phenomenon that, in answer to the prayer, God stopped the earth from rotating on its axis for 24 hours. Prof. Totten of Yale has published calculations to show that one day in the earth's history was 48 hours long. Mark 11:23-24.

The name Jerusalem is mentioned for the first time in the Bible. It has since become the most famous place in the world and the Crusaders shed rivers of blood trying to capture it.

The kings of the north formed a second confederacy but in divine might Joshua overcomes them all, and the land rested from war.

LESSON—The destruction of the Canaanites is a foreshadowing of the great destruction that shall surely come upon the wicked.

Great Fact VI -- Dividing the Land.

Joshua 12-24.

Nine and one-half tribes have their portion on the west side of the Jordan, and, two and one-half on the east side. (Reubenites and Gadites and half tribe of Manasseh.)

The Cities of Refuge mentioned in Numbers and Deuteronomy are now set up. "Then the Lord gave them rest and victory." "There failed not ought of any good thing the Lord had spoken." All God's promises will in due time be made good. After eight years rest in the land Joshua, knowing the time of his departure is at hand, calls the people together and exhorts them to be faithful, and warns them of the results of apostasy.

The covenant is again renewed, and Joshua in memorable words calls upon Israel "To choose you this day whom you will serve."

He stands a noble and sublime figure among them, and gives his testimony "That as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." At the age of 110 Joshua died. What a tribute to him that it is said "and Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua."

LESSON—In view of all that God has done for us we ought reverently and heartily to pledge ourselves to serve the Lord. Canaan with all its treasures speak to us of the Christian's present inheritance. Victory must come before enjoyment.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Incomplete Victory,—Judges 1:21-28.
- []—Institution of Judges,—Judges 2:16-23.
- []—Deborah and Barak,—Judges 4:4-24.
- []—Gideon's Victory,—Judges 7:16-25.
- []—Jephthah's Vow,—Judges 11:30-40.
- []—Samson's Work,—Judges 15:14-20.
- []—Micah's Self-Will,—Judges 17:1-6.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Judges.

Lesson No. 8

LESSON THEME:—JUDGES

Judges 1:16-23.

- **KEY WORD**—“SERVITUDE.”
- **KEY VERSE**—Judges 17:6
- **KEY PHRASE**—“ISRAEL’S BACKSLIDING FROM GOD.”

NAME—The name was given to the 15 judges who ruled Israel from the death of Joshua to Saul the first king of Israel. Two of them, Eli and Samuel, are not mentioned in this book but in First Samuel. Since coming out of Egypt Israel had been under the leadership of two great men—Moses and Joshua. The tribes had common in-treats and met their common dangers unitedly. After the two great leaders died, the tribes were scattered over the land and faced their problems and foes separately. Then as emergencies arose God would raise up Judges who would rally the people against their enemies. The Judge was a combination of a military leader and religious reformer. Often he led just a few of the tribes, sometimes more than one Judge ruled at the same time. In this book, the tribes rather than the nation are the view.

AUTHOR—Samuel. Time of writing about 1100 B.C. Events cover period 1425-1100 B.C., or 325 years.

PURPOSE—To give the history of Israel during the Dark Ages and to prove that the troubles through which the people went were the consequences of their unfaithfulness to the covenant. Judges also sets forth the readiness of God to accept repentance and to grant deliverance.

Two facts stand out—the frequent backslidings of Israel and the constant grace of God.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Omission.
2. Commission.
3. Discipline.
4. Deliverance.

Great Fact I -- Omission.

Judges 1-3.

Six times it is declared that Israel did not drive out the Canaanites. Through a lack of vigorous effort and strict obedience to the command of God they failed to exterminate these wicked people of the land. They tolerated their corrupt life, habits and religion, although they were out of harmony with God's law. Toleration was followed in a few years by admiration, which was in turn followed by imitation. The Canaanites were a cause of future trouble and a constant temptation to idolatry and immorality. Israel went to the land like a farmer establishing himself on uncleared soil. He clears just enough to support himself at first, leaving the rest as it was. When a tribe was caught off its guard, these natives swept down taking it captive and placing it under bondage.

LESSON—We must not neglect God's will for worldly conveniences. It is dangerous to associate with evil company when we can avoid it. Psalm 1:1. The Canaanites remaining in the land are a type of sins remaining in the heart of the Christian. They lurk in the corners of life. By the Holy Spirit's -presence and help let us drive them all out.

Great Fact II -- Commission of Sin of Idolatry.

Judges 3-16.

The sin of omission is followed by the sin of commission, for the book records seven backslidings, seven servitudes and seven deliverances. Israel intermarried with the heathen, worshipped their idols and practiced their vices. The one land that should have been free from idol groves and heathen altars and corruption was in danger of being engulfed.

The very people who were called out by God to end these abominations were perpetuating them.

LESSON—Social failure is rooted in religious backslidings. Israel's abandonment of God was 'punished by God's abandonment of Israel. This may seem a small thing at first sight, but we see that within a short time their enemies overran the land and had them completely at their mercy. We do not recognize as we should that we are guided and guarded by Divine goodness hour by hour.

Great Fact III -- Discipline in Servitude.

God's discipline of Israel was severe. The highways were deserted, lawlessness abounded, so that men had to find their way by stealth to evade the highway robbers who filled the land. Some took refuge in the caves; some were hunted upon the mountains. Israel had bent its neck to the low religion of the heathen, now it was compelled to bend its neck to the rule of the heathen.

LESSON—God's punishments are always curative, aimed at bringing people back to a consciousness of sin and of God. It is said of the eagle, that when her young ones are full-fledged and yet would prefer to remain in the comfort of the nest, she breaks up the nest twig by twig, to urge her young to leave and soar high amid the sunshine of heaven. They must fly or die. Thus God takes away our comforts when they lead to our spiritual loss.

Great Fact IV -- Deliverance from Foes.

The Judges were rough and rugged heroes. The seven greater were:—

- Othniel who delivered the Israelites from the Mesopotamians.
- Ehud, who delivered the Israelites from the Moabites.
- Shamgar, who delivered the Israelites from the Philistines.
- Deborah and Barak, who delivered the Israelites from the Canaanites.
- Gideon, who delivered the Israelites from the Midianites.
- Jephthah, who delivered the Israelites from the Ammonites.
- Samson, who delivered the Israelites from the Philistines.

Gideon was afraid by himself but when assured that God was on his side he then with 300 men, lamps and pitchers and trumpets, gallantly triumphed over the great army of his enemies.

Samson was the Hebrew Hercules. His birth was announced by an angel. He was a Nazarite who constantly broke his separation vows. He was called of God to judge Israel yet did no abiding work because of his lack of consecration. He was, however, a man of mighty faith in difficult times.

LESSON—Repentance always brings deliverance. Over every dark chasm swings the rope of salvation.

Deliverance is the keynote in the "New Song" of all the blood-bought millions on earth and in heaven.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Choosing. Ruth—Ruth 1.
- []—Gleaning—Ruth 2.
- []—Resting—Ruth 3.
- []—Rejoicing—Ruth 4.
- []—Birth of Samuel—1 Samuel 1:20-28.
- []—Samuel in the Tabernacle—1 Samuel 3:1-18.
- []—Ark taken—1 Samuel 4:1-11.

Lesson No. 9

LESSON THEME:—RUTH

Ruth 1:6-18.

- **KEY WORD**—“DECISION.”
- **KEY VERSE**—Ruth 1:16.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“DECIDING FOR GOD.”

NAME—The book is named for its chief character—Ruth, a woman of Moab, who became an ancestress of the Messiah.

AUTHOR—Samuel. Time of writing 1100 B.C. The events probably occurred during the rule of Gideon, 1249 B.C.

This charming story should be connected with the early chapters of Judges as it gives us a picture of life in Israel at that time.

PURPOSE—

1. To establish the lineage of David, the ancestor of Christ.
2. The adoption of Ruth into the family of Israel is a prophecy of the adoption of the Gentiles into Christ’s family. The Moabite, shut out by law, is admitted by grace.
3. To show that God knows all about our private affairs, and that “the steps of the righteous are ordered of the Lord.”

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Choosing.
2. Gleaning.
3. Resting.
4. Rejoicing.

STORY OF THE BOOK. In the days when the Judges ruled, a severe drought drove Elimelech and Naomi and their two sons from their home in Bethlehem, across the Jordan to the land of Moab. Here their sons married Ruth and Orpah, women of Moab. Elimelech and his sons died, leaving the women to widowhood. In her loneliness, Naomi returned to her native land. Before doing so she bade a

tender farewell to her daughters-in-law, and urged them to return to their fathers' homes. Orpah did this, but Ruth, who had become a worshipper of the true God, replied in the matchless words of Ruth 1:16.

Naomi and Ruth go to live in Bethlehem, and Ruth gleans in the wheat and barley field of Boaz. Later on, Boaz falls in love with Ruth and marries her. To the union was born Obed, the grandfather of David.

Great Fact I -- Choosing.

Ruth 1.

Ruth was born a heathen, but through her husband or Naomi, had learned of the true God. When the cross-roads of decision came into her life, she firmly and speedily decided to forsake her idol; and the corrupt life of the Moabites, and to serve the true and living God, Her choice was affectionate and final. She clung to the Lord as devotedly as she did to Naomi.

LESSON—There comes a time for us all to take the Lord for our God, and His people for our people. It is possible as it was with Orpah, to go a long way towards being a Christian, but to kiss Christ and to leave Him. But we must say, "Farewell, Moab, Welcome Canaan, Farewell World, Welcome Savior." We must be not almost, but altogether decided for Christ. "Without a murmur I dismiss, My former dreams of earthly bliss, My joy, my consolation this, Each hour cling to Thee."—Mrs. Elliot.

Great Fact II -- Gleaning

Ruth 2.

Ruth was eager to work, so she went forth to glean in the grain fields of Boaz, whose name means Redeemer, "a mighty man of wealth," is a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Ruth had a claim on Boaz through her father-in-law, Elimelech. Our claim upon Christ is through the Holy Spirit. Boaz noticed the new worker, and graciously bade her to stay in his fields, and instructed the young men to let some handfuls of golden grain fall purposely for her. The Redeemer provided for her, an evidence of His love.

LESSON—Where have you gleaned today? Have we gleaned in His Word, for the handfuls He has purposely dropped for us? What have we gathered from the fields

of truth and grace? The world also is a field. Have we gleaned in it the past week for precious sheaves from the heavenly gardener?

Great Fact III -- Resting.

Ruth 3.

Naomi thought that Boaz was the nearest kinsman of Ruth, and therefore according to the Mosaic law, was under obligation to marry Ruth. Naomi therefore advised her to remind Boaz of this obligation by resting at his feet.

LESSON—This should encourage us to rest by faith at the feet of Christ, for He is our near kinsman, having taken our flesh upon Himself, and become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

Christ promises rest, and gives rest. As with Mary, it is good for us to be at His feet, yes, it is a blessed truth that rest is found only at the feet of the Redeemer.

Great Fact IV -- Rejoicing.

Ruth 4.

Boaz found that there was a relative nearer by blood than he was. He therefore called the elders of the city into conference, offered the other kinsman the right to redeem the inheritance and to marry Ruth. He was unable to do this and in token of release, plucked off his shoe and gave it to Boaz. This custom arose from the fact that when anyone took possession of land he did so by treading on the soil, and asserting his right of possession by standing upon it in his shoes. The taking off of the shoe and handing it to another was a token of renouncing one's right in his favor.

Boaz now marries Ruth, past sorrows were blotted out, and her happiness was crowned by the birth of Obed, who was in the Messianic line.

LESSON—The powerless redeemer is a type of the law, which is unable to redeem us from the curse of sin. Ruth's case was hopeless from the point of law, Grace alone could help, and this grace is blessedly seen in Boaz. Great are the rejoicings of the righteous when they enter into all the privileges of redemption.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Ark brought back, 1 Samuel 7:1-8.
- []—Saul Anointed, 1 Samuel 10:1-7.
- []—Samuel's Stewardship, 1 Samuel 12:1-15.
- []—Satire self-will, 1 Samuel 13:1-10.
- []—David's Victory, 1 Samuel 17:31-51.
- []—Jonathan and David, 1 Samuel 18:1-14.
- []—Jonathan protects David 1 Samuel 20:1-24.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of 1 Samuel.

Lesson No. 10

LESSON THEME:—1 SAMUEL

1 Samuel 8:7-22.

- **KEY WORD**—"MONARCHY."
- **KEY VERSE**—1 Samuel 8:5.
- **KEY PHRASE**—"A KINGDOM FOR GOD."

NAME—The two books of Samuel constitute one story and receive their name from Samuel because he is the prominent figure and author of the first few chapters.

AUTHOR—Samuel of the first 24 chapters, and the prophets Nathan and Gad of the remainder. The writing was concluded soon after Solomon's death about 940 B.C. Events cover period from 1100-1017 B.C., or 83 years.

PURPOSE—To give the history of Israel under the last two Judges—Eli and Samuel, and under their first king, Saul, and to show why the government was changed to a monarchy.

GREAT CHARACTERS:—

1. Eli.
2. Samuel.
3. Saul.
4. Jonathan.
5. David.

Great Men I -- Eli.

The book opens with Eli as both Judge and priest, the first time the offices had been combined in the history of Israel. He judged the people for 40 years. His sons Hophni and Phinehas, also priests, acted so outrageously, that they excited the deepest disgust. Eli did not sternly rebuke, but only gently chided them for their greed and immorality. He was therefore warned of the downfall of his house. During the next invasion of the Philistines, the Israelites were badly defeated, the Ark of God was captured and his sons both killed. When Eli learned this news, the

shock killed him and he died at the age of 98. He was a good man and full of humility and gentleness, but weak and too indulgent.

LESSON—Indulgent parents are cruel to themselves and to their children. National life is grounded on the development of the life of the family, therefore parents should exercise due restraint over their children, and children should submit to the restraint of their parents. This will produce industry, virtue, contentment and success, in the individual life and in the nation. Exodus 20:12.

Great Men II -- Samuel.

1 Samuel 3-16.

Samuel, a descendant of Levi, was born at Ramah in answer to prayer, and was consecrated to God by his mother. He was the last of the judges and first of the prophets. He was upright and fearless in his administration, was founder of the school of the prophets and of the monarchy. He is one of the noblest figures in the Old Testament, whose private and public record was not marred by one unworthy act. Moses under God was founder of the Theocracy, Samuel was the founder of the Monarchy.

God had intended that Israel should become a great nation under His own immediate reign, but Israel wanted to be like the nations around them and have an earthly king. The evil conduct of Samuel's sons, who were deputy judges, encouraged this ambition. Samuel convened the nation at Mizpah. The Ark is returned to Israel after 20 years. Saul is proclaimed king, and Samuel gives an account of his administration and charges the people to fear the Lord.

LESSON—Samuel's exalted character was due to his being established in religious principles in early life. He became a model of integrity in office. He never enriched himself nor sought the praise of men.

Let us always choose men for public office who have a like standard of honor and justice.

Great Men III -- Saul.

1 Samuel 9-31.

It was prophesied in Deuteronomy 17:14-20, that Israel should have a king. God, however, did not intend him to be an autocratic but a theocratic king, acting always

under divine guidance. Saul, to Israel, was a man after Israel's own heart, so after Samuel had anointed him privately, he was accepted publicly. He was a tall, brave, modest man and made a splendid start. He soon however, manifested much of self-will, for he intruded on the priest's office and disobediently spared the spoils of the Amalekites, and therefore was rejected of God.

An evil spirit now troubles Saul so that in stubbornness and jealousy he seeks the life of David. In a battle with the Philistines, Saul and his sons were killed. Thus closes under a shadow a life that had a glorious promise.

LESSON—In proportion as a man lives for himself or for God, he becomes weak, sinful and miserable, or strong, holy and happy. Natural qualities must be sanctified for them to be a power for good.

Divine grace when persistently resisted is withdrawn, leaving the soul to be troubled by an evil spirit. When grace is humbly and faithfully received, it is followed by more grace. Think of the end of Saul and be wise! Think of the end of Saul of Tarsus and be happy.

Great Men IV -- Jonathan.

1 Samuel 14-20.

Jonathan was the eldest son of Saul, and his father's right hand in all his battles. With only an armor-bearer, Jonathan surprised a Philistine outpost at Gibeah which led to complete victory for Israel. However, he came near being put to death by his father for eating before evening against an edict of the king, Jonathan is best known for his devoted friendship with David, which led him, not only to take David's part against Saul, but also made him willing to surrender his own claim to the throne of Israel. In the battle with the Philistines he fell with his father.

Jonathan was one of the finest spirits who ever lived. So brave and unselfish and such a friend to David, that he is one of the knights of chivalry that we should all imitate. David and Jonathan were one in love of virtue and the fear of God. It is natural for men to set up social ties, but in real friendship there must be a complete union of feeling on all subjects, accompanied by appreciation and affection.

David's life will be considered in the next lesson.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—David mourns the Death of Saul and Jonathan.—2 Samuel 1:17-27.
- []—King over Judah.—2 Samuel 2:1-11.
- []—King over Israel.—2 Samuel 5:1-12.
- []—Davidic Covenant.—2 Samuel 7:4-17
- []—David's Repentance.—2 Samuel 12:1-13
- []—Song of Deliverance.—2 Samuel 22:21-36
- []—Numbering of the People.—2 Samuel 24:1-14.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of 2 Samuel.

Lesson No. 11

LESSON THEME:—2 SAMUEL

2 Samuel 7:4-17.

- **KEY WORD**—"KINGLINESS."
- **KEY VERSE**—2 Samuel 3:18.
- **KEY PHRASE**—"DAVID A TYPE OF THE MESSIAH KING."

NAME—Named like First Samuel, after Samuel the last of the Judges and the first of the prophets.

AUTHOR—The prophets, Nathan and Gad. Time of writing 940 B.C. Covers the period from 1017 to 977 B.C. About 40 years.

PURPOSE—To give the history of David, his character, his reign, his failures and achievements, revealing a kingly man.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Shepherd.
2. Prince.
3. Exile.
4. King.

Great Fact I -- David as Shepherd.

1 Samuel 16-17.

David, the son of Jesse and great-grandson of Ruth and Boaz, was born in Bethlehem. He was the youngest of eight sons, brave and devout spirit. When he was 18, Samuel was divinely directed to anoint him king to succeed Saul. In early life he shepherded his father's flocks, skillfully guiding them and bravely defending them from wild beasts.

His fame as a harpist led him to be called to the court of Saul. He next slays Goliath, but having passed from boyhood to manhood since the king saw him he is not recognized.

LESSON—The shepherd life developed fearlessness and faithfulness in David and gave him time for devout meditation. He thus learned of the Good Shepherd who always sought the good of the flock and was ready to lay down his life for the sheep. Out of this experience he wrote Psalm 23. He learned also how to keep his temper, so that when his older brother, Eliab, taunted him he was able to rule his own spirit. Under the same conditions let us remember that the conflict is not with the scorner but with ourselves. In the fight with Goliath he showed wonderful faith, reasoning that the God who had helped him conquer the lion and bear would make him more than conqueror now. When special difficulties come to us let us remember former deliverances and so labor and pray, that labor and prayer will overcome all things.

Great Fact II -- David a Prince at Court.

1 Samuel 18-20.

David wins the love of Jonathan, Saul's son, and is promoted to a high command in the army, but his success makes Saul jealous so that he makes five attacks upon David's life.

1. He spoke to Jonathan and all his servants that they should kill him.
2. He threw a spear at his head, 1 Samuel 19:10.
3. Sent for David to be brought to him on a sick bed. 1 Samuel 19:15.
4. Sent messengers to seize him at Ramah, 1 Samuel 19:20.
5. Went to Ramah himself after David, 1 Samuel 19:23-24. Saul also flung a spear at Jonathan in his rage at their friendship.

LESSON—David was delivered from all these dangers and wrote the 59th psalm and many others like it testifying that God was his defense and refuge in those days of trouble. When we read these stern Psalms we must remember that danger and treason were all around him so that he was mightily stirred. As the farmer waits for the harvest let us rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him, for evil-doers shall he cut off. Read Psalm 37, which is the good man's medicine for hard times and hard places and the antidote for impatience.

Great Fact III -- David, the Exile.

1 Samuel 21-31.

He flew to Nob where he wrongly persuaded the high priest to give him the showbread. Went westward to Gath where he pretended to be crazy and was driven out by the king. Psalm 34 records this escapade. Returning to the land of Judah he takes refuge in the cave of Adullam and becomes a captain of troops of sympathizers. Psalms 52; Psalm 57; Psalm 142; bear this date. At Engedi David finds Saul asleep and instead of killing him only cut off part of his robe. This generous act of mercy touches Saul's heart for a time.

At Carmel, David threatens but afterwards spares the life of greedy Nabel whom he had protected from robbers, but who wouldn't give him food. After this time Samuel dies and Psalm 63; is written. David spares Saul's life the second time and goes to live among the Philistines for 16 months. Psalm 56 was written. Saul and his three sons having been killed by the Philistines, David's exile ends.

LESSON—During these bitter experiences David learned his own weakness and gained a spirit of humble prayer and perfect trust. Good men will have their fears at times, but what should that man fear who pleases a God who can crush all his adversaries? So let us place our affairs in the hands of the Savior and live a life of constant trust.

Great Fact IV -- David the King.

2 Samuel

For seven and one-half years David reigns over Judah in the south with Hebron as the capital. When a new dynasty came to the throne it was the custom to put the family of the predecessor to death. David, however, had different religious principles. However, Saul's son, Ishbosheth, would not give up the throne without a struggle, so he proclaimed himself king in the north and for seven and one-half years held the northern tribes against David. At last David captures Jerusalem, makes it the capital and removes the Ark to that place. Now thoroughly established on the throne, David earnestly desires to build a temple for the Ark and for the Lord to dwell in. Because he was a man of war God did not grant this desire, but makes Messianic covenant with David that through Christ he should have an everlasting kingdom. 2 Samuel 7:4-16. David had many foreign wars, committed the sin of adultery and murder, of which he deeply repented. Psalm 51 and Psalm 32. He had many family troubles which culminated in the rebellion of his son Absalom, which was quelled. His sin in numbering the people and the land was punished with a three-day pestilence. He gathers great stores of material for the

building of the temple and directs his son Solomon to build it. David dies at the age of seventy years.

LESSON—David is one of the unique men of the world, ranking with Abraham, Moses and Paul. His religious experiences as told in the Psalms have endeared him to all. In character he was unselfish, in ability a great soldier and ruler, as a sacred poet and hymn writer he is unequalled in all times. He is also a more complete type of Christ than any other for he was shepherd and king, lion and lamb, a man of sorrows, then crowned with glory and honor. Let us, like David, have right conceptions of the almightiness and righteousness of God, confidence in the mercy Of God, and a desire to do the will of God.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Building of the Temple.—1 Kings 6:1-14.
- []—Dedication Prayer.—1 Kings 8:22-53.
- []—Folly of Solomon's Son.—1 Kings 12: 1-11.
- []—Elijah.—1 Kings 17:1-16.
- []—Translation of Elijah.—2 Kings 2:1-13.
- []—Israel Carried into Captivity.—2 Kings 17:7-23.
- []—Judah Carried into Captivity.—2 Kings 25:1-21.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire books of 1 & 2 Kings.

Lesson No. 12

LESSON THEME:—1 KINGS and 2 KINGS

1 Kings 8:22-29.

- **KEY WORD**—"TEMPLE."
- **KEY VERSE**—1 Kings 8:27.
- **KEY PHRASE**—"A GLORY-FILLED HOUSE."

NAME—First and Second Kings is one story intended to be a continuation of the books of Samuel. They derive their name from the fact that they record the events of the reign of King Solomon and of the kings of Israel and Judah.

AUTHOR—Jeremiah. Time of writing during the Exile 588-538 B.C. History recorded covers about 400 years from 977-577 B.C. (From the accession of Solomon to the Babylonian captivity and the destruction of the temple.)

PURPOSE—To give the history of the glorious kingdom of Solomon, of the divided kingdom and the captivity. The southern kingdom (Judah) had 20 kings in 390 years (977-587), and the northern kingdom (Israel) had 19 kings in 256 years (977-721), which ended in the Assyrian captivity.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Solomon.
2. Kings.
3. Prophets.

Great Fact I -- Solomon's Reign.

1 Kings 1-10.

Solomon was the son of David and received his religious training from prophet Nathan. He succeeded his father at a favorable time and was approved by God and accepted by the people. His kingdom embraced 60,000 square miles, 10 times more than his father inherited; this shows the achievements of David. Solomon's reign began with a blaze of glory but it ended in a division of the kingdom. His greatest work was the building of the Temple at Mt. Moriah, the eastern hill of Jerusalem. The temple was very magnificent, the materials being of the very best

and overlaid with gold, silver and precious stones, so that a moderate estimate of its cost is \$600,000,000.00. It was 90 feet long by 30 feet wide by 45 feet high.

It contained the outer court of the Gentiles, and the inner court of the Jews, the court of the priests where daily sacrifices were offered up, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, the walls of which were covered with pure gold. In the Holy of Holies was the Ark with the mercy seat, overshadowed by the Cherubim and the supernatural Shekinah, light, the symbol of the presence of God. None but the High Priest, and he only on the Day of Atonement once a year with the blood of his offering, could enter the Holy of Holies. The temple was dedicated with great pomp and solemnity and Solomon's sermon and prayer were masterpieces.

Solomon maintained a wise and strong administration of home affairs, erected many buildings and fortifications. Found leisure for writing the Proverbs and Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes. Formed alliances with foreign nations. Became so famous that the Queen of Sheba visited him and declared upon seeing his glories that the half had not been told her. His decline set in because he married many heathen wives who introduced idolatry. Because of his backsliding God raised up enemies to vex Solomon. Ecclesiastes describes the bitterness of Solomon's heart at this time. Solomon reigned 40 years.

LESSON—We must be wary of success. Not only as to how we get it, but as to how we stand it. To succeed, we must build on a good foundation, must connect with right things and big things, not overlooking small things and then consecrate it all to God's glory.

Great Fact II -- Kings of the Divided Kingdom.

1 Kings 11 – 2 Kings 25.

During Solomon's reign the country groaned under an intolerable burden of taxes. Luxury, vice and idolatry broke down integrity, and the religious principles of the people. There had long been jealousy between the northern kingdom (Israel) and the southern kingdom (Judah), so when Solomon's son Rehoboam, foolishly threatened to impose heavier burdens upon the people, there was instant revolt and Jeroboam was made king of the northern kingdom. He made Shechem his capital and set up idolatrous calf worship at Dan and Bethel. Israel had nine dynasties and 19 kings from Jeroboam to Hoshea, 977-721 B.C., 256 years. Then the people were carried into captivity by Shalmanesser never to return. He was the king of Assyria with his capital at Nineveh. Many of God's prophets warned Israel of

impending captivity if they turned not from idolatry. The names of the prophets are Elijah, Jonah, Amos, Hosea and Micah.

The southern kingdom (Judah) sought to conquer the northern kingdom but failed, and internal divisions weakened both kingdoms. In Judah there was only one dynasty, and 20 kings, from Rehoboam to Zedekiah, which reigned 390 years from 977-587 B.C. The prophets of Judah who kept alive the religion Of Yahweh were Joel, Isaiah, Nathan, Zephaniah, Habakkuk and Jeremiah. Judah fell to Nebuchadnezzar, who had his capital at Babylon, in 587 B.C., about 136 years after the northern kingdom had fallen. Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple was burned. The causes of the captivity are, the people had forsaken God and disregarded His word and ill-treated His prophets. So He permitted the nations to take away their freedom, in order that they might learn in adversity, that which they were too self-willed to learn in the time of privilege.

LESSON—No nation or life can prosper and be happy if it forsakes God and disregards His word. It is not our genius and strength that makes our lives fortunate, but the supporting hand of the Almighty. Great is the gain of godliness. Said a wise Roman, “I would rather have the love of the Emperor, than his gifts.” So acceptance with God is the greatest privilege, for in the light of His countenance is life.

Great Fact III -- Prophets.

The prophets played an important part in the history of these times. For the most part they were flaming evangelists seeking to stir up the consciences of the people, to abolish idolatry, and keep religion pure and undefiled. Also to encourage a spirit of earnest expectation of the coming of the Messiah.

Perhaps the outstanding prophet was Elijah, who ministered in Israel during the reign of Ahab who had married a heathen princess, Jezebel. She did much to spread the worship on Baal. When Yahweh’s school at the prophets had been broken up, and heathenism was at its zenith, Elijah suddenly appeared and prophesied a three-year drought. While in retirement he was fed by the ravens. He gave life to a widow’s son at Zarephath, challenged Ahab again at Mt. Carmel, brought rain down from Heaven, trained Elisha as his successor and ascended into heaven in a chariot of fire.

Elijah is the most romantic character of the Bible.

LESSON—In the midst of the Dark Ages the prophets of God have always borne witness to the fact that God lives.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Psalm of Thanksgiving,—1 Chronicles 16:7-25.
- []—Davidic Covenant,—1 Chronicles 17:7-15.
- []—Counsel to Israel.—1 Chronicles 28:1-10.
- []—Solomon established in his Kingdom.—2 Chronicles 1:1-17.
- []—Fame of Solomon.—2 Chronicles 9:1-8.
- []—Division of the kingdom.—2 Chronicles 10:12-19.
- []—Reforms under Hezekiah.—2 Chronicles 31:1-12.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire books of 1 & 2 Chronicles.

Lesson No. 13

LESSON THEME:—1 and 2 Chronicles

1 Chronicles 17:1-7.

- **KEY WORD**—“**PROVIDENCE.**”
- **KEY VERSE**—1 Chronicles 29:12.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“**HISTORY FROM ADAM TO HEZEKIAH.**”

NAME—The word “Chronicle” means a record. This book is so named because it is the time of the restoration of Judah from the brief record of events from Adam to the captivity.

The two books of Chronicles are one in the Hebrew Bible. While they largely cover the same grounds as I and II Kings, Chronicles was written especially for the Jews after the return from Babylon and follows the kingdom of Judah from the ecclesiastical viewpoint, and keeps in view the covenant promises.

AUTHOR—Ezra. Time of writing, after the captivity in Babylon, 450-400 B.C.

PURPOSE—

1. To show how God preserved the tribe of Judah, and the line of David through which the Messiah was to come.
2. To encourage the Jews to rebuild the temple.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Recognizing.
2. Overthrowing.
3. Establishing.
4. Rending.
5. Reforming.

Great Fact I -- Man Recognizing God.

1 Chronicles 1-6.

This record of men and their parentage is not a mere stringing together of names, but shows that throughout Israel’s history God was ever behind the shadows

keeping watch above His own. Ever and anon was selecting one and rejecting another, and the basis of selection was character built on faith and obedience. Disobedience forfeited the rights and privileges of the covenant. Noble birth or high family connections never helped. God always chose men who would carry out His will. Men were either made or ruined in the proportion that they recognized God in all the events of life.

LESSON—There are many factors that lead to the success of one, and the absence of which leads to the failure of another. Among these are purity, honesty, industry, courage, shrewdness and politeness. But success will be short-lived and superficial unless it comes as “the heritage of them that loved the Lord.”

Great Fact II -- God Overthrowing Saul.

1 Chronicles 10.

Ezra did not give us the history of Saul’s reign, but only his overthrow, through which David comes to the throne.

In a battle with the Philistines Saul is fatally defeated, and 10:13 tells us the reason of it was “his transgressions against the Lord.”

No man’s greatness can exempt him from the judgment of God.

Saul had been a good son, and a brave and modest king in the early part of his reign. However, rebellion against God, stubbornness against God’s will, and jealousy of David, wrecked his whole career. He who often conquered the Philistines could not conquer himself.

LESSON—Likelihoods are not certainties. Our careers may have every prospect of being useful and happy. Whether or not the prospect will be realized, depends upon whether we choose our own time and our own way, or whether our wills are mastered by the Master. No man can resist God and prosper. The God-dominated heart and mind, pressing through the openings that God provides, is the only one who is really useful and happy.

Great Fact III -- God Establishing David and Solomon.

1 Chronicles 11 – 2 Chronicles 10.

Chronicles here gives us an account of the crowning of David at Hebron by united Israel. Tells us of David's mighty men who were doubtless made great by their leader's greatness. Tells us of the capture of Jerusalem and the bringing of the Ark to that place. It is sometimes called the city of David, because he made it the center of Israel's life and glory.

The account is next given of the making of Solomon king, the preparations of site, materials and labor for the temple, and the organization of the Levites, priests and singers for the service of the temple and kingdom.

Chronicles deals particularly with the glorious periods of the theocracy, depicting its bright scenes and treating as briefly as possible those of the opposite character.

For this reason the book contains more good cheer for the downcast than any other historical book in the Old Testament.

LESSON—What God did for David and Solomon he will do for every good man. God is ever looking for wholly dedicated men whom He may exalt to places of highest usefulness. Take William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army. The fact that God established and owned the work of his hands was due to the utter abandonment of self and of selfish motives and to his one desire that God should have all that there was of him.

Great Fact IV -- Dividing the Kingdom.

2 Chronicles 11-36.

The second division of Chronicles tells us how the ten northern tribes revolted and chose Jeroboam as their king, and how they rejected the worship of Yahweh.

In the south, Judah kept the forms of the true religion, although there was a great lack of warm spiritual worship, and such a disregard of God's law and God's messengers that the people were taken captive to Babylon, and the temple was burned down.

LESSON—A formal religion has no power in the life of a nation. A glorious temple will not take the place of the mighty Spirit of God. What made the Puritans so mighty was not their rules and regulations, but their sublime hold upon God.

Great Fact V -- Judah Sometimes Reforming.

Under Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah, reformations and revivals were attempted. Fasts were proclaimed, idols removed, the law was read and the people were called to prayer.

At one time religious enthusiasm ran so high that they threatened to put to death every person who did not seek the Lord, “and when they sought .him with all their hearts, He was found of them”—and gave them rest!

The true path of blessing is found in learning, believing and obeying.

The self-willed man is not happy! When a man proudly says, “I am my own master,” the answer is, “Could you have worse?” Self-will is captivity and ruin, but loving obedience to the will of God with its self-control and self-denial is health and peace. Human goodness and human nobleness consist in self-forgetfulness the disregard of personal indulgence, and of personal advantages. At their best, David and Solomon were great men, and did a great work because they had a great God. Our conception of God controls everything.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Decree of Restoration.—Ezra 1:1-11.
- []—Altar Set Up.—Ezra 3:1-8.
- []—Enemies Seek to Hinder,—Ezra 4:1-10.
- []—Enemies’ Letter to the King,—Ezra 4:11-24.
- []—Prophets Encourage the Work,—Ezra 5:1-12.
- []—Temple Finished.—Ezra 6:15-22.
- []—Ezra’s Work,—Ezra 8:21-36.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Ezra

Lesson No. 14

LESSON THEME:—EZRA

Ezra 9:5-9.

- **KEY WORD**—“RESTORATION.”
- **KEY VERSE**—Ezra 9:9.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“RETURN AND REBUILD THE TEMPLE”

NAME—This book was named for its author, Ezra, the priest, teacher and reformer, who was from one of the best Jewish families, and who could trace his line back to Aaron. He was the first of the scribes, who, in our Lord’s time, had degenerated so that they were odiously connected with the Pharisees. He was called a scribe because he was a teacher, and copier of the Law of Moses, and because he compiled the list of inspired books of the Old Testament. He also instituted synagogues for the first time for the local worship of the people.

PURPOSE—To give an account of one of the most important events in Jewish history—the return of the people of Judah (the southern kingdom) from the Babylonian captivity. The northern ten tribes who were carried away captive to Assyria never returned. Some of the people doubtless conformed their lives and religion to the standards of the nations around them. A faithful few likely found their way back to the land of their fathers, but what became of the ten tribes as a whole is a question of tremendous interest.

From this time, owing to the predominance of the tribe of Judah, the people are known as “the Jew.”

TIME OF WRITING—About 444 B.C. The first six chapters covers 23 years, and mark the return of 50,000 under Zerubbabel B.C. 536. Between the sixth and seventh chapters there is an interval of 57 years during which the incidents of the book of Esther occur, then Ezra at the head of 6,000 exiles returned, B.C. 458. (The book covers 80 years in all.) Thirteen years later Nehemiah arrived at Jerusalem to build the walls of the city. 445 B.C.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Return.
2. Rebuilding.

3. Ministry.
4. Separation.

Great Fact I -- The Return from Babylon.

Ezra 1-2.

The Babylonian captivity did not bring the Jews to national repentance, and therefore did not lead to national restoration. The Babylonians had been conquered by the Medes and Persians. When Cyrus, their king, gave permission to the captives to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, only 50,000 availed themselves of the privilege, and they never did regain their political independence, but were subject to Gentile rulers. God stirred up Cyrus to let his people go, and he gave into the hands of Zerubbabel 5,400 vessels of gold and silver which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple when he captured Jerusalem. Besides this the people took with them a great store of goods. The genealogies had been carefully kept during the captivity. They now set forth on the long journey, which occupied about four months over the 700 miles from Babylon to Jerusalem. From the first deportation of the Jews to the return was exactly 70 years, and there was a reason why it should be just 70. Israel had not kept every seventh year as a Sabbath year of rest for the land. Seventy Sabbatic years were desecrated, so it took seventy years of captivity to atone for the sin. Nor was the discipline in vain. The Jews were cured of idolatry; they have never since observed the religion of their heathen neighbors. They showed a new devotion towards the Sanctuary, and learned the value of the scriptures as never before. Thus God overruled the captivity for their good.

LESSON—Trouble will sometimes teach us what nothing else will. Indeed, it is very useful and profitable to the real Christian. Jonah slept while on board the ship, but immediately he was cast into the sea, he repented and prayed. The prodigal had no thought of returning to his father's house until he got into trouble.

Great Fact II -- Rebuilding of the Temple.

Ezra 3-6.

After the return to Jerusalem, the people began by setting up the altar of daily sacrifice. It was wise for them to begin with God. The altar of sacrifice (the burnt offering) was the center of the Jewish religion, just as its antitype, the Cross, is the center of Christianity. Care was taken to build the new altar on the foundations of

the old one, doubtless to indicate the fact that the religion they brought back from captivity was the same as that they had taken away with them. The worship as prescribed in Leviticus is re-established, and the foundations of the temple are laid amid tender memories and bright hopes.

The Samaritans, who were the descendants of an Assyrian colony planted in the province of Samaria, asked but were refused permission to join them in this work. When permission was refused they hindered the work by withholding supplies, and by lodging accusations with the king of Persia, under whom the Jews were subject. Work now had to be suspended for about fifteen years, during which time they had the altar and a tabernacle. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah stimulated the flagging zeal of the builders, and new permission being obtained, the work was resumed, and proceeded so rapidly that in 516 B.C. the temple was completed and dedicated with great joy.

LESSON—Every important work has its hindrances, and no great results have been achieved without overcoming obstacles. Hidden away, however, God usually has a Haggai who will press the reform at all costs. Whenever there is a great task to be accomplished there is always a clamor for delay. God needs men of action who will not stand shivering on the banks thinking of the cold and danger, but men who will jump in and scramble through. Life is too short for so much hesitation and calculation.

Once the temple was finished the people began to live a new life. The house of God supplies the spiritual needs of man. The instinct of worship leads men to find peace within the walls of the sanctuary. The preaching of the everlasting gospel meets the human need of salvation. In the sanctuary we dream dreams and see visions of the Land beyond the setting sun. “There Heaven comes down, our waiting souls to bless.” Let us set great store upon the place where we meet God.

Great Fact III -- Ezra's Ministry in Jerusalem.

Ezra 7-8

Eighty years have now elapsed since Zerubbabel and his company had returned to the holy city, Ezra with about 6,000 souls now set forth to Jerusalem. He assembled his company at the river Ahava, due east of Damascus, proclaimed a fast there and called on God for ‘protection and blessing. Four months were occupied in crossing the desert. Besides carrying with them a multitude of gold and

silver vessels, Ezra and his people had an order from the king authorizing the state treasurer at Jerusalem to pay him what was necessary for his sacred task.

Upon his arrival at Jerusalem he put down idolatry, and arranged, edited and published the Old Testament, a work for which he will always be famous. He then read the scriptures publicly in the presence of the people and set up synagogues at all central places, for the reading of the Law, prayer and exhortation. The synagogue system tended greatly to reduce idolatry and promote devotion to the worship of God.

LESSON—We also may be devout students of God’s will as revealed in His Word “preparing our hearts to seek the law of the Lord to do it.” We may open our hearts to receive heavenly influences, and gain by humility and prayer, “the hand of our God upon us for good.” We may make known the will of God to others, teaching the truth of Jesus Christ. We may co-operate cheerfully with others, yielding our preferences to their, “being of the same mind in the Lord” with those who are our fellow laborers in Christian work.

Philips Brooks gave as a definition of faith “Forsaking All I Take Him.” It will be noticed that the initial letters spell faith. It would be a good thing if, like Ezra, we made as the motto of our lives, “Forsaking All I Take Him!”

Great Fact IV -- Separation.

Ezra 9-10.

Ezra found that the Jews had paid no regard to the law which prohibited their marriage with idolaters, and that the very princes had been foremost in forming these unhallowed alliances. Ezra was deeply mortified and ashamed of this offense and made confession unto God for the people. With contrite hearts, the people put away their idolatrous wives, purity was again restored and the Law honored.

LESSON—As Christians we are under obligations to renounce the world and all familiar interaction with those whose character and conduct might prove a snare to beguile us into sin, 2 Corinthians 6:14-17. In the very names for believers we find something to suggest separation, “a garden enclosed,” Song 4:12; “a lily among thorns,” Song 2:2; “a peculiar people,” 1 Peter 2:9. A Christian is represented as a “soldier,” 2 Timothy 2:4, who obviously cannot discharge his duty if he makes friends with his Master’s enemies. Of course this separation does not mean the cold, haughty distance of the Pharisee. Civility and kindness must not be neglected,

but we must keep away from those who would make us lose our personal holiness or who would dull our consciences.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Nehemiah's Prayer.—Nehemiah 1:5-11.
- []—Nehemiah Views the Walls.—Nehemiah 2:11-20.
- []—Opposition.—Nehemiah 4:1-9.
- []—The law read.—Nehemiah 8:9-18.
- []—Confession of the people.—Nehemiah 9:7-15.
- []—The covenant.—Nehemiah 9:32-38.
- []—Fidelity encouraged.—Nehemiah 13:1-22.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Nehemiah

Lesson No. 15

LESSON THEME:—NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah 4:1-6.

- **KEY WORD**—"CITY-BUILDING."
- **KEY VERSE**—Nehemiah 6:3
- **KEY PHRASE**—"THE REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM,"

NAME—This book was named for its author, Nehemiah, who held the honorable office of cup-bearer to the king of Persia. He was a worthy member of the old line of Hebrew believers, one whose character was cast in the same mold as that of Moses, Joshua and David of other days. He was sent to Judah as Persian governor of the province.

TIME OF WRITING—About 431 B.C. Events cover a period of eleven years, 445 B.C. to 434 B.C.

PURPOSE—To describe the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, the renewing of the covenant, and the temple and Sabbath reforms.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Rebuilding.
2. Renewing.
3. Reforming.

Great Fact I -- Rebuilding the Walls.

Nehemiah 1-6.

Thirteen years after Ezra arrived in Jerusalem, Nehemiah paid the city a visit. He viewed the ruined walls of the city and realized that no national life or security would be possible until they were protected from their enemies. With great faith and enterprise he succeeded in getting the Jews to rebuild the walls in the short period of 52 days. The Samaritans did everything in their power to frustrate the plans and work of the people, by ridicule, by craft and by conspiracy but without success. Under the protection of God they continued the work, and Nehemiah's unselfishness was so great that all the time he acted as governor, he drew no salary

from the state. After twelve years he returned to the court of the king of Persia, according to the promise he had previously made.

LESSON—The success achieved in building the wall was due to the fact that the people “had a mind to work, to wait and to pray.”

The great tasks of the world are accomplished, not so much through genius as through labor. Many have a mind only to think and dream. In theory they can solve any problem, but more difficulties are removed by working than by thinking. “Labor and prayer overcome all things!” Enthusiastic work is the way that opens the treasuries of contentment and advancement.

The people also had a mind to wait. Just when they desired to build at full speed, they had to divide their forces and give attention to defense. Progress of the best kind is usually slow; we must be satisfied to advance in life as we walk, step by step. To know how to wait is a rare quality, but a most valuable one.

The people also had a mind to pray. Nehemiah said, “I prayed the God of Heaven.” Everybody prays when they get into trouble, but if we pray in time we would not get into trouble. Mr. Spurgeon was once asked the question, “How do you pray?” “I go to the Bible and find a promise applicable to my need, then I reverently plead that promise before the Lord, asking Him to keep it for Jesus’ sake; and I believe God will, and He does.”

Great Fact II -- Renewing the Covenant.

Nehemiah 8-11.

While the events of the early chapters of Nehemiah were transpiring, Ezra had probably been recalled to Persia, hence Nehemiah found in Jerusalem, the oppression of the poor by the rich, desecration of the Sabbath, negligence with respect to the tithes and offerings, and many marriages of Jews with Gentiles or heathen women.

As soon as Ezra returned he resumed the work of instructing the people of the Law. This stirred them up to repentance, and the Feast of Tabernacles (commemorating God’s goodness to them during the forty years they were in the wilderness in the time of Moses), was solemnly observed. After the feast a great fast was kept, sackcloth was worn, and dust was sprinkled on the head. In the temple court, the vast assembly listened to the words of the Law and confessed their own sins. Then the Levites brought forward a written bond of covenant,

pledging them to walk in God's law, and to make lasting provision for the priest and temple service.

LESSON—Revivals of religion have always been associated with a revival of Bible-reading. This is infinitely precious to the devout believer, and infinitely powerful in changing lives.

The covenant with God that the Jews entered into helped them to keep true to Him. It is a good thing for the individual Christian to make a definite and sacred covenant with the God of his salvation. To vow to forsake all besetting sins, to practice every virtue, and seek to possess every fruit of the Spirit.

Christmas Evans, after being sorely tried, was led to enter afresh into personal covenant with God, and such was the joy which followed, that he said of it "After forming the covenant, I felt great calmness and peace. I had the feeling of a poor man who had just come under the protection of a great king, and obtained a pension for life, the fear of poverty and want left me forever, I felt the safety which the little chicken feels under the wings of the hen." Let us subscribe our hands to be forever the Lord's, to go anywhere, do anything, to endure any hardship, to live and die for the Lord.

Great Fact III -- Reforming Through Obedience.

Nehemiah 12-13.

After the walls of the city had been finished twelve years, a solemn dedication of the same took place. The long interval between is accounted for by the absence of Nehemiah from Jerusalem. The very act of dedication shows that the people relied not upon mere walls for safety, but upon divine protection.

During Nehemiah's absence, the old evil practices had come in again, such as mixed marriages, trade on the Sabbath, irregularity in paying tithes, and the debasing of the temple. Part of the temple had been used as a dwelling house of a heathen! (By Tobiah, the Ammonite.)

Nehemiah encouraged the Jews to lead a separate life again, the temple was cleansed, the Sabbath made sacred, and purity of worship restored.

LESSON—Nehemiah would make no compromise with enemies within the temple, or within the city, or without. He rebuked priests and nobles alike when they violated the teachings of the scriptures. He feared God so much that he feared

man little. He had faith to act with God and for God. He did not simply believe in right principles, and then do nothing for them. So when we believe that men will be forever lost unless saved by having faith in Christ, then we should be willing to put blood and sweat into the business of saving men. Are our lives bravely bearing witness to the truth that there is a hell to avoid and a heaven to win? Are we soul-winners, or soul-losers? We need more aroused Nehemiahs. Only in this way will our homes and cities be changed by redemptive grace.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Story of Vashti.—Esther 1:1-12.
- []—Esther made queen.—Esther 2:1-11.
- []—Haman's plot.—Esther 3:1-15.
- []—Jews fasting.—Esther 4:1-14.
- []—Courage of Esther.—Esther 5:1-14.
- []—Mordecai exalted.—Esther 6:1-14.
- []—Haman hanged.—Esther 7:1-10.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

- [] The entire book of Esther.

Lesson No. 16

LESSON THEME:—ESTHER

Esther 9:20-25.

- **KEY WORD**—"PRESERVATION."
- **KEY VERSE**—Esther 4:14.
- **KEY PHRASE**—"THE FATE OF THE JEWS IN THE HANDS OF A WOMAN."

NAME—This book is named for the Jewish orphan, Esther, who became a Persian queen, and through whose efforts the Jews were preserved from destruction. She was a woman of good judgment, magnificent self-control, and of the noblest self-sacrifice, ranking with the great women of the Bible.

AUTHOR—Probably Ezra.

TIME OF WRITING—About 460 B.C.

The events of the book cover 12 years, and took place between the sixth and seventh chapters of Ezra. We should remember in reading Esther that the Jews are in captivity in Persia, carried there by the Babylonians, as reported in 2 Kings 24-15.

PURPOSE—To relate an event which involved the destruction or the preservation of the Jews, and to explain the origin of the Feast of Purim. The word "Purim" means "lots," because lots were cast to see which month the Jews should be destroyed.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Refusal.
2. Crowning.
3. Plotting.
4. Feasting.

Great Fact I -- Refusal of Vashti.

Esther 1.

King Ahasuerus entertained at a great feast in the royal palace of Shushan all the banquet was on an enormous scale and ex-nobles and princes of his kingdom. This tended over 180 days. The men were feasted in the palace gardens, while the women were received by Queen Vashti in her private apartments. When much wine had been drunk, the king commanded that Vashti should attend the feast in order to show off her beauty to the semi-drunken revelers. Such a proceeding was a great breach of Persian etiquette, and an outrage upon one whom he, above all men, was bound to protect. Vashti therefore refused to obey. This made the king a laughing stock to all at the court, and on the advice of the princess, Vashti was deposed.

LESSON—If Vashti had been proud of her beauty, and shameless, she would have gladly obeyed, but being feminine and modest, she would not make herself a gazing stock for wine-drinkers.

Vashti may be taken as an example of devotion to just and pure ideals. She was true to her best self, and suffered for the time being, “but to thy own self be true and it follows as the night, the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.” Modesty is the crown jewel of womanhood. None ever err from having too much of it, while thousands err from lack of it.

Great Fact II -- Crowning of Esther.

Esther 2.

Esther is now selected to succeed Vashti. She was a Jewish orphan who had been brought up by her uncle, Mordecai, and was beautiful in face and form. Upon seeing her, Ahasuerus instantly made her his queen, placed the royal crown upon her head, and celebrated the joyful event by a great feast, and a remission of taxes for a certain time. Thus the humble Jewish maiden became the queen of the empire which comprised more than half of the known world.

LESSON—We read that Esther pleased and obtained the favor of those who could advance her interests, so young people should cultivate qualities and manners that give them favor with men. There is a foolish idea some hold that when one becomes courteous he ceases to be independent. But the scripture urges us “Be courteous,” 1 Peter 3:8, and we read that “the Lord Jesus grew in favor with God and men,” Luke 2:52. With one discourteous speech Rehoboam lost the ten tribes

of Israel, and could not win them back even with his blood. While Alexander the Great won the hearts of his footmen, by calling them his “fellow” footmen. The best Christian is the Christian who is most humble, and the truest lady or gentleman is that one who is the most courteous.

Those who enjoy promotion should endeavor with watchfulness and prayer to use it for the good of their fellowmen and glory of God.

Great Fact III -- Plotting of Haman.

Esther 3-5.

Between chapters two and three there is an interval of some years. Haman has now become the chief minister to the king. In the East the men are so servile that a new favorite of the court receives royal honors. All bowed down before Haman except one man, Mordecai. But he, being a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, would not concede divine honors to a man! This enraged Haman, and he resolved, that if Mordecai, because he was a Jew, would not bow down to him, then there should be no more Jews—he would have them all put to death. To decide which day his enemies should be destroyed Haman cast lots, and the day that this indicated was the 13th of March, which was ten months distant. To obtain the king’s consent to his plot, Haman asserted that they were disloyal subjects. He also offered to pay into the king’s treasury a great sum of money. The result of his bribe was that King Ahasuerus signed a royal decree that on the day set, all the Jews within his kingdom, young and old, men and women, should be killed and their property confiscated. The Jews, clothed in sackcloth, fasted and prayed to God. Queen Esther inquired into Mordecai’s grief, and he gave her a copy of the decree and added these significant words, “And who knoweth whether thou are come to the kingdom for such a time as this.”

Esther venturing before the king, is received with favor and invites the king and Haman to a banquet. That night the king, unable to sleep, had the records brought in and finds that Mordecai, who had once saved the king’s life, had not been rewarded. Haman is called in and asked, what shall be done to the man the king delights to honor. Imagining that he himself was the man the king had in mind, he suggested the highest honor he could think of, which was carried out, not for himself, but for Mordecai. The king granted Esther’s plea, Haman is hanged on the scaffold he had erected for Mordecai. The Jews were allowed to defend themselves and Mordecai was advanced to the place of honor next to the king.

LESSON—It is astounding that, in order to revenge himself for one man's discourtesy Haman should seek the destruction of a whole race. However, he left out of his calculations the God of this race, and in this respect he resembles many of the persecutors of Christianity. Julian (331-363 A. D.) emperor of Rome, sought to stamp out Christianity and bring back paganism, but at his death he said, "Thou Galilean hast conquered!" We scarcely realize the constant plotting that goes on against Bible churches and Bible Christians, but Isaiah 54:17 is still true. A persecutor once said to a Christian woman, "You will soon taste the bitterness of death." But her answer was, "No, I NEVER shall, for death has lost its sting, and the grave gains no victory over those who are in Christ Jesus."

Great Fact IV -- Feasting.

Esther 9.

After the Jews had triumphed over their enemies, they had a Thanksgiving Day, and the festival became an annual holiday under the name of the Feast of Purim, or Feast of Lots, which falls on the 14th and 15th days of March, the 13th being observed as a fast in commemoration of Esther's fast before going in uninvited to the king. When the feast is celebrated, and the name of Haman is mentioned, shouts fill the synagogue, "May his name perish!" While the memory of Esther and Mordecai is cherished with gratitude and warmth. The Jews remember that, although they were in captivity, they were not forsaken by God, and because He spared them then, He will yet recall them to the Land of Promise.

LESSON—When mercies have been received in common, they should be acknowledged in common. Praise is just and due tribute for all God's blessings; for what else do the best favors of God call for at our hands? Thinkful and thankful are closely allied in their Anglo-Saxon derivations. To be thankful is to be thoughtful or mindful of benefits received. A beautiful tradition says that when God created the world He asked the angels what they thought of the work of His hands. One of them replied that it was perfect and that only one thing was lacking, namely, voices clear, mighty and harmonious ever filling the world day and night with sweet sounds of thanksgiving for the incomparable blessings of their Maker. So our thanksgiving should not be just an annual affair. It should be constant, the voice of love, which is ever living and fresh in our hearts. When David was wearied, in praising God, he called upon the sun, the moon, and the stars, to take up his Creator's praise! Psalm 148.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Job and his accuser.—Job 1:1-12.
- []—Job afflicted.—Job 1:13-28.
- []—Bildad thinks Job a hypocrite.—Job 8:1-22.
- []—Job answers his friends.—Job 12:1-25.
- []—Lord speaks to Job.—Job 38:1-18.
- []—Job’s self-judgment.—Job 42:1-9.
- []—Job vindicated and honored.—Job 42:10-17.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

- [] The entire book of Job.

Lesson No. 17

LESSON THEME:—JOB

Job 23:1-10.

- **KEY WORD**—“SUFFERING.”
- **KEY VERSE**—Job 5:17.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“TRUSTING GOD IN SPITE OF TRIALS”

NAME—This book is named for the outstanding character of the book, Job, who lived in the land of Uz northeast of Palestine, probably just before the time of Abraham, about 2000 B.C. The book finds its place between the eleventh and twelfth chapters of Genesis, and is doubtless the oldest book of the Bible. Events cover one year of Job’s life.

AUTHOR—Probably Moses while in the desert of Midian, about 1520 B.C. It is possible that the teachings of the book were delivered to suffering Israel in Egypt, to comfort them under their burdens, and to encourage them in the hope, that as with Job, so God would also deliver and enrich them.

PURPOSE—To show the disciplinary nature of suffering, and to inspire patience with the misfortunes of life.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Afflictions.
2. Discussions.
3. Addresses.
4. Prosperity.

Great Fact I -- Afflictions.

The story opens with Job a prosperous and upright man. Satan’s theory was that Job was good just because he was prosperous. God therefore gave Satan permission to afflict Job in order to test his righteousness. Job loses his children and property, for they were swept away in a single day. He next loses his health, for he is smitten with a form of leprosy, which quickly covers the body with boils. He suffers tortures and has little hope of recovery. He next loses his good name, for his best friends think he has committed some sin which has brought upon him

his present troubles. Yet, in spite of these great trials, Job did not sin with his lips. He said, “What shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we receive evil? The Lord giveth and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!”

LESSON—We see that Satan is not only a tempter’ but an accuser of the saints, Revelation 12:10; and that he is permitted a certain power of sifting or testing among believers. However, they are sustained in their trials and kept in the faith by the prayers of Christ. Luke 22:31-32.

We learn,

1. That if Satan can find his way into the very presence of God with his slanders, it is more than likely that he is very busy with his falsehoods in the churches of God on earth.
2. That if so good a man as Job did not escape the accusations of Satan then it will not be surprising if ordinary Christians are accused.
3. If God permitted Job and Peter to be cast into Satan’s sieve, then we must expect also to be tested and tried.
4. That if God set a limit to Satan’s power, in his dealings with Job, how much more certain it is that he will limit Satan’s authority’ over us, who are less able to stand his attacks.
5. That if God sustained Job when passing through the fiery ordeal and brought him out victor, how much more will He sustain us, and “give us twice as much as we had before?” Job 24:10.

Great Fact II -- Discussion as to Job’s Righteousness.

Job 4-27.

Job’s three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, arrive to comfort him, and there are three cycles of speeches, in which the problems of Jobs’ afflictions, and the revelation of evil to the righteousness of God, is thoroughly discussed. Job’s “comforters” argued that suffering is the penalty for sin, therefore his troubles were the result and the evidence of an ungodly life. Job, in spite of the reproaches of his friends, asserted his righteousness and urged, that even if the pure eye of God were to try him he would come forth as gold, 23:10. A young man, Elihu dissatisfied with the ideas of the older three, impetuously breaks in upon the discussion. His theory is that God-inflicted sufferings are chastisements that proceed from a loving

purpose to purge out faults, to purify and to strengthen; and they should be borne in the right spirit, namely, in faith and humility.

LESSON—

1. Without doubt suffering does follow sin, as the cartwheel follows the horse. Man in his honest moments will admit that he brings a good many of life's sufferings upon himself through his own sins. However, this does not explain the cause of all sufferings for thousands of little children who have not sinned, and who suffer. There are other causes.
2. Elihu suggests a second cause. God purifying and developing men and women through trials and sorrows so that they become more humble, more unselfish, more noble and useful than they ever were in the days of prosperity. This, however, does not explain all the causes of trial. There are thousands of cases of severe discipline, where it does not seem to be needed, and thousands of people seem to need it who do not get it.
3. Henry Churchill King suggests a third reason for suffering. That without it true virtue would scarcely be possible. That if temporal happiness and temporal reward always followed good living or good deeds, then men would be good simply for what they could get out of it and unselfishness would die out. But because the same thing happens to the righteous as does to the wicked, therefore the righteous love God for what He is, and not for what they get out of Him.
4. A fourth way of looking at sufferings, is to remember that God's ways are higher than our ways, Isaiah 55:9; that His infinity and majesty are so wonderful, that we may well leave the riddle for Him to explain, "when we shall know, even as we are known," 1 Corinthians 13:12. Coulson suggests that if an ant were to crawl into the brain of a man it could not see things and understand things as man sees them and understands them. Neither can a man, who is nothing but an ant as compared with God, put himself in the place of God and understand divine mysteries. When Payson, in the midst of great suffering, was asked if he saw any reason for the visitation, replied. "No but I am well satisfied as if I saw ten thousand; God's will is the very perfection of all reasons."

Great Fact III -- Yahweh's Addresses.

Job 38-41.

In answer to Job's repeated demands that God would appear and solve the riddle of his life, the Lord answers Job out of a whirlwind. He does not refer to Job's individual problem, but in a series of questions asks him, as he thinks himself capable of fathoming all things, to expound the mysteries of the origin and preservation of the world, the wonders of the atmosphere, and the instincts of the animals; and as he thinks that God is not conducting the world right, invites him to seize the reigns of governments himself to clothe himself with divine thunder and quell the rebellious forces of evil in the universe. Job is humbled and abashed, and lays his hand upon his mouth, and repents his hasty words in dust and ashes.

LESSON—It is an amazing act of presumption for a mere creature to find fault with God. The first sign of wisdom in a man is a realization of his own littleness and of God's greatness. Only the mind that planned the world can understand its government, and just as every phase of the material world is stamped with wisdom, so is also the moral and spiritual world. The more we understand of God's ways in redemption and providence, the more we admire them, and worship Him. Most men believe in the existence of God, but most men are seriously ignorant of His character. We should have a profound and an increasing faith in His wisdom and love. He is our divine ally, within us and about us, without Him we are helpless, with Him we are mighty!

Great Fact IV -- Job's Prosperity Restored.

Job 42.

Job's false comforters are reprimanded, are urged to offer sacrifice, and are pardoned on the intercession of Job. He was granted twice his former possessions, though before he was the greatest of all the men on the earth, Job 1:3; 42:12. The Lord also gave him exactly the same number of children he had lost. He lived 140 years after his trial.

LESSON—Although the honor of even a good man may be temporarily overshadowed by misfortune, yet God will cause the night of sorrow to be followed by the morning of joy. He will never forsake those who are faithful to Him. The story of Job also pictures to us that a peaceful old age in the bosom of a Christian family is one of the choicest blessings a saint can enjoy this side of heaven. Thus the beautiful and practical lessons of Job appear like so many flowers in a well-watered garden, proving a blessing to thousands, who have "heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful."

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Psalms of Law.—Psalm 1; Psalm 11; Psalm 19.
- []—Psalms of Creation.—Psalm 19; Psalm 29 ; Psalm 104.
- []—Psalms of Judgment.—Psalm 10; Psalm 14; Psalm 28; Psalm 35; Psalm 52; Psalm 53.
- []—Psalms of the Christ.—Psalm 116; Psalm 22; Psalm 24; Psalm 40; Psalm 41.
- []—Psalm of Life.—Psalm 3; Psalm 18; Psalm 31; Psalm 41; Psalm 60; Psalm 68.
- []—Psalms of the Heart.—Psalm 6; Psalm 38 ; Psalm 41; Psalm 23; Psalm 6; Psalm 21; Psalm 4.
- [] – Psalms of God.—Psalm 90; Psalm 139; Psalm 45; Psalm 18; Psalm 36; Psalm 8.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

- [] The entire book of Psalms.

Lesson No. 18

LESSON THEME:—Psalms

Psalms 95:14.

- **KEY WORD**—“**WORSHIP.**”
- **KEY VERSE**—Psalm 95:6.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“**A BOOK OF HEART-FELT RELIGION.**”

NAME—The Hebrew title of the book is “Book of Praises,” so called because it is a manual for the nurture of the spiritual life in private as well as in public worship. “It is a marvelous record of human hearts pouring themselves out from age to age in communion with God.” It has so much of Christ and His gospel as well as of God and His Law that it might well be called a Summary of both Testaments. Bishop Ryle says: “The Book of Psalms is full of Christ—Christ in humiliation, Christ suffering, Christ dying, Christ rising again, Christ coming the second time, Christ reigning over all. Both advents are here the advent in suffering to bear the cross, the advent in power to wear the crown. Both kingdoms are here—the kingdom of grace, during which the elect are gathered; the kingdom of glory, when every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord. Let us always read the Psalms with a peculiar reverence, saying to ourselves, “A greater than David is here.”

WRITERS—There are 150 Psalms.

- 50 of them are anonymous,
- 73 were written by David,
- 122 by Asaph,
- 10 by the sons of Korah,
- 2 by Solomon,
- 1 by Moses,
- 1 by Ethan and
- 1 by Heman.

TIME OF WRITING—The Psalms were composed during a period of about one thousand years from the time of Moses (about 1500 B.C.) to the time of Ezra (about 450 B.C.). They were collected and arranged by Ezra. There are about 70 references to the Psalms in the New Testament.

ARRANGEMENT—In the Hebrew text the Psalms are arranged into five distinct books, reminding one that the Pentateuch is divided in like manner, Book I. Psalm. 1-41; Book II, Psalm. 42-72; Book III, Psalm. 73-89 Book IV, Psalm. 90-106; Book V. Psalm. 107-150. Each of the five divisions ends with the same doxology, “Amen, Amen, Hallelujah!”

PURPOSE—To provide a book of devotion for the Lord’s People.

Following Dr. A. T. Pierson we will group the Psalms in seven divisions:—

1. Psalms of Law.
2. Of Creation.
3. Of Judgment.
4. Of Christ.
5. Of Life.
6. Of Heart.
7. Of God.

Great Fact I -- Psalms of the Law or of the Scriptures,

Psalm 1; Psalm 11; Psalm 119.

These Psalms extol and praise God’s word, which is the great expression of God’s mind and will. The Excellency of it is sung in a thousand tongues and it is prized “above gold, yea, the finest gold,” it is “sweeter than honey and the hone-comb.”

LESSON—If the devout Israelites saw such wonders in the Old Testament, what ought we to see who have both Old and New? How we ought to love and treasure the one Divine Book that blesses little children, Matthew 19:14. That makes young men strong, 1 John 2:14. That makes young women pure and virtuous, 1 Timothy 5:2. That protects the widow, Exodus 22:22-23. That honors the grey hair of the aged, Leviticus 19:32. That offers eternal life freely to all who will accept it by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. John 3:36. Let us read every day and memorize much of the “Best Book of All!”

Great Fact II -- Psalms of Creation.

Psalm 19; Psalm 29; Psalm 104.

These Psalms are the poets’ version of Genesis. To them the whole earth is a Bible, and the voice of nature is the voice of God. The Psalmist gives God the glory for

the splendor of the skies, the creation of land and sea, and all that is in them; and the provision He has made for the preservation of all His Creatures.

LESSON—This fair earth is a mighty parable, and full of the Shekinah glory. There is not a leaf, nor flower, nor dewdrop that is as God’s image and reveals His heart. We should develop the faculty of seeing God in all the things of nature Tennyson charmingly puts it:

“The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and plains
Are not these, O Soul, a vision of Him who reigns?”

The Psalmist said, “Lord, how manifold are thy works!” He studied them all in a religious spirit. Then let us not ungratefully pass them over without consideration, but beholding the wonders of nature, and realizing their sacredness, let us then with gratitude look up and exclaim, “The Maker of all these wonders is my Friend!”

Great Fact III -- Psalms of Judgment.

Psalm 35; Psalm 69; Psalm 109.

These Psalms contain prayers for defeat and overthrow of the wicked, and are called “Imprecatory Psalms,” or Psalms of Judgment upon enemies.

At first thought the curses pronounced upon the wicked are startling and painful, but we must remember that the enemies cursed, are not personal enemies, but the enemies of God’s cause; those who break every moral law and defy God. The Psalmist identifies himself with Yahweh, and prays with His glory in view. Psalm 139; Psalm 21; Psalm 22.

LESSON—No one should pronounce curses on his personal enemies. Read what our Lord says in Matt. 5:44. When, however, the Lord’s honor is at stake and His cause in peril, we are justified in denouncing evil and evil-doers. Like David, we must draw our swords and with burning zeal fight all the vicious evils that are treading under foot our blood-bought religious liberties and our holy faith.

Great Fact IV -- Psalms of Christ.

Psalm 2; Psalm 16; Psalm 22; Psalm 24.
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They are also called Messianic because they are full of descriptions of the coming Christ or Messiah. They picture Him as coming to suffer as in Psalm 22; and as

coming to reign as in Psalm 24. They picture Him as our eternal Priest, Psalm 110:4. They picture Him as King fulfilling the Davidic covenant, Psalm 89:3-4.

LESSON—It is very important that we associate the Psalms with Christ. Most of their truths can apply literally only to Him. The scarlet thread of His redeeming work, and the golden thread of His coronation are seen all through these songs of the sweet singers of Israel. “Christ shall reign where’er the sun, doth its successive journey’s run, His kingdom stretch from shore to shore. Till moons shall wax and wane no more.” Then let us prepare to sit with Him on His throne, rather than to be His foot stool.

Great Fact V -- Psalms of Life.

Psalm 18; Psalm 44; Psalm 60; Psalm 68.

These may be divided into two sections, Psalms of personal life and those affecting national life. In the former we have prayers for deliverance from pressing danger and trouble, interspersed with confidence and faith in God’s goodness, and exhortations to the saints of God to be strong and trust in Him. In the national Psalms, God’s care of the nation is praised, His favor is sought upon all their affairs, and His help in battles implored.

LESSON—What is God to us; what is Christ to us, personally? Living water will not flow into a vessel turned upside down. The Psalms are full of mercy and truth, hope and comfort, for those who come to them as empty vessels to be filled. “Oh, fill me with thy fullness, Lord, until my very heart o’erflow!”

Great Fact VI -- Psalms of the Heart.

Psalm 6; Psalm 38; Psalm 42; Psalm 23; Psalm 10; Psalm 21; Psalm 4.

Among these we have Psalms of penitence, sorrow, darkness, faith, prayer, worship and vision.

LESSON—The plans, work and enjoyments of life are too often without God. Many look up and pray only when they are in the school of trouble and have the deepest heart experiences. Mrs. Browning says, “Eyes that the preacher could not school, by wayside graves are raised. And lips say, ‘God be merciful!’ that ne’er said ‘God be praised!’ “

The spirit and habit of prayer will keep us out of trouble, and make our days peaceful and prosperous.

Great Fact VII -- Psalms of God.

Psalm 90; Psalm 139; Psalm 46; Psalm 5; Psalm 18; Psalm 36; Psalm 8.
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These Psalms praise the sublime attributes of Almighty God. They speak of His glorious power, of His universal presence in every place at the same time, of the wonderful facts that He knows all things and sees all things. “That He is our shield and Defender, the Ancient of days, pavilion in splendor and girded with praise!”

LESSON—What must be the wisdom of Him from whom all beings derive their wisdom; what must be the goodness of Him from Whom all beings derive their goodness; therefore let us worship God. In youth and in age, in sorrow or in joy, in distress and in prosperity, let us worship God. “Let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker, for He is our God and we are the people of His pasture.” Ps. 95:6.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Foundation Maxims,—Proverbs 1:1-19.
- []—Christian Wisdom described,—Proverbs 3:1-24.
- []—Wisdom the best way,—Proverbs 4:1-18.
- []—Against various evils,—Proverbs 6:1-20.
- []—Christ is wisdom in this chapter,—Proverbs 8:1-17.
- []—Warnings and instructions,—Proverbs 28:1-13.
- []—A virtuous woman,—Proverbs 31:10-31.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Proverbs.

Lesson No. 19

LESSON THEME:—PROVERBS

Proverbs 9:1-10.

- **KEY WORD**—“**WISDOM.**”
- **KEY VERSE**—Proverbs 9:10.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“**HEAVENLY WISDOM FOR THE EARTHLY LIFE.**”

NAME The name is taken from the opening words. “The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel.” A proverb is a short and pithy saying that forcibly expresses some practical truth. God’s ways in wisdom are seen in the Book of proverbs.

WRITERS—Solomon, Hezekiah, Agur and Lemuel. Collection was completed under Hezekiah, about 800 B.C.

PURPOSE—To provide a hand-book of wisdom, which would apply to the earthly conditions of the people of God. We have had divine laws, and divine histories, and divine Psalms, now we have divine wisdom. This book contains in small compass a complete body of divine ethics, politics and economics, exposing every vice, recommending every virtue, and suggesting rules to govern self in every relationship of life. Many a young man or woman has laid the foundation of his/her character upon this book. It is a living book. Its teachings apply to all people and all conditions today.

GREAT FACTS:—

The Duties of Man to:—

1. God.
2. Ourselves.
3. Neighbors.
4. Parents and Children.
5. Civil Life.

Great Fact I -- The Duties of Man to God.

The first of all duties, the foundation of all morality and religion, is the fear of God. Proverbs 1:7. This must be followed by perfect trust in Him and distrust in self, Proverbs 3:5. Religious worship and service must not be neglected. "It disgraces a man to deny his promise and after his vow to back out." Proverbs 20:25 R. V. but God looks chiefly at the heart, Proverbs 17:3. It is this which makes men acceptable or abominable in His sight, Proverbs 11:20. If we sin we must confess our guilt, Proverbs 28:13 and meekly submit to His discipline, Proverbs 3:11.

LESSON—Summed up, our duties to God are: trust in Him, reverence and service for Him, our hearts right before Him, confession and submission to Him. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. There should be, however, not only the selfish fear that He might hurt us, but the fear of love, fearing lest we hurt Him. We shall not begin to be wise until our lives are in right relation with Christ, the Fount of all wisdom.

If we trust Christ wholly, and acknowledge Him constantly, Proverbs 3:6, we have every assurance that He will guide our feet along the paths of life, lead us into all truth, help our souls up the heights of holiness, and direct our steps into the gates of the Heavenly City.

Great Fact II -- Duties to Ourselves.

The chief lesson urged is the utter necessity of avoiding fleshly lusts and evil companionship, Proverbs 1:10. Among deadly sins to be avoided special mention is made of pride, which is hateful to God and is the enemy of wisdom, Proverbs 16:18. Greed and covetousness lead to fraud and wrong, Proverbs 28:30. and produce only temporary profit, Proverbs 14:30. Envy is as rottenness in the bones, Proverbs 14:30. Luxury and excess which are induced by imitating the non-Christian rich, are strongly condemned and shown to insure most fatal results Proverbs 23:21. Anger leads to folly, causes quarrels and makes a man hateful, Proverbs 14:17. Idleness ruins equally a man's character and prosperity, Proverbs 13:4. Much is said about the necessity of guarding the tongue, in the power of which are life and death, Proverbs 12:22 and Proverbs 18:21. We should avoid self-praise, Proverbs 27:2.

LESSON—Our conduct has a good or evil effect upon ourselves, and is exposed to Divine judgment. The author of this book of Wisdom therefore pleads with us to avoid evil companions, pride, greed, envy, intemperance, anger, idleness and sins of the tongue. It is impossible for us to do this, however, except we have Christ the Wisdom of God within us. The old Spartan, who tried to make a corpse stand

upright, but found that it would fall, said, “Ah, it needs something inside!” Yes. it needed life! If we have that life, then our souls will be drawn to all that is worthiest and noblest. His presence will guard us from evil, enrich us with every true blessing, and gladden us with lasting joy.

Great Fact III -- Duties to Our Neighbors.

We should sympathize with the afflicted, and try to cheer them, Proverbs 12:25. Should help the poor in their need, because they are brethren, and children of the same Father, Proverbs 14:31. A neighbor should be judged honestly and truthfully, Proverbs 17:15. We should live with him in peace, Proverbs 3:29; should not slander him, Proverbs 11:12-13; should encourage sincere friendship, Proverbs 18:24; should be strictly honest in all transactions with him, Proverbs 11:1.

LESSON—Kindness is due our neighbors and fellowmen, therefore we should be sympathetic, helpful, peaceable, friendly and honest. Extreme unsociability is a form of sin. Themistocles, when he had a farm for sale, advertised the fact that he had a good neighbor. His point was that good neighbors are worth having. Thomas Pane, the infidel, once observed to a preacher, “What a pity it is that man has not a perfect rule for the government of his life.” The preacher replied, “There is such a rule. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself!” The infidel became confused, realizing that our religion covers all the duties of life. Two neighbors, one a Christian and the other not, who lived on the opposite side of the same street, were dying at the same time. One of them said to the other, “I feel that I am dying, and my neighbor over the way, I hear is dying too. They say he is going to heaven; I know I am going to hell. He must have known that I was perishing, but he never warned me of my danger or told me of the way of salvation. We were together every day, and we talked about the weather and business and politics and a thousand other things, but he never spoke to me about my soul. His silence I regarded as the sanction of my sin. He may be going to heaven, but he will be followed to heaven with the curses of my lost soul!” To those who need our help, especially spiritual help, God help us to be real neighbors!

Great Fact IV -- Duties of Parents and Children.

Godly parents are a blessing to children, Proverbs 20:7, and should instruct them in holiness from the earliest years, Proverbs 4:1. Should train them in the right way, Proverbs 22:6, and correct them when they do wrong, Proverbs 13:13. Children on their part, should attend to the instructions of parents, and gladden their hearts by

prompt obedience and a virtuous life, Proverbs 1:8. Let the mother of the family realize her high position, and be the crown of her husband, Proverbs 12:4; and build up her house, Proverbs 14:1. If she needs an example let her emulate the virtuous woman, Proverbs 31:10-31. Be it far from her to imitate the contentious wife, whose peevish ill temper is like the continuous dropping of water through a leaky roof, and renders family life insupportable, Proverbs 19:13. Servants should be wisely treated in order that they should not presume too much, Proverbs 29:21.

LESSON—The Bible consecrates and sanctifies all the relationships of life and we should read it frequently and thoughtfully if we would measure up to the standards God requires. Parents should remember that what they are, and what they do will determine the character and happiness of their children. Children should always obey their parents (unless contrary to God's Word), while they are in the home, but honor them forever.

Great Fact V -- Duties in Civil Life.

It is the duty of men to render obedience to the powers that be; punishment speedily overtakes the rebellious, Proverbs 16:14. God is the maker of the rich and poor in the land, Proverbs 22:2, therefore the rich ought to help the poor, Proverbs 14:21, and not treat them roughly, Proverbs 18:23. All commercial transactions should be conducted with the strictest honesty, and the withholding of what is due is especially denounced, Proverbs 11:26. It is a foolish thing to stand security for another's debt; you are sure to smart for it, and then you can blame only yourself, Proverbs 6:1-2.

LESSON—It is the duty of the Christian to support all legislation against child labor, vice, crime, monopolies and everything that is opposed to a better social order. We are citizens of two worlds, and our aim should not be only to take people to Heaven, but to bring Heaven down to the people. Jesus Christ taught that the only way to solve bad conditions is to put into men good motives; that men are not free to do what they like, but what they ought!

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Pleasure Ends in Emptiness,—Ecclesiastes 2:1-11.
- []—A Time for Everything,—Ecclesiastes 3: 1-14.
- []—The Worship of God,—Ecclesiastes 5:1-8.
- []—Foolishness of Greed,—Ecclesiastes 6: 1-10.

- []—Value of a good name,—Ecclesiastes 7:110.
- []—The Value of Wisdom,—Ecclesiastes 9:1-10.
- []—Satisfaction Only in God,—Ecclesiastes 12.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Ecclesiastes.

Lesson No. 20

LESSON THEME:—ECCLESIASTES

- **KEY WORD**—“EMPTINESS.”
- **KEY VERSE**—Ecclesiastes 1:2.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“LIFE IS A DISAPPOINTMENT APART FROM GOD.”

NAME—The name Ecclesiastes means preacher, so-called because this book contains the meditations and sermons of the wise man, Solomon; so that another name would be “The Book of the Preacher.”

WRITER—Solomon.

TIME OF WRITING—979 B.C.

SPECIAL NOTE—In reading this book do not form spiritual judgments on the isolated verses. Inspiration set down accurately what the preacher said, just the same as the words of Satan are set down, Genesis 3:4; Job 2:4. But just as we recognize that the words of Satan do not express the mind of God, so we should also recognize that the reasoning of a mere natural man, who leaves God out of account, will very often not express the mind of God. Solomon had been holy and happy, but in his old age became backslidden and cynical. In lamenting his own folly and mistakes, he utters many pessimistic sayings that show how he felt about life, but not what God teaches about life. However, he was wise enough to see the emptiness of pleasure, riches, folly and impiety.

PURPOSE—To show that true happiness apart from God is impossible.

GREAT FACTS:—

The Emptiness of:—

1. Pleasure.
2. Riches.
3. Folly.
4. Ungodliness.

Great Fact I -- The Emptiness of Pleasure.

Ecclesiastes 1; Ecclesiastes 3.

The preacher first lays down the proposition that all things are unreal, and the results of human effort are deceitful, and that life is one unending round. As a scholar and thinker he finds no satisfaction, so he turns to entertainment and pleasure. He engaged in banqueting and revelry, fleshly indulgence and worldly excitement; but the feverish excitement soon passed away and left him in deeper gloom, so he exclaims in Ecclesiastes 1:2, “All is vanity.”

LESSON—Disappointed men are found, not only on poor farms and in the ranks of the unemployed, but also in the ranks of high society and in the mansions of the fortunate in life. There is the man who is disappointed because he does not get, and there is the man who is disappointed because he DOES get, and the latter is by far worse of the two. The man who is disappointed because he does NOT get may still have the fascination of his hopes before him. But the man who has got what he desires and is then disappointed, has burst the bubble, and knows the meaning of emptiness and exasperation of spirit. The last was the disappointment of Solomon. The selfish man is always a disappointed man. This book reveals utter selfishness. It is all I, I, I,—I made, I got, I did, I had, I sought, and that is the end of it all. These is a great art in choosing beneficial pleasures. No Christian in his best moments would sanction those pleasures that lead to immorality. On the other hand, after all the questionable things are left out there are so many pure and elevating enjoyments left, that there is no real self-denial, but rather self-enrichment.

Great Fact II -- The Emptiness of Riches.

Ecclesiastes 4-6.

Solomon has shown the emptiness of pleasure, honor, and power. Many will agree with him on this but at the same time will think that money is the supreme good in life. Solomon combats this error in these chapters and shows that neither the gathering of great riches, nor in the spending of them, is there real happiness, Ecclesiastes 5:10. It is true that honest labor leads to prosperity, and this is desirable. More often it is the ungodly who increase in riches through dishonesty, speculation, or oppression. Both their wealth and a furious lust of wealth increase, and when they possess the most they seek for more. Their anxieties increase, they do not get refreshing sleep, they get in love with the world, become proud, are much tempted, they draw their hearts away from God and from duty, and make it very difficult for themselves to enter the kingdom of Heaven, Matthew 19:23.

LESSON—It is lawful to gather wealth, if we can do so without violating the laws of God and man, and if we consecrate it to the service of God and man. Two questions will be asked rich men at the Judgment: How did you make your money, and how did you spend it? If riches increase, set not your heart upon them, Psalm 62:10. On the other hand remember that it is easier to be contented without riches than with them. It is so natural to make gold our god; to trust in it, and to depend upon it for happiness. The Bible depreciates the value of money because the best things, like salvation, blessedness and peace cannot be bought with it. It is not along golden roads that God's children pass to bliss. Therefore, happy are those who have learned to be contented with little, whose wants are few and moderate, who, having the necessities of life, are thankful and hopeful. "I never complained of my lot," said a Persian poet, "but once—when my feet were sore, and I had no money to buy shoes; but I met a man without a foot, and became contented with my lot when I saw him!"

Great Fact III -- The Emptiness of Folly.

Ecclesiastes 7-11.

The thought of these chapters is "Be not foolish," Ecclesiastes 7:17. Seek a good name and cherish it above all earthly distinctions, cultivate meekness, be diligent, make the best of the present instead of dreaming about the past, or the future. Serve God with intelligent reason and prudence instead of rushing to extremes in anything. Perish in righteousness, rather than prosper in wickedness. Wisdom is the highest good. "Wisdom giveth life to those who have it!" Ecclesiastes 7:12.

LESSON—The root of folly is represented as in the heart, Proverbs 12:23. There is more folly in the heart of man than in the head. Foolishness stands first in the catalogue of evils, Romans 3:3. Examples of folly are, the foolish builders, Matthew 7:26; the foolish virgins, Matthew 25:3; the rich fool, Luke 12:16. On the other hand, the wisdom that is from above will preserve the soul's life, by imparting to it the gift of God, which is eternal life, it will preserve the mind's life, by flooding it with truth; it will preserve the body's life by giving it length of days and a glorious resurrection at the last day!

Great Fact IV -- The Emptiness of Ungodliness.

Ecclesiastes 12.

This chapter is a call to young people to “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,” Ecclesiastes 12:1. Not to flatter themselves with vain expectations, but to guard against the spiritual disease of youth. Rutherford said, “A young man is often a dressed lodging for the devil to dwell in. Satan has a friend at court in the heart of youth, and their pride, luxury, lust and forgetfulness of God are his hired agents. Therefore, what a sweet couple, what a glorious couple are youth and grace, Christ and a young man!” The period of youth has the responsibility of shaping all one’s after life, and if we do not remember our Creator in early days we shall not be able, nor shall we want to do so, in the later days of life. The philosophy of Ecclesiastes is summed up in these words:—“Reverence God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man!” Ecclesiastes 12:13.

LESSON—There are many reasons why we should become devout Christians in early days.

1. In youth the foundations of life are laid. Some workmen in building a tower laid one brick a little out of line. The work went on without it being noticed, but as each course of bricks was kept in line with those already laid—the tower was not put up exactly straight, and the higher they built, the more insecure it became. One day there was a tremendous crash. The building had fallen, burying the men in the ruins. Lives were sacrificed, time lost, materials were wasted, all because one brick was laid wrong at the start. Think of that ruin that comes of one bad habit, or one brick laid wrong, while you are building a character for life and eternity. Keep the foundation straight.
2. Because life is always uncertain, there are graves in the churchyard just your length. God will not spare you on account of your youth, if you die without an interest in Christ.
3. Because if you seek Christ early and find Him, your life will be more eminently useful to God, and more serviceable to men. Augustine repented, and so have many others, that they began the Christian life so late, and knew God no sooner.
4. Because your whole life will be happier if the morning of it is dedicated to the Lord. The first fruits sanctify the whole harvest. This will have a sweet influence upon all your days, whatever changes may come. Let every young person say today.

Now that my journey’s just begun,
My course so little trod,

I'll stay before I further run,
And give myself to God!

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—In joyful Communion,—Song 1:1-7.
- []—The Rose of Sharon,—Song 2:1-7.
- []—The visit of the beloved,—Song 2:8-17
- []—The Absence of the Beloved,—Song 3:1-5.
- []—The Seeking Bride,—Song 5:6-8.
- []—The bridegroom praised,—Song 5:10-16
- []—In praise of the bride,—Song 6:4-9.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Song of Solomon.

Lesson No. 21

LESSON THEME:—SONG OF SOLOMON

Song 2:1-4.

- **KEY WORD**—“**LOVE.**”
- **KEY VERSE**—Song 2:4.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“**GOD’S LOVE FOR ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH.**”

In the East the physical charms of lovers are described minutely without any thought of vulgarity. In this book, one is on holy ground; pray for spiritual understanding!

Remember that it is made up of conversations between the bridegroom and the bride, and between the bride and her attendants. As you read keep the various speakers distinct in your mind.

NAME—This book is called the Song of Solomon because Solomon is the author and hero of it.

TIME OF WRITING—About 1000 B.C.

PURPOSE—To show in the changeless devotion of the bridegroom and the bride, the love of Yahweh for Israel, and of Christ for the church.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Rapture.
2. Festival.
3. Separation.
4. Reunion.

Great Fact I -- The Bride’s Rapture.

Song 1-3-5.

The bride is a beautiful Shulamite maiden. So called because she was the descendant of Shulam, who was a son of Dan. Shulamith, the bride, is awaiting the arrival of her lover, and, surrounded by a chorus of ladies, pours out her rapture

and longing, which is responded to by her admiring companions, Song 1:1-8. The royal lover appears, and the rapturous joy of mutual delight is poured out in the banqueting house, Song 1:9-2:7, closing with a song of serene contentment, addressed by the bride to her companion, Song 2:7. In the rapture of the new-found love, the bride tells how her loved one wooed her, and how their love was mingled with the loveliness of opening spring and summer. How her heart longed for him until he was found, and when found, she was not willing to let him go, Song 3:5.

LESSON—The rapture of the bride for the bridegroom reminds us of the loving intercourse between Israel and Yahweh, and between the church and the heavenly Bridegroom. Some of the noblest religious souls have expressed their love in the fervent words of this Song of Songs,

In this parable of love we have a king seeking and wooing a bride in her humble home in the mountains. Thus the King of Kings left his glory-throne to seek and win the church for his bride. He despised not stable nor manger. He has sought the lowest and neediest, “My friend, my fair one rise up, and come away.” His love covers the multitude of our sins. He calls us “fair” and makes us fair. Then comes the rapturous utterance, “My beloved is mine and I am His,” Song 2:16. Christ is ours.

1. Because of the free gift of Himself “He loved me and gave Himself for me.”
2. He is ours if we believingly take Him to ourselves, for faith has marvelous power.
3. He is ours if we joyfully realize His life to us. Many fail right here. It is unspeakably blessed to realize all that Christ is to our souls.

Every Christian is Christ’s.

1. By creation. “It is He that hath made us,” Psalm 100.
2. By the purchase of His blood.
3. By the conquest of His spirit.

To the believing, Christ-loving soul, He is the “Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valley, the chief among ten thousand.” Those who have found him and know Him with real spiritual knowledge, count other objects of human desire as nothing in comparison with Him! “What things were gain to me,” says Paul, “those I counted loss for Christ!”

Then let us again:—

1. Make a definite dedication of ourselves to Christ.
2. Be very careful not to offend Him in our conduct.
3. Prove our devotion by obedience to His commands.
4. Defend Him and His cause against all His present-day enemies.
5. Seek to extend His kingdom from shore to shore.

Great Fact II -- The Wedding Festival.

Song 3:6; Song 4; Song 5:1.

We have here but a glimpse of the glad festival, but it suggests the whole. Solomon is seen surrounded by his bodyguard advancing towards Jerusalem. The daughters of Jerusalem go forth to meet him. He is crowned with the splendid crown made by his mother for the happy day. Next follows a beautiful song in which the bridegroom addressed the bride. She responds with a song of delight, in which she gives herself entirely to her husband, Song 4:16. In response to the bride's invitation to enjoy the pleasant fruits of the garden, the bridegroom responds with great satisfaction, Song 5:1.

LESSON—It was a great thing for the poor bride from Lebanon to be brought into the court of the king whose magnificence filled the Queen of Sheba with wonder and delight. But “eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9. The day is coming when the Lord Jesus will present the church unto Himself, as a glorious bride, holy and without blemish. King Solomon went out of Jerusalem in royal pomp to meet his betrothed. When the marriage of the Lamb is come “The Lord Himself shall come to meet us,” (read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). The heart of man cannot conceive of the bliss of that moment, when the heavenly bridegroom shall bring home the church, His bride. The union of Christ and the church will be perfected forever. We shall enjoy our heritage as heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ. Eternity will be one blessed honeymoon.

Great Fact III -- Temporary Separation.

Song 5:2-6:3.

A cloud passes over the sun. The brightness of the bridal bliss is obscured for a while. Under the figure of a dream the bride describes a brief separation of her heart from the bridegroom, her misery, her longing and searching for her beloved,

and her appeal to her companions to help her. They draw from her the fullness of her love by asking questions like, “Where is thy beloved gone?”

LESSON—When the sun is eclipsed it does not cease to shine, though its rays may not reach the earth. And when Christ is hidden, He remains Himself “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” However there have been times in the history of churches and of Christians that resembled the captivity of Israel, when the Lord has seemed far from them, and they have walked in darkness. Sometimes Christ apparently deserts us because of our sins, and as plants kept from light become unhealthy, so souls deprived of light of God’s countenance lose their peace and strength. Our daily cares which we loved to cast upon the Lord, are borne upon our own shoulders with anxiety. Love of the world and the love of riches outweigh our love for Christ. We doubt our own conversions, and the realities of the blessed life. Prayer gives us no refreshment, and the Bible no precious promises. We become fault-finders and blame the minister and the church, when the blame of our discontentment lies only with us. In the book we are studying, how the bride sought the bridegroom, as soon as the separation was felt! So we should ardently desire to be reconciled and to regain the favor we have lost!

Great Fact IV -- Reunion.

Song 6:4-8:14.

There is soon a reunion between the royal bridegroom and the bride, and she, full of satisfaction of the love of her husband, invites him to return with her to the scene of her maiden life, for there his love would beautify all that was familiar to her. In the thought of such bliss she again charges her companions to witness her happiness, Song 1:4. Bride and bridegroom are now together in restful joy, exchanging remembrances and confidences, presenting a picture of ideal love.

LESSON—Man was made for companionship with his Savior, and many beautiful expressions are used in scripture to suggest this communion.

We may delight ourselves in the Lord, Psalm 37:4. May dwell in the secret place of the Most High, Psalm 91:1. We may enter into the holiest, Hebrews 10:19. We may have the companionship of Christ,

1. In our occupations, whatever lawful ones they may be.
2. In our enjoyments which are all hallowed by His gracious presence.

3. In our sufferings, when we perhaps most need Him, and when His sympathy is especially precious.
4. In our Christian service, for how can we do His work except beneath His smile?

A mother was asked by her child, “Why is it that when you come from your room you always look so happy?” The answer was “Because I have been praying to my Savior. I ask Him for His grace to make me happy and holy. I ask Him to assist me to keep me from committing any sin against Him, and above all, I ask Him to have mercy on your soul, to save you from the ruin of those who go down to hell.” “Oh! is that the secret?” said the child, “Then I will come into the secret place with you!”

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—The case against Judah,—Isaiah 1:1-18.
- []—Isaiah’s vision,—Isaiah 6:1-8.
- []—Christ-child is Israel’s hope,—Isaiah 9:1-7.
- []—The coming kingdom,—Isaiah 11:1-9.
- []—Hezekiah’s sickness,—Isaiah 38:1-8.
- []—Christ our sacrifice,—Isaiah 53:1-12.
- []—Everlasting salvation,—Isaiah 55:1-13.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

- [] The entire book of Isaiah.

Lesson No. 22

LESSON THEME:—ISAIAH

Isaiah 9:2-7.

- **KEY WORD**—“**MESSIAH.**”
- **KEY VERSE**—Isaiah 9:6.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“**SALVATION THROUGH JUDGMENTS AND GRACE.**”

NOTE ON THE PROPHETS—We now come to the 17 prophecies of the Old Testament. The prophets in their message uttered great truths that applied to their own times, but just as truly to the times of Christ. To the time of His first and of His second coming. The burdens of their messages were that God would bless His covenant people with both temporal and spiritual blessings if they were true to Him. But if unfaithful then judgment should come upon them until they would repent, when they should be restored to God’s favor and to their own land.

NAME—Isaiah means “salvation of Yahweh,” which is significant, as he was the great prophet of salvation in the Old Testament. Christ and the apostles quoted him more than any other prophet. Events cover 62 years, 760-698 B.C.

PURPOSE—To prophesy Israel’s captivity, repentance and restoration, and the glories of the Messianic age.

THE TIMES OF ISAIAH—Isaiah lived 780 B.C.—690 B.C. in the southern kingdom of Judah at Jerusalem. When he was twelve years of age the Assyrians invaded the land and had to be bought off with a large indemnity. 2 Kings 15:19. About twenty years later the northern kingdom (Israel) was taken into captivity. This exposed Judah to the same fate, but Judah’s king, having declared himself to be the vassal of Assyria, the evil day was put off. When Hezekiah came to the throne of Judah, 727 B.C., he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and was supported by Isaiah, who exhorted his countrymen not to be afraid of the Assyrians, Isaiah 10:24, but to depend wholly upon Yahweh. Worldly advisers, however, persuaded Hezekiah to make an alliance with Egypt against Assyria, but it was of no avail. Hezekiah was defeated and paid a heavy indemnity out of the Temple treasury. After a brief interval, Assyria again threatened Israel, but this time acting under the advice of Isaiah, Hezekiah “spread the matter before the

Lord,” Isaiah 37:14, and God’s decree went forth for the destruction of the Assyrian (701 B.C.). Sennacherib, their king, never recovered from this disaster, and he made no more expeditions against Palestine.

Isaiah lived under the reigns of four Kings of Judah—Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. Morally and spiritually, the country was full of corruption, vice and irreligion. The rich lived in luxury, the poor were oppressed. It was against these evils that Isaiah lifted up his voice.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Accusations.
2. Nations.
3. Hezekiah.
4. Release.
5. Messiah.
6. Kingdom.

Great Fact I -- Accusations Against Judah and Israel.

Isaiah 1-12.

In this section Isaiah accuses the nation of ingratitude, folly, and stubborn rebellion, Isaiah 1:2-9. They have withdrawn themselves from God’s favor by their commercial greed, heathen alliances, luxury and idolatry, Isaiah 2:6-9, The rulers of the people answer the charge by stating that they keep up all the outward ordinances of religion required by the law, therefore are blameless. Isaiah indignantly denounced such hypocrisy, Isaiah 1:15. Assures them of forgiveness if they repent. Isaiah 1:18, but if they continue their rebellion then the sword would devour them, Isaiah 1:20. In Isaiah 1, there is a prediction of the Assyrian invasion. In Isaiah 9, the prophet sees that Israel’s troubles shall end through the birth of the Christ-child, who shall rule over the full kingdom of David in justice and in righteousness forever.

LESSON—Israel was increased from the family to a nation, divinely raised out of bondage to a commanding position, and given a land flowing with milk and honey. Each step in their progress should have drawn from them their gratitude, love and obedience. Israel, however, acknowledges none of these obligations, but refused to know God or have Him in their thoughts. Multitudes of Christians have followed suit. No wonder Isaiah scathingly denounces such evil doings!

In Isaiah 1:18 God condescends to reason with us. He offers salvation, not only from punishment, but from sin itself in all its forms, all its depths, all its degrees! He bids us turn from the empty ceremonies that Israel was making so much of, to the Fountain filled with blood. He assures us that although we may be dyed scarlet, or double-dyed in crimson with sin, we may be “as white as snow!” No wonder the book of Isaiah is called “The Gospel of the Old Testament!”

Great Fact II -- Prophecies Concerning Foreign Nations.

Isaiah 12-35.

Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Damascus and Tyre are mentioned and judgments upon them definitely prophesied, all of which came to pass. Babylon fell 200 years after this prophecy. This reminds us that other judgments predicted to come upon the whole world will just as surely come to pass. These prophecies have a near and far view. They were literally fulfilled in the destructions of these nations. They will be spiritually fulfilled when judgment comes upon corrupt world-power, and corrupt religion, Revelation 6-13.

Isaiah 14:12-17 refers to Satan. After the prophet denounces the enemies of Israel and he brings his message to a grand climax by outlining the final triumph of God's people.

LESSON—The history of the world is a history of nations whom God has punished for their sins by final destruction. Think of Egypt, Babylon, Carthage, Rome and Greece. The punishment of individuals, too, is final. Korah for insolence went quickly into the pit, Numbers 16:30. Uzzah died for irreverence, 2 Samuel 6-7. Ananias fell dead for lying, Acts 5:5. God must punish in wherever He finds it.

Great Fact III -- History of Hezekiah.

Isaiah 38-39.

This history is given also in 2 Kings 18:20, and tells how Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came against Judah. How Hezekiah prayed and consulted Isaiah, who foretold the disaster that should come upon the Assyrian army. Next we have the sickness of Hezekiah and how, in answer to prayer, his life was spared for fifteen years. Then we have Hezekiah's folly in showing of his treasures to the ambassador of the king of Babylon and Isaiah's Prophecy that in process of time these same treasures would be carried off to Babylon.

LESSON—Hezekiah was a great king, and that largely because he sought the counsel of Isaiah, and became his disciple. The rich and the great need the wisdom “that cometh down from above.” It is true wisdom to take all our affairs to the Lord, to keep no difficulties hack, to hide no faults. God will then make good His promises, help us over all difficulties and abase our enemies. Not always at once but always eventually. Therefore, put you confidence in the Lord God.

Great Fact IV -- Coming Restoration Prophesied.

Isaiah 39-48.

This section is sometimes called the “Book of Comfort,” because the prophet tells in glowing terms of the restoration of Judah, and the coming of Yahweh’s Ideal Servant to be the Messianic King.

LESSON—The word “Comfort” in the Bible means to strengthen. So when God says “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,” He means strengthen them, arouse them, nerve them. So we must dare to do right, dare to be true, dare to be brave! Sorrows may be bitter, evils may be deeply entrenched, but if we faint not, but fight on, tomorrow will come the song!

Great Fact V -- The Messiah Promised.

Isaiah 49-58.

Dr. J. M. Grey points out how the portrait of the Messiah becomes very clear in Isaiah. In Genesis the seed of the woman became the seed of Abraham, and the line of Judah.

Deuteronomy spoke of Him as a Prophet like unto Moses; Samuel described Him as King sitting on the throne of His father, David; and now Isaiah pictures Him in many ways. He prophesies His virgin birth, Isaiah 7:14. His divine and human nature. His mission to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. His many names, Isaiah 9:6. His humiliation as well as His glory, Isaiah 53. These things were all written 700 years before they came to pass, and therefore impress us with their divine origin. If all these things were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, and in Him only, then He indeed the one who is the Son of God and God the Son!

Great Fact VI -- A Glorious Kingdom to be Set Up.

Isaiah 59-68.

This section tells of Israel's final restoration to their land, of their increased prosperity and of the divine blessing resting on them forever. The Gentiles shall aid them in their return, Isaiah 49:22. The land will be too small for them, Isaiah 49:18-21. They shall be served by other nations, Isaiah 60:12. They shall inherit the land forever, Isaiah 60:21. God will rejoice in their national happiness, Isaiah 65:19.

These promises have not yet been fulfilled, but will be when Israel is regathered, and Jerusalem is made the center of Christ's glorious kingdom. All the prophets speak of its glory and blessedness. Revelation 20 tells us it will be for 1000 years. Romans 8:21 says the earth shall then be delivered from physical corruption. The wilderness shall blossom as the rose, Isaiah 35:1. The glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Isaiah 11:9. The savage nature of beasts will be banished and a little child shall lead them, Isaiah 11:6. The government shall be on Christ's shoulders and of the increase of righteousness and peace there shall be no end. Isaiah 9:6. Nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares and learn war is no more, Isaiah 2:4.

LESSON—Those who suffer with Christ shall reign with Him. Those who are faithful to the suffering Messiah, shall be rewarded by the exalted Messiah. In Sparta only those who had won victories were allowed to sit beside the king. Let us look for and hasten the coming of the golden Kingdom-age!

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Divine goodness to Judah,—Jeremiah 2:1-9.
- []—Treachery of Judah,—Jeremiah 4:12-19.
- []—Encouragement to repent,—Jeremiah 7:1-15.
- []—The Lord is our hope,—Jeremiah 17:12-18.
- []—Advice to captives,—Jeremiah 29:8-14.
- []—Promises of mercy,—Jeremiah 30:18-24.
- []—Comfort to the afflicted,—Lamentations 3:21-41.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire books of Jeremiah and Lamentations.

Lesson No. 23

LESSON THEME:—JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS

Jeremiah 2:1-9.

- **KEY WORD**—“WARNING.”
- **KEY VERSE**—Jeremiah 2:9.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“JUDAH CARRIED OFF TO BABYLON.”

NAME The book is named for its author, Jeremiah, who was a priest and prophet, and lived in the village of Anathoth, three miles northeast of Jerusalem. He began to prophesy while yet a young man, in the reign of Josiah (628 B.C.). Never did a patriot who loved his country, nor a preacher who loved his God, have more indignities heaped upon him for his faithfulness. From the first appearance of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in Palestine (605 B.C.) Jeremiah announced that submission to his rule was the will of Yahweh. For this he was sorely prosecuted. After Nebuchadnezzar had taken Jerusalem in 587 B.C., Jeremiah was left in Palestine with the remnant, but later taken captive to Egypt, where he died. He exercised his prophetic ministry about a century later than Isaiah. Events cover 41 years, 629-588 B.C.

TIMES OF JEREMIAH—For these, read 2 Kings 21-25. While Josiah was king of Judah, the political and religious conditions were outwardly good, but when his older brother, Jehoiakim, and his successors came to the throne, they despised the religion of Yahweh, threw Jeremiah's prophecies into the fire, and idolatry and flagrant sins were openly practiced. Jeremiah did his best to stem the tide of evil with his warnings and entreaties, but in vain. Yet even when the people were doomed to captivity, he uttered some of his most glorious Messianic prophecies, foretelling that after 70 years the captivity would end with their repentance and restoration. We must remember that Babylon has destroyed Assyria's power by this time and is now mistress of the world, and the instrument of God's hand to chastise Judah for its sins.

PURPOSE—To foretell the captivity that should follow Judah's backsliding, and the judgments that should come upon the nations for oppressing Judah.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Captivity.

2. Restoration.
3. Indignation.
4. Lamentation.

Great Fact I -- Captivity shall follow Backsliding.

Jeremiah 1-22.

Jeremiah was Yahweh's spokesman in days of darkness and disaster. Two nations were threatening Judah at this time; Babylon on the east and Egypt on the south, and Judah not knowing with which to make an alliance, sought to play them off one against the other. Morally and spiritually, the nation had sunk lower and lower. Their backslidings were driving them to ruin. Different political parties urged their ideas upon the people, but no real reformation ensued. Jeremiah, with faithful prayer and weeping, points out their astonishing unfaithfulness to God, but they turn from him to false prophets. He warns them not to trust the sacrifices of the temple and in ritual to save the land, and tells them that they must get ready for exile. In chapter 17 he says that the observance of the Sabbath would bring blessings, but nothing can put off the captivity.

LESSON—Backsliding was the characteristic vice of the Jewish people throughout the whole course of their history. Their career was one of perpetual sinning and repenting, until their great rejection of Christ, which led to the final falling away. The Jews were a representative people and their history is often a true reflection of individual lives. It is remarkable how many of the saints of the Bible proved weak at their strongest point. Abraham, the man of faith, was noted for his acts of unbelief. Moses, pre-eminent for meekness, was overcome by anger. Job, the example of patience, became impatient. Peter, the boldest in the hour of danger, turned coward. It is a sad sight to see a wrecked ship, or a church building in ruins, but a backslider is a sadder sight still. "Let us watch and pray that we may not enter into temptation."

Great Fact II -- Repentance and Restoration Foretold.

Jeremiah 24-25.

As clearly as Jeremiah prophesies the captivity, he also foretells a return to Jerusalem of a portion of the people. He has a clear vision of Christ coming to reign in Jeremiah 23. The sign of the figs typifies their return, Jeremiah 24. The captivity should end in 70 years, Jeremiah 25. Even the vessels of the Lord's house

shall be returned, Jeremiah 28. Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, Jeremiah 33. The Rechabites were faithful in not drinking wine, Jeremiah 35.

LESSON—The language of these prophecies plainly shows that the divine author has in mind not only the return of Judah from Babylon, but also the return of all the twelve tribes from among the Gentile nations. Every prophecy not yet come to pass will be fulfilled literally at Christ's second coming. Just as God does not restore Israel until they are healed of their unholiness, so healing of the soul comes before the blessings of redemption.

Great Fact III -- Indignation upon Oppressing Nations.

Jeremiah 45-52.

In this section the prophet predicts the downfall of Egypt, the spoiling of the Philistines, the confounding of Moab and Ammon, the wasting of the secret places of Edom, and the desolating of Damascus, Kedar and Elam. In Jeremiah 50-51, the end of Babylon is seen, and her place is to be taken by spoilers from the north.

LESSON—A country's safeguard is not in commerce, or Tyre would not have fallen. Not in art, or Greece would never have perished. Not in strong political organization, or Rome would have continued. Not in armies, or Germany would now be the victor of the world. Not in religious ceremonies, or Jerusalem or Rome would be the most influential cities today. No! Righteousness, and it alone, exalteth a nation, and safeguards its people. When Israel was God-fearing she was mighty. When she fell into the wicked ways of nations around her, she and they were brought low. Further, in Genesis 12:3, God said He would punish those who injured Israel, and this has been fulfilled in the experience of all ancient and modern nations.

Great Fact IV -- The Lamentations of Jeremiah.

Lamentations 1-5.

This book consists of live Lamentations, or songs of sorrow, over the destruction of Jerusalem, 587 B.C., and over the condition of the captives. It pictures the deepest suffering; but the righteousness of God is confessed and prayer is offered for pardon and acceptance. Resolutions are made to obey the Lord, and all classes are called to join in a national reformation. In Lamentations 3, there is much comfort in the thought of God's unceasing mercies.

LESSON—In times of distress, Jeremiah found his brightest hope in “the Lord’s mercies, which are new every morning!” We may sometimes forget them or abuse them, but they are ever new. Just as God keeps the old world green by renewing it every spring, so He refreshes His people, by spring times of grace. When clouds come, let us see God’s rainbow covenant of mercy through the clouds as Noah did in Genesis 9:13. When we sin let us remember the mercy seat of Exodus 23:17-22; where we may be received back by Yahweh. God’s mercies are ever new and everlasting. This does not mean that God is merciful at the expense of His truth, holiness and wisdom. Israel’s history proves this. Yet God is the Father of all mercy, and all His children can say with the Psalmist, “Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life!”

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—The Prophet Commissioned,—Ezekiel 2:3-10.
- []—The Prophet a Watchman,—Ezekiel 3:10-21.
- []—Israel to be converted,—Ezekiel 11:14-21.
- []—The Sins of the People,—Ezekiel 22:3-31.
- []—Tyre a Symbol of Satan,—Ezekiel 28:11-19.
- []—Vision of the Dry Bones,—Ezekiel 37:1-14
- []—Two Sticks are Israel and Judah,—Ezekiel 37:15-24.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Ezekiel.

Lesson No. 24

LESSON THEME:—EZEKIEL

Ezekiel 3:16-21.

- **KEY WORD**—“VISIONS.”
- **KEY VERSE**—Ezekiel 1:3. “The hand of the Lord was upon me.”
- **KEY PHRASE**—“VISIONS OF JUDGMENT and OF THE TWO RESTORATIONS.” Mentioned seven times in the book.

NAME—The book is named after its author, Ezekiel, who was a priest and a major prophet. He was carried captive to Babylon, 597 B.C., about eleven years before the destruction of Jerusalem. He lived at the time of Daniel and Jeremiah, and was a disciple of the latter while in Jerusalem. He received his call at the age of 30, and prophesied for 22 years. He was a man of intense moral earnestness and of deep personal humility, and conspicuous for his fidelity to Yahweh in the trying times of the exile.

TIME OF EZEKIEL—The northern (Ezekiel 4-7) kingdom, Israel, had been in captivity, for over 100 years. Nebuchadnezzar had descended upon Jerusalem of the southern kingdom, and carried away 10,000 of its chief citizens, among whom was Ezekiel. This judgment did not sober its idol-mad and vice-intoxicated inhabitants, but only plunged them deeper into superstition and wickedness. Like their fathers, they were a rebellious nation and a stiff-hearted, people, who set up idol-groves upon the high hills, and defiled Yahweh’s sanctuary with abomination, Ezekiel 5:11. Far away from his native land, by the rivers of Babylon, Ezekiel preached against the national sins of his people in some remarkable visions, but like Isaiah, he closed his message with a description of the Messiah’s glorious reign. Events cover 21 years, 595-574 B.C.

PURPOSE—

1. To dispel foolish hopes of a speedy deliverance from the yoke of Babylon.
2. To expose the backslidings of Judah.
3. To call the Jews to individual repentance.
4. To call out a new Israel, which could inherit the promises.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Rebukes.
2. Enemies.
3. Future.

Great Fact I -- Rebukes and Prophecies of Judgment.

Ezekiel 1-24.

First we have the call and commission of the prophet in four visions, Ezekiel 1-3. The prophecy given six years beforehand of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. Ezekiel 4-7. The greatness of Judah's iniquity shown in several visions, the results of which they must bear on their own heads, as no help will come from Egypt to save them from captivity, Ezekiel 8-10. Judah's sins are enumerated, and Yahweh's chastisement of the nation is justified, Ezekiel 20-24.

God had wonderfully favored his people, Israel. They had been blessed with more illustrious men than other nations, mightier and more wonderful deeds had been done for them than for any other people, a clearer and brighter revelation of God had been given them, a purer and nobler worship had been instituted among them. All these privileges were given that others might be blessed through them. Psalm 67:12. But "she quarreled with God's judgment more wickedly than did the heathen nations," and grew daring and defiant in her disobedience. They were therefore punished with famine, pestilence and dispersion.

LESSON—The oft-repeated mistake of Israel was to consider itself a privileged nation, sure of the favor of God in spite of its unfaithfulness. Many Christians flatter themselves with the same delusion. Yet, God never spares a sin or a sinner. In the discipline of the Christian life, God is always fighting against sin, and He will not cease until He plucks every viper from our lives, Matt. 3:12. The tears of Gethsemane were not a substitute for the Cross of Calvary. The tears of regret will not wash away God's judgment for sin. "Could my tears forever flow, could my zeal no respite know, all for sin could not atone, Christ must save and Christ alone!"

Great Fact II -- Prophecies Against Judah's Enemies.

Ezekiel 25-32.

In these eight chapters the prophet has no word to speak concerning Judah and Israel, but the divine woe is pronounced against the seven neighboring nations

which had shown the most hostility to them: Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon and Egypt. The capture of Tyre and its ruin by Nebuchadnezzar is foretold. Egypt shall be desolate forty years. The prince of Tyre, Ezekiel 28:11-19, is a type of the prince of this world, Satan. His unfallen state is here described, as is his fall in Isaiah Ezekiel 14:12-14. Satan is the inspirer of all pride such as ruined Tyre. God exercises His judgments over the whole earth. Seven nations are here mentioned because seven is the number of completeness. The nations around Israel regarded Yahweh as a tribal god. But Christ announced a judgment of all nations would follow that of Israel, Matthew 25:32. God visits national sin with national judgments. Not only will individuals be judged, but each nation as a whole will have to answer for its national sins, of oppression, Sabbath breaking, drunkenness, graft and corruption.

LESSON—A nation by Its collective action possesses national responsibility. If the people sin, the people suffer. If a people repent and call upon God, national calamities are averted. National pride should give away to national goodness, and national power to national kindness. “The righteous Lord loveth righteousness.”

Great Fact III -- Future Restorations and Glory of Israel.

Ezekiel 33-48.

These discourses were delivered after the destruction of Jerusalem, in which he pictures the happy return to Israel to their own land, henceforward to dwell in safety, and secure from former calamities. The land shall have renewed beauty and fertility. The nation, although then dry bones, should live again. Ezekiel, like John in the Book of Revelation, had a vision of a glorious temple to be rebuilt. The ever-growing river coming out of the sanctuary, speaks of the increasing prosperity and blessedness that should come to the land. Gog, of the land of Magog, will make a great attempt to destroy this new kingdom, but will utterly fail, Ezekiel 38-39. The temple shall be the center of Israel's life and God will dwell among them, and He will be their God and they shall be His people.

It is evident that the prophet has in view, not only the return after 70 years, but the later gathering of the Jews from among the Gentiles, and their final return for millennial place and glory, when Christ shall sit on the throne of his father David, and rule the earth in righteousness.

The reasons for this interpretation are as follows:—

1. In the first restoration only those who were so minded, came back from Babylon, Ezra 7:13., while many remained in Babylon, Egypt, and elsewhere, but in the final restoration not one will be left, Ezekiel 34:11-13 and Ezekiel 39:28-29.
2. In the first restoration only Jews (southern kingdom) returned, but in the final restoration both Judah (two tribes) and Israel (northern ten tribes) will return, 36:10, and Jeremiah 3:18.
3. At the first restoration they returned to be over thrown and driven out again. But in the final restoration they shall return to remain, and go out no more. They shall be exalted, and dwell safely and the Gentile nations shall flow unto them, Ezekiel 34:28, Ezekiel 46:11-12.
4. In the first restoration, because of their blindness and hard, stony hearts, they rejected and killed Jesus. But in the final restoration they shall repent of all this, and have clean hearts, and accept Christ who shall be their King, Ezekiel 36:24-28; Ezekiel 37:23-27.
5. Nothing has ever yet been built like the temple which Ezekiel describes in chapters 40-48 but in the final restoration the prophecy will be literally fulfilled and each tribe shall be located exactly as stated by the prophet Ezekiel, and the apostle John, Ezekiel 48:22-35, Revelation 21:11-13.

LESSON—The final restoration of Israel is one of the triumphant certainties of scripture, and it is closely connected with the Lord's Second Coming, Psalm 102:16.

W. E. B. gives the order of events as follows:—

1. Christ sets up His millennial kingdom (we are now in the kingdom of grace), and all that offend are gathered out of the land.
2. He judges first his own people the Jews, as to their fidelity to Him, and then the nations of the earth as to their treatment of His people.
3. The Lord makes a new covenant with His People, Judah and Israel, forgiving their iniquity, but punishing their enemies, including Gog and its armies which are overthrown and destroyed.
4. The Jews come into full possession of the full extent of their land according to promises.
5. The temple and city are rebuilt according to the Divine plan, and the Levitical forms of worship are re-established, with some modifications.
6. Nothing shall hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain, and Jerusalem is made a praise, the joy of the whole earth. The earth is full of the glory of the Lord!

The Lord will not restore Israel nor build up Zion until he has caught up true believers, Colossians 3:4. Let us therefore not be cold-hearted, world-conforming Christians, but earnest, watchful and true, ever seeking the conversion of souls, that when the king shall come we shall be ready to go out to meet Him! Matthew 25:6.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Daniel's steadfastness,—Daniel 1:1-8.
- []—Prayer for Wisdom,—Daniel 2:16-22.
- []—The harmless furnace,—Daniel 3:19-25
- []—Tree Vision Interpreted,—Daniel 4:19-27.
- []—Found Wanting,—Daniel 5:22-31.
- []—The Lion's Den,—Daniel 6:16-24.
- []—Coming of Christ in Glory,—Daniel 7:9-14.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Daniel.

Lesson No. 25

LESSON THEME:—DANIEL

Daniel 2:16-22.

- **KEY WORD**—“EMPIRES.”
- **KEY VERSE**—Daniel 2:21.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“GOD CONTROLS THE RISE AND FALL OF EMPIRES.”

WRITER—Daniel was one of the royal princes who was carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. He was well-favored in person, and cultured in mind, so that he was given an apartment in the king’s palace, and received daily portions of the king’s food and wine. He proposed, however, not to defile himself with food that had been offered to idols, and lived instead on a vegetable diet. His first appearance in public was as an interpreter of the image dream of the king. He himself had some wonderful visions. He also was a statesman who held high offices under three successive kings, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Darius. While in the service of Darius he was put in the lion’s den for praying to his God. However, the God in whom he trusted closed the mouths of the lions and he came out unharmed, and his accusers, instead, were destroyed by the lions. He lived through the whole 70 years of the captivity and saw the return under King Cyrus as recorded in the book of Ezra.

TIME COVERED—607 to 534 B.C. about 73 years.

PURPOSE—To show that God controls not only the lives of the Hebrew captives, but the mighty empires of the earth.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. History.
2. Prophecy.

Great Fact I -- Historical Section.

Daniel 1-6.

Daniel 1, shows us the faithfulness of Daniel and his three companions to their religious convictions, in not eating heathen food. “His loyalty he kept, his faith, his love.”—Milton.

In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar dreams and forgets his dream. His wise men cannot help him, and Daniel, to whom God has revealed the dream and the meaning, is called in. The dream of the king was of a great image with a head of fine gold, breast and arms of silver, stomach and thigh of brass, legs of iron, and feet that were part iron and part of clay. A stone cut out of a mountain without hands struck the image upon its feet and destroyed it.

Daniel’s interpretation was that the image represents the greatness and splendor of the Gentile world powers. The head of gold is the **BABYLONIAN EMPIRE**, 626-636 B.C., and the beginning of the time of the Gentiles. Luke 21:24.

The breast and arms of silver represent the **MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE**, which conquered and succeeded that of Babylon, and stood from 636-330 B.C. Its power began with Cyrus under whom the Jews returned to Jerusalem. Ezra 1:1. The stomach and thighs of brass represent the **GREEK EMPIRE**, which under Alexander the Great, conquered the entire Persian world, Daniel 2:39. This stood from 330-321, and at Alexander’s death was divided among his four generals. The legs of iron represent the **ROMAN EMPIRE**, Daniel 2:40, one leg being the eastern and the other the western divisions with capitals at Constantinople and Rome. The ten toes represent the ten future kingdoms to arise from the breaking up of the two divisions of the Roman Empire, which stood from 27 B.C. to 476 A. D. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands represents the coming of Christ in glory in the time of the ten kings, to set up an everlasting kingdom, Daniel 2:46.

Daniel 3, tells how Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden idol and required all to fall down and worship it. Daniel’s three friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, refused to do so and were cast into the fiery furnace, but were miraculously delivered by their God.

Daniel 4, tells of the king’s dream of a great tree which was cut down. This was meant to be a warning to Nebuchadnezzar, but a year later he lost his mind and became a madman, because he set himself up as a rival against Almighty God.

Daniel 5, gives the record of the king’s great feast (Belshazzar had succeeded Nebuchadnezzar) and how he wickedly took the golden vessels from Solomon’s temple and used them for drinking wine to the idols. An angry God caused handwriting to appear on the wall, and Daniel explained that the message meant,

“Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting.” In that night the king was slain. Exodus 20:3 says “Thou shalt have no other Gods before me!”

LESSON—Daniel stands before us as a magnificent example of moral heroism. Although he held a high position in Babylon, he daily walked with God, and he kept up the practice of David of praying three times daily. When he was eighty years old, the king’s friends through envy thought to depose him, but his faith in God triumphed, and he was delivered. Even his enemies could not question his uprightness, and his noble stand for principle will shine through the ages. “Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone, dare to have a purpose true and dare to make it known!”

Great Fact II -- The Prophetic Section.

Daniel 7-12.

In Daniel 7 the prophet sees four wild beasts coming up from a stormy sea, a lion, a bear, a leopard and a terrible beast with great iron teeth and ten horns. Among the ten horns there came up another little horn, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots, Daniel 7:8. Then a judgment scene is pictured, in which everlasting dominion is seen in the hands of Christ, Daniel 7:13-14.

This vision of the four beasts covers the same ground as the great image vision of Daniel 2, but in this vision the four empires are represented as fierce beasts, because of their cruelty and oppression.

The little horn coming up among the ten is the anti-Christ yet to come, represented in Revelation 13:10, as the beast coming up out of the sea, Daniel 7:15-28. The saints will be oppressed by the anti-Christ until the coming of Christ. This is the period of the Great Tribulation spoken of in Revelation 6-18;—the period between the coming of the Lord for His saints, and His coming with His saints to reign.

In Daniel 8, Daniel has a vision of a ram with two horns, which is overcome by a he-goat with one horn, which in turn is overcome by four notable horns, and they in their turn were followed by one which waxed great. The ram represents the Medo-Persian Empire, which was over-come by the Greek Empire. The four notable horns are the four kingdoms into which the Greek Empire was divided. The little horn, fierce and of mighty power, is Antiochus Epiphanes, King of Syria, who invaded Palestine, murdered 40,000 Jews, desecrated the temple, and brought upon them the saddest experiences of their history.

In Daniel 9, while Daniel is praying toward the end of the captivity that God would forgive their sins and cause His face to shine upon the sanctuary, the angel, Gabriel, drew near and told him what would take place before the Messiah should come. He told Daniel that seventy seven-year periods would lapse before the national chastisement would be ended, and the nation re-established in everlasting righteousness, Daniel 9:24. The first seven of the seven-year periods (49 years) began at the command to build and restore

Jerusalem in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. The second period of 433 years (627-year periods) began at the building of the walls and continued until Christ was cut off (crucified). The last seven-year period will not begin until after the church-age because these periods deal strictly with Israel and not the church. This last seven-year period will begin with the anti-Christ in power and in covenant with the Jews. In the middle of the seven years, he will break the covenant and cause Time of Trouble of Daniel 12:1, which is the same as the Great Tribulation of Revelation.

Daniel 11, describes the conflicts between the kings of the north (Syria) and the kings of the south (Egypt), ending with a description of Antiochus Epiphanes and the anti-Christ. The former is the little horn of Daniel 8, and the latter is the little horn of Daniel 7.

Daniel 12:2-3 gives us the two resurrections. The resurrection to everlasting life, which is followed a thousand years after by the resurrection to shame and everlasting contempt. See also Revelation 20:5. In the first verse of this chapter we have the Time of Trouble or Tribulation, that comes between the two resurrections. This will last half the seven-year period, or three and one-half years.

LESSON—Daniel is the great prophet of the future in the Old Testament. More than any other, he had visions of the end of the age. They were given for our prayerful study and should not be neglected as they usually are. Let us have faith in the sure word of Prophecy, remember the Almighty Word-giver behind it, and light up the present with the sunshine of future glory.

So many of the prophecies of this book have been fulfilled, that the Bible must be the Word of God, and if the scripture is the Word of God, then Christianity must be true, and if Christianity is true, then we ought to love its Author, and practice His teachings.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Promises of mercy,—Hosea 2:14-20.
- []—Undying love of Yahweh,—Hosea 3.
- []—Willful ignorance,—Hosea 4:6-11.
- []—Withdrawn face of Yahweh,—Hosea 5:9-15.
- []—A cake not turned,—Hosea 7:1-8.
- []—Yahweh yearns over his people,—Hosea 11:1-8.
- []—Entreaty to return,—Hosea 14.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

- [] The entire book of Hosea.

Lesson No. 26

LESSON THEME:—HOSEA

Hosea 2:14-20.

- **KEY WORD**—“RETURN.”
- **KEY VERSE**—Hosea 6:2.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“ISRAEL’S UNFAITHFULNESS TO GOD.”

WRITER—Hosea was a prophet of the northern kingdom, Israel, to whom his preaching was directed. His name means “The Lord is my help.” At God’s command he married a woman who was an idolater, and to their three children he gave typical names, speaking of the rejection and dispersion of Israel. After a time Hosea’s wife, feeling a restraint in the prophet’s home, fled from her husband and was unfaithful to him. Hosea, seeking her, found her deserted and despised, sold as a slave. Yet his love was not worn out. He purchased her freedom, and took her to his house to atone for her sin in repentance. Hosea taught that just as he had been wounded by the conduct of his unfaithful wife, so God is hurt by the backsliding of Israel.

TIMES OF HOSEA—By reading 2 Kings 15-17 one will understand the condition of Israel at this time. Outwardly the land was enjoying prosperity. Military victories had enlarged the land and caused trade to flourish, and the forms of religion were observed. Yet inwardly the nation was decaying. The people were discontented under the oppression of corrupt rulers. Baal worship with all its wicked ceremonies was eating away at the purity and uprightness of the nation. It was said of all the kings of Israel at this time “that they did evil in the sight of the Lord.” Assyria was about to crush Israel. Hosea pleaded with them to return unto God and seek His help. When they refused, God left them to their fate.

TIME OF WRITING—About 725 B.C. Book covers period of 60 years, 785-725 B.C. While Isaiah and Micah were prophesying in Judah, Hosea and Amos prophesying in Israel.

PURPOSE—To show God’s yearning love for unfaithful Israel.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Unfaithfulness.

2. Decline.
3. Hope.

Great Fact I -- Israel's Unfaithfulness to God.

Hosea 1-3.

The state of the chosen people is symbolized by the prophet taking an evil woman to be his wife. Yet Israel had no more to recommend her to God's love than this woman had when Hosea married her. Just as the wife espoused to a loving husband, enjoys the protection of home and owes all her provision to her husband, so Israel, chosen by Yahweh and brought by Him into a fertile land, has received all she had from Him alone. Under the type of the wife departing from her husband, Israel is seen departing from God. She will receive a full reward for her wickedness, but this shall lead to her repentance and restoration. As Hosea received back his wife through love, so because of divine love, God will receive back His chosen nation.

LESSON—Not only is God the Maker and Redeemer of His spiritual Israel, but He is also the Divine Husband, admitting her into the most tender relationship, and conferring upon her special favors. Therefore she should bind herself “to keep to Him only.” He alone is to be worshipped and obeyed. In contrast to this, Israel, like many Christians, went after other lovers, and attached herself to any other worthless lover who wooed her. God cannot view such conduct with indifference. He claims all our love. The least departure from scriptural faith is spiritual unchastity. Let us guard the spiritual honor of ourselves and families as zealously as we do our moral honor.

Great Fact II -- The Decline of Israel.

Hosea 4-10.

In this section the prophet strongly reproves Israel for swearing, lying, killing, stealing and idolatry of the worst sort. At times he has the tender compassion of Christ when he wept over Jerusalem. At other times he denounces them for their blindness in not seeing that they must reap a harvest of Judgment. Not only were the people guilty, but the priests were also. They had failed to preach the Law, and had pretended not to see national idolatry, on account of the profit they got from it. The calf-worship and sacrifices brought them many fees, so instead of rebuking it

they encouraged it. No wonder the nation went to the bad, for “Like priest, like people.”

LESSON—There is a solemn responsibility resting upon the preachers and teachers of a nation. If they are faithful in their duty the standards of God will never be permanently lowered. Too often, however, the moral and spiritual tone of the community reacts upon the religious leaders, instead of their influence reacting upon the community. How can the nation have right ideas of God’s spirituality, His holiness and moral demands unless preachers, teachers and parents teach, not only the interesting stories of the Bible, but the requirements of God, as given in all the books of the Bible. Luxury, ambition, greed, self-indulgence and irreverence are as moths eating at the vitals of the nation. Nothing but the whole gospel of God, taught, preached and practiced can uphold the greatness and glory of a nation.

Great Fact III -- The Hope of Israel.

Hosea 11-14.

Wave after wave of threatened wrath had rolled over Israel, but God now offers them grace upon grace. Hosea makes a strong and gracious appeal to Israel to return unto the Lord and be forgiven. He reminds them what Yahweh has been to the Hebrew people.

1. A loving father, Hosea 11:1. They bore his name. Enjoyed daily access to Him. Obtained needed protection and provision from Him. He subjected them to suitable training and discipline. He has an eternal inheritance awaiting them. All this is beautifully true of the Christian.
2. Yahweh was a careful nurse, Hosea 11:3. He knew His people’s needs. Was touched with a feeling of their infirmities. Took upon Himself the entire charge of the nation. Set up the tabernacle for them as a spiritual kindergarten, and patiently healed their backslidings. God is the same careful Nurse to His spiritual children. He bears up the believer and bears with him. He raises him when he falls, heals his bruises and is “a present help in the time of trouble.” The path of duty may lead a believer into slippery places, but “underneath are the everlasting arms.”
3. Yahweh was a kind master, Hosea 11:4. He did not treat them as slaves but as sons. He drew them with bands of love, which means that he was tender and persuasive with them. When they served God they were the most prosperous, which showed that “His yoke was easy.” In like manner the Lord deals with His redeemed people. “He takes off the yoke of guilt, the

yoke of sin, the yoke of the law, the yoke of unrest and the yoke of fear.”
And “He lays meat unto them” – the hidden manna of His grace, and “the fatness of His house.”

LESSON—Just as the church is spoken of as the bride of Christ, Ephesians 5:25, because He gave Himself to redeem it, in love is purifying it, and one day will present it to Himself a spotless bride; so in Hosea, Israel is seen to be the wife of Yahweh, now disowned, but one day to be forgiven and restored. This is the hope of Israel. They failed to realize this hope at Christ’s first coming. They now direct it to His second coming. Yea, His appearing is also the “blessed hope” of the church.

The supreme lesson of the book is “that the ways of the Lord are right.” He knows wherein our true good lies. Taking the way He prescribes, we shall most certainly attain to blessedness!

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Chastening of Judah by locusts,—Joel 1:1-12.
- []—Call to repentance,—Joel 1:13-20.
- []—Warriors, like locusts, will invade land,—Joel 2:1-11.
- []—The Lord’s pity and favor,—Joel 2:18-27.
- []—The Holy Spirit poured out,—Joel 2:28-32.
- []—Judgment of nations at Lord’s return,—Joel 3:1-8.
- []—Full Kingdom Blessing,—Joel 3:16-21.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Joel.

Lesson No. 27

LESSON THEME:—JOEL

Joel 2:28-32.

- **KEY WORD**—“**OUTPOURING.**”
- **KEY VERSE**—Joel 2:28.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“**THE TWO OUTPOURINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**”

WRITER—Joel, a prophet of Judah wrote this book. His name means “Yahweh is God.” He lived in Jerusalem, and is thought to have been one of the priests of the temple.

TIME—Many scholars claim that Joel is the earliest of the prophetic books, and that he ministered in the reign of Joash, king of Judah, about 860 B.C. While he was prophesying in Judah in the south, Elijah and Elisha were preaching in Israel in the north.

PURPOSE—To show that the locusts swarming into the land were figurative of the nations who should swarm upon Israel, but if the people would repent, then God would deliver them, and pour out His Spirit upon them.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Plague.
2. Fast.
3. Blessing.

Great Fact I -- Plague of Locusts.

Joel 1.

The occasion of this prophecy was four successive plagues of locusts and a severe drought which desolated the land. Joel calls upon the people to reflect upon the cause of the calamity and to mourn with true penitence. He urges them that if they would avoid further troubles that they should fast and make their supplications unto God, that He may bless and not curse their land. Locusts were one of the plagues of Egypt, Exodus 10:14; Exodus 15, and there was nothing like them for

multitude and mischief they did. Speaking of a plague of locusts, Thompson says, “The number of them was incredible, the whole face of the country was black with them, on they came like a living deluge. We dug trenches and kindled fires, and beat and burnt to death heaps upon heaps, but the effort was utterly useless. They poured over rocks, walls, ditches and hedges. The roads were covered with them, all marching in regular lines, like armies of soldiers with the leaders in front, Joel 2:5. When they approached our garden all the farm servants were employed to keep them out, but to no avail, and when they had devastated our garden they passed on to another.” Proverbs 30:27.

LESSON—

1. Those who out do their fathers in sin may justly expect sorer judgments than their fathers ever knew. Sometimes a terrible upheaval is necessary for a nation for without it wrongs will not be righted.
2. If calamities come upon us because of our own faults we should repent and be wiser for the future. If they have befallen us because of the faults of others, we should live them down, for we have nothing with which to reproach ourselves and time will remove the handicap. If we have spiteful enemies, we should so live that their enmity may be disarmed. If we have kind and faithful friends, we should live to bless and protect them. If we hope for eternal happiness, we should prepare to enjoy it.

Great Fact II -- Exhortation to Keep Solemn Fast.

Joel 2

In this chapter we have a further description of the plague, and the blast of the ram’s horn called an assembly for an extraordinary fast. Not a soul was to be absent. It convened old and young, men and women, and even bridegroom and bride on their wedding day. The priests dressed not in white robes as usual, but in black sack cloth, would prostrate themselves upon the ground and then turning toward the Invisible Presence within the sanctuary, cry, “Spare the people, O Lord.”

In answer to this, the prophet assures the people that God will indeed bestow upon them both temporal mercies, Joel 2:18-27, and spiritual blessings, Joel 2:28-32.

Often in the prophecies some local circumstance is made the occasion of a far-reaching prophecy. Many scholars think that “the day of the Lord,” Joel 2:15,

refers to events at the end of the age, and Scofield outlines these events as follows:—

1. The invasion of Palestine from the north by Gentile world powers under the Anti-Christ and false prophets,—Joel 2:1-10.
2. The Lord's army destroys the invaders,—Joel 2:11, Revelation 19:11-21.
3. Repentance of Jews restored to their land,—Joel 2:12-17.
4. Temporal kingdom blessing upon the land,—Joel 2:12-17.
5. The outpouring of the Spirit in the last days,—Joel 2:28-29.
6. Return of the Lord in glory and the setting up of the kingdom,—Joel 2:30-32.
7. Full and permanent kingdom blessing,—Joel 3:1-16.

LESSON—

1. Fasting or the total abstinence from food for a certain length of time was practiced by the Israelites in a devotional spirit. It was engaged in as an evidence of sorrow for sin and associated with confession of sin, through it Divine favor and blessing was sought. The apostles practiced it, 2 Corinthians 6:5, but it does not seem an essential part of the gospel plan. However, self-denial and confession of sin should be constantly practiced, as plain living leads to high thinking.
2. The prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit had one fulfillment at Pentecost, Acts 2:17-21, but it would not be right to regard that particular occasion as exhausting the fulfillment of the prophecy. Rather Pentecost was the first great example of the universal outpouring of the Spirit that is to take place in the Last Days.

Great Fact III -- Full and Permanent Kingdom Blessing.

Joel 3.

Only by inspiration could Joel, the earliest of the prophets of Judah, have foretold the return from captivity. The language is such, however, that it is evident that the prophet had in his vision not only the return from Babylon, but the last regathering of the Jews from among the Gentiles, and the judgment of the nations after the battle of Armageddon as seen in Matthew 25:32; Revelation 19:18.

After the restoration of Israel and the judgment of the nation, Joel 3:1-2, comes the setting up of the everlasting and universal kingdom, Joel 3:20. That kingdom will

be heaven in origin, principle and authority, Daniel 2:44, and will be set up on the earth, not by persuasion, but by power. It will be a kingdom of righteousness and peace. The meek not the proud, will inherit the earth, the knowledge of the Lord will be universal, and the out breaking of sin will be visited by instant judgment. With Satan's powers restricted, it is impossible to conceive all the spiritual and temporal blessedness that the race will enjoy.

LESSON—Joel's picture of final deliverance and glory is very much like that of Zechariah in his prophecy, showing that the hope of final triumph dominated Israel in its dark days. So hope will keep our hearts from breaking under the pressure of evils, and ever hold before us the prospect of greater good. Deep humbling of heart is often the door of hope to joy and victory. In the Psalms of David, written in his deepest trouble from the persecution of Saul and the rebellion of Absalom, we always find some ray of hope. In 1 Peter 1:13, Peter says, "Hope to the end," and he is called the apostle of hope because in five chapters he refers ten times to the triumphs of the future.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Can Two Walk Together?—Amos 3:1-7.
- []—Prepare to Meet God,—Amos 4:6-12.
- []—Mourning over Israel,—Amos 5:1-8.
- []—Woe to Those at Ease,—Amos 6:1-8.
- []—The Prophet's Intercession,—Amos 7:1-9.
- []—The Basket of Summer Fruit,—Amos 8:1-7.
- []—Future Kingdom Blessings,—Amos 9:11-15.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Amos.

Lesson No. 28

LESSON THEME:—AMOS

Amos 4:6-12.

- **KEY WORD**—“PUNISHMENT.”
- **KEY VERSE**—Amos 4:12.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“THE NATIONS AND ISRAEL CALLED TO ACCOUNT.”

WRITER—Amos was a native of Tekoa, a small town about 12 miles south of Jerusalem. Amos was not a prophet nor the son of a prophet, nor did he attend the schools of the prophets. By occupation he was a shepherd and a fruit-grower. As he followed the flock in Judea, God called him to prophesy in the northern kingdom, Israel. In obedience to this call he went to Bethel where the sanctuary was. There he preached with such earnestness and plainness of speech that Amaziah, the leading idolatrous priest, complained to the king and he was expelled from the kingdom. He probably returned to his home at Tekoa, where he wrote this book.

TIME OF WRITING—About 760 B.C. While Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam II was king of Israel. Prosperity had brought great evils to the people. The rich lived in great luxury, and drank and feasted to excess amid delicate perfumes and soft strains of varied music, Amos 6:4-6. But all this was obtained through violence and robbery, Amos 3:10. The poor and needy were sold as slaves, and false weights and measures were used, Amos 2:6. The judges were corrupt, Amos 5:7, and to be upright was to be unpopular and to be hated, Amos 5:10.

PURPOSE—To foretell the punishment that should come upon foreign nations, and to condemn Israel for its idolatry and oppression.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Nations.
2. Israel.
3. Visions.

Great Fact I -- Prophecies Against the Nations.

Amos 1-2.

The accusations against the nations were called forth because they had harmed other nations. Damascus standing for Syria heads the list, because her cruelties had been most felt, by Israel. She had been fiercely cruel. The Philistines come next because they had sold Israelites into bitter slavery. The prophet next turns to Tyre, for they had acted as slave agents. Edom comes next because of its hatred and fighting against Israel. Next comes Ammon for its wicked crimes. Then judgment falls upon Ammon because of their meanness and sacrilege in wrecking their vengeance upon a corpse. Such were the charges that Amos brings against the heathen neighbors of Israel, and the commerce which bound these nations together as the slave-trade in most odious form.

LESSON—The fact that punishment came upon these nations, reminds us:—

1. That the mightiest human kingdoms cannot prevent God's judgments from coming upon them. The Canaanites were a great people, yet because of their corruption, God took away their country from them. Pharaoh was the mightiest despot of the old world, yet he and his hosts because of their obstinacy were cast into the Red Sea. Napoleon and the Kaiser thought they were superior to God and acted independent of Him, but they were soon put beneath His feet. God will not be hindered. God's helpers shall be exalted, His hinderers brought low.
2. That God knows all about human sin which fact should make us careful and prayerful to avoid evil and devoutly pursue the good. It should also impress us with the wonderful patience of God. Lamentations 3:22. Because of this patience He suspends His anger toward the wicked lest they be instantly destroyed, and instantly forgives and forgets the sins of the righteous if they confess them, 1 John 1:9.

Great Fact II -- Charges Against Israel.

Amos 3-6.

Amos now addresses both Israel and Judah. They were a chosen nation, therefore they should be punished. They stood more fully in the light and therefore they cast a darker shadow. The prophets tells them first about their civil oppressions. Righteousness seems to have been forgotten. Over their magnificent homes and courts might be written only cruelty and injustice. The women are contemptuously called "Kine of Bashan" because they were wholly absorbed in worldliness and

luxury. The prophet tells the people that when they went on their religious pilgrimage to Bethel and Gilgal it was only to add sin to sin, for their worship was mere formal ritual, and half idolatrous. They were reminded that God had sent upon them drought, plagues and earthquakes, yet they did not repent.

LESSON—When God’s people do not glorify Him, He glorifies Himself by punishing them. God never threatens, however, without offering a way of escape, never warns without also pleading with men to repent. Again and again has He stepped from the chariot of His thunder that He might put His arms around some sinner and bid him come home. He has waited for men whom others have forgotten or are ashamed of. The Bible is terrific and awful beyond all other books in denouncing sin, and threatening wrath, yet it is shot through and through with the spirit of pity and mercy and hope, and no one will be finally lost except he push on by the divine arms of compassion.

Great Fact III -- Five Visions.

Amos 7-9.

Amos used these visions for much the same reason that the Master employed parables, to illustrate and enforce the messages. In the first vision the prophet sees green fields, but God formed locusts and they ate the grass. Fearful lest famine should ensue if they devoured the crops of wheat, Amos pleads earnestly for his country and the Lord stays the Plague.

In the second vision there was a fire that was so terrible that it devoured not the land only, but also the great deep. Again the prophet pleads and his prayer is heard, the Lord said: “This also shall not be.”

In the third vision the Lord is seen with a plumb-line measuring the city for destruction. This time the prophet realizes that judgment is so certain, that he does not have the heart to intercede.

In the fourth vision a basket of summer fruit is seen. This meant that although Israel thought themselves to be sweet and luscious fruit yet in reality they were rotten at heart and would soon be cast aside.

The last vision revealed the Lord standing by the altar, bidding the prophet to smite the doorposts and shatter the fragments upon all their heads. The worshippers were to be scattered until all the sinners died by the sword.

As with the other prophecies this book closes with a bright picture of the future. The whole land should once more be one kingdom under the House of David. The Tabernacle of David now torn down, should be rebuilt and its sway should extend over all nations which are called by the Lord's name. There shall also be a great plenty, so that a happy people shall dwell in a happy land. This has not yet been fulfilled in a literal sense, but will be at the Lord's coming.

LESSON—National prosperity is still awaiting the scattered children of Israel. The land of promise shall again flow with milk and honey. Jerusalem shall again be the capital of a mighty kingdom. The hills of Judah and the plains of Israel shall again be tilled by the children of Jacob. A converted Israel shall yet witness to the grace of the Messiah, now rejected by them, but then to be served with passionate devotion.

For us now, this picture tells of the spiritual prosperity and gladness that should be appropriated from God's Word. Of peace which is for the heart of man. Of satisfaction for man's deepest wants. Of a sure abiding place for the faithful in the care and love of the Eternal. Of a Kingdom which is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Of songs of gladness and thanksgiving in which all the redeemed may join.

It is only as we have faith in the literal and spiritual fulfillment of all God's promises that we shall toil on for our own, and for the world's greatest good.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—First Deportation of Babylon,—2 Kings 24:11-16.
- []—Final Deportation of Jews,—2 Kings 25:1-7.
- []—Jerusalem Destroyed,—2 Kings 25:8-13.
- []—Edom Shall be Brought Low,—Obadiah 1:1-9.
- []—Edom's Spiteful Behavior Shall Be Avenged,—Oba. 1:10-14.
- []—Guilt of Heathen Nations,—Obadiah 1:15-16.
- []—Deliverance from Captivity and Messianic Kingdom,—Obadiah 1:17-21

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Obadiah.

Lesson No. 29

LESSON THEME:—OBADIAH

Obadiah 1:1-4.

- **KEY WORD**—“EDOM”
- **KEY VERSE**—Obadiah 1:8.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“THE HATEFULNESS OF A COMMENDATION.”

WRITER—Nothing is known of the personal history of Obadiah except that he lived in the kingdom of Judah. His name means “Servant of Yahweh.” This is the shortest book in the Old Testament.

TIME OF OBADIAH—Most scholars think that Obadiah wrote shortly after the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, about 587 B.C. The cause of the prophecy was Edom’s shameful rejoicing over the capture and ruin of Jerusalem. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob, and were always unfriendly to God’s covenant people, Israel. They refused to allow Israel to pass through their land on the way to Canaan. Saul, David and Solomon found them to be bitter enemies, and kept them under stern measures. They often allied themselves with Israel’s foes, and when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, they gladly joined the invaders, helped to plunder the city and cut off stragglers who tried to escape. This hostile attitude towards God’s people brought down upon Edom the severe condemnation of the prophet. Obadiah lived at the same time as did Jeremiah.

PURPOSE—To prophesy the downfall of Edom because of her hatefulness and pride, and rise up again of Israel from her captivity.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Downfall.
2. Cause.
3. Triumph.

Great Fact I -- Downfall of Edom.

Obadiah 1:1-9.

Edom thinks herself secure in her mountain strongholds, but though she exalts herself as the eagle, and set her nest among the stars, the Lord will bring her down and make her small among the heathens, Obadiah 1:1-4. Robbers might cease when they had stolen enough, and grape gatherers might leave some gleanings, but not so the avengers of Edom, she shall be spoiled to the depths of her hidden treasures, Obadiah 1:5-6. Her allies shall deceive her, and spread a net that she will not see, and her wisdom and power shall be of no avail, Obadiah 1:7-9.

LESSON—The particular fault with which Edom is charged is pride. “The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee.” Edom built among the stars, but God brought her down to the ground.

Nothing so much offends God as pride, haughtiness and presumption, and when men display these, they may expect to be abased to the very dust until they have learned humility under His correcting hand.

There never was an angel who had pride in his heart, but he lost his wings as did Satan and his fallen angels, and there will never be a man full of conceit and self-confidence but the Lord will spoil his glories and trample his vain hopes in the dust. Luther used to say, “Do let God be God.” Do not say “I and God,” but “God and I.” God first and I second. God to lead and I to follow, God to rule and I to obey. Do let God be God!

Great Fact II -- The Cause of Edom’s Down-fall.

Obadiah 1:10-18.

The overthrow of Edom is due to the violence and cruelty shown to God’s people at the time of the capture of Jerusalem. Edom and Israel had descended from brothers. Esau and Jacob, they were therefore cousin nations, yet when foreign invaders were dividing by lot the spoils and captives of Jerusalem, Edom maliciously rejoiced at Israel’s misfortune, they actively shared in spoiling Israel, and stood at the crossroads to cut off the escape of the Jews and delivered them up to the Babylonians. The prophet therefore proclaims that in the Day of the Lord, Edom and all the enemies of Israel shall suffer just retribution, meeting with the fact which they had inflicted on others.

LESSON—The story of Edom is a severe rebuke to those who do not treat others in a brotherly manner. She was full of malice, hatred and envy, and committed one unbrotherly act after another. Men who are brothers by blood ties, or are Christian brothers through the blood of Jesus Christ, should live as brothers. There is no room in families or in churches for the unsympathetic unloving elder brothers. We ought so to love one another that we do not hate or persecute our brothers; we ought so to love one another as God has loved us, 1 John 4:11. There is a debt of mercy, pity, charity, compassion and support that one man owes another. If we refuse to pay it in time of our abundance, we may justly expect it to be denied us in the time of our want.

Frequently at the great Roman games, the emperors, in order to gratify the citizens, caused sweet perfumes to be rained down upon them through the awnings which covered the amphitheatre. The huge vases of perfume did not refresh, delight and gratify the people, until they were unsealed, opened and poured out. So each Christian heart is a potential vase of perfumed, loving kindness. Like our Older Brother Christ we were born to sympathize. Then let us constantly pour forth love's divine perfume, not only upon our brothers in the flesh and brothers in the faith, but upon the poor, the tempted and the sorrowful.

Great Fact III -- The Triumph of Israel.

Obadiah 1:17-21.

Edom was conquered by her enemies in 300 B.C., and has disappeared from history, but for the house of Jacob, there shall be deliverance from captivity. Jerusalem shall be a safe refuge, the borders of her land shall be extended while judgment shall come upon the nations, and the Lord's kingdom shall be set up. The fulfillment of this is yet future. We rejoice in the spiritual kingdom within us, but for the literal and complete fulfillment, we still pray "Thy kingdom come!"

LESSON—There is a significant promise in Obadiah 1:17: "The house of Jacob shall possess their possessions." The perpetual possession of the Holy Land is promised them by all the prophets, and God will make the pledge good. The promise applies to the Christian also. He shall possess his possessions, and the word possessions here is a rare one in the original. A rare word is used to describe rare possessions. The possessions of the people of God are rare and precious. In 2 Corinthians 6:10; Paul speaks of the believers "as possessing all things." This reminds us that a man's real wealth is not anything outside, but is in himself. A Christian is the heir of the ages if his mind is enriched with the highest knowledge

and purest truth. If his heart is inspired with a goodness that responds to all that is noble and God-like and beats all the sweet, brave impulses of prayer, devotion and love.

A gentleman once took a friend to the top of his mansion to show him the extent of his possessions. Pointing to a great distance on one side, he said: "Do you see that far-extending farm?" "Yes." "Well, that is mine." Pointing to the other side: "Do you see those stores and the big bank in the distance? Well, they are mine!" Pointing again to another side: "Do you see the village below? Well, all that is mine!" Said the friend: "I know a woman in that village who is richer than you." "How can that be?" asked the rich man. Said the friend: "She is far richer than you. She can say 'Christ is mine!' She sings:"

*The treasures of earth are not mine,
I own not its silver nor gold,
But a treasure far greater is mine,
I have riches of value untold!
Far better than gold or wealth untold,
Are the riches of love in Christ Jesus.*

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Jonah's Call and Flight from Duty,—Jonah 1:1-11.
- []—Swallowed by a Great Fish,—Jonah 1:12-17.
- []—Jonah's Prayer,—Jonah 2:1-7.
- []—Delivered and Recommissioned,—Jonah 2:8-3:3.
- []—Nineveh Repents,—Jonah 3:1-10.
- []—Jonah's Anger,—Jonah 4:1-6.
- []—Lessons of the Gourd,—Jonah 4:7-11.

Lesson No. 30

LESSON THEME:—JONAH

Jonah 3:4-10.

- **KEY WORD**—“REPENTANCE.”
- **KEY VERSE**—Jonah 3:10.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“A GREAT CITY SAVED WHEN IT REPENTED.”

WRITER—Jonah was a native of Gathhepher, a village about an hour’s walk north of Nazareth. Jewish legend said he was the son of the widow of Sarepta, whom Elijah had restored to life. But whether this is true or not, he was probably a disciple of Elisha, and succeeded him as a great preacher of righteousness. He prophesied the victories of Jeroboam II, king of Israel, against Syria. The next we hear of him he is called to leave his home and go to Nineveh and cry against it.

TIME OF JONAH—He prophesied about 800 B.C. in the reign of Jeroboam II, 2 Kings 14:25. Nineveh, to which Jonah was commanded to go, was the capital of Assyria, and was a city of great splendor, sixty miles in circumference. The wickedness of the place was in proportion to its greatness. It was another Sodom or Gomorrah. Jonah hated to go to Nineveh because he knew that if it repented and was spared of God, that it would prevail over Israel. As a matter of fact God did use the Assyrians, whose capital was Nineveh, to chasten Israel by taking it into captivity.

PURPOSE—To show how a city may be saved by the wonderful power of repentance.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Mission.
2. Overboard.
3. Delivered.
4. Preaching.
5. Anger.

Great Fact I -- Jonah’s Mission.

Jonah 1:1-11.

God calls Jonah to go 500 miles eastward, over mountains, through trackless forests, and across burning deserts to Nineveh. Hating the idea of being a channel of blessing to the entrenched enemies of Israel, he fled 100 miles westward toward Tarshish on the south coast of Spain. Right opposite Gibraltar. Jonah was willing to prophesy to Israel but he at first flatly refused to become a foreign missionary.

God sent a great storm upon the vessel upon which Jonah had taken flight, and the ship is placed in great danger. The sailors try all means to save the ship, and at last cast lots to see who is the cause of the misfortune coming upon them. The lot points to Jonah, and he begs them to cast him into the sea.

LESSON—As God called Jonah, so he is calling men today by a voice so distinct that they cannot misunderstand. Some people say they would gladly do the will of God, if they could know what it was. This, however, is often insincerity, for John 7:17 says, “If any man is willing to do His will he shall know.” When God called Moses He made the call so plain that Moses had no rest until he responded. Samuel’s call was repeated over and over again until he realized that it was God’s voice and yielded to His claim. God’s call to all of us is to repentance, faith and obedience. Dr. W. B. Riley tells how a friend of his in Chicago was deaf in one ear, so that when he laid down to sleep, he shut out all sound by burying the good ear in the pillow, and turning the deaf one up. So too often, we turn a deaf ear towards heaven, and say that God has not called us. God gives us a holy courage that will scorn all ease and petty excuses!

Great Fact II -- Jonah Overboard.

Jonah 1:12-17.

The crew of the ship made renewed efforts to get to shore, but when this seemed to be impossible, they take Jonah at his word and cast him into the sea. Then the storm immediately abates and the ship sailed on with its awe-struck but thankful crew. Jonah is in fearful danger, but God so ordered events that after he had sunk to the bottom a great fish swallowed him up and preserved him alive for three days and nights, until it could cast him out upon the land.

No miracle of scripture has called forth so much unbelief, but in Matthew 12:39 our Lord confirms the truth of this account. “God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.” GOD prepared a missionary for Nineveh, He prepared a storm, when that missionary was disobedient, He prepared a great fish to preserve his life. He prepared a gourd. He appointed a host of caterpillars to strip the gourd.

He appointed a scorching, burning wind to beat upon the head of Jonah. The whole account is full of the direct acts of God. Who will say that such acts are impossible to the Almighty Creator, who made heaven and earth and all that in them is?

On the natural history side of the question, many have stood up in the skeleton of a whale that was on exhibition that was 80 feet long and 7 feet high when lying on its side. Frank Bullen tells of whales 70 feet long swimming about with their lower jaws wide open so that a man could easily slip down without the fish hardly knowing it. Trustworthy records say that when a whale is dying it always ejects the contents of its stomach. Masses eight feet by six feet have been vomited up, as has a whole horse, so it is not at all incredible that this should have happened to Jonah. His preservation in the body of the fish was plainly supernatural, as was the preservation of the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace. In 1758 a man was swallowed by a shark. The captain on deck with a gun shot the fish and caused it to cast out the sailor and he was rescued alive. With God all things are possible. Jonah's supernatural experience not only looked backward to his sin, but forward to Christ's burial and resurrection. Matthew 12:39.

Great Fact III -- Jonah Delivered.

Jonah 2

Jonah's deliverance was in answer to prayer. He prayed out of the body of the fish, and when submission took the place of rebellion, the Most High was willing to deliver the captive, to pardon the sinner to employ again the unfaithful runaway.

LESSON—If you cry to God out of the depths, you will cry yourself out of them. A man who was broken by his unbelief in prayer was asked the question, "Do you think a loving God has written in His book today, on the 25th of February, 2011, William T____, asked Me for the forgiveness of all his sins for My Dear Son's sake, and I refused him?" "No, I cannot believe that." "What then, has He written beside your prayer?" The man thought deeply for a time and then replied, "It is more likely He has written '*Granted*' by its side!" From that moment the restraints of his fears were broken and he was set free to trample on his sins and to serve his Savior.

Great Fact IV -- Jonah Preaching.

Jonah 3.

Jonah being called a second time now goes to Nineveh and proclaims the gospel in the streets of the heathen city. They were startled by the warnings that in forty days their city would be overthrown, and put on sackcloth, sat in ashes, repented of their sins and cried mighty unto God for mercy. When God saw that they had turned from their evil ways, He graciously held back the threatened wrath and judgment and Nineveh was spared.

LESSON—

1. How good of God to offer a divine commission to deserters. There is no need for any Christian worker to be out of the harness. The word of the Lord comes to you a second time, *“Arise and go!”*
2. Jonah’s message was not a pleasant one, but he was not responsible for it. A preacher or teacher is like the bearer of a telegram – he must convey the message, but not change it. God’s message, plus Jonah’s earnestness produced a miraculous effect. Think of 600,000 on their faces in repentance before God! Surely we ought to pray for such a revival in every city in the land. The God who blessed Jonah’s message and saved a great city in forty days is still our God.

Great Fact V -- Jonah’s Anger.

Jonah 4.

Jonah is aggravated at the sparing of Nineveh. The expectation of which had led to his former flight. He therefore makes himself a booth outside the city walls and yet hopes to see the city punished. God prepared a vine to spring up and shade Jonah from the sun, but He also prepared a worm or host of black caterpillars (for the word could be a collective noun), to destroy the gourd and leave Jonah exposed to the scorching sun. When Jonah grieved bitterly for the loss of the gourd, God asked him why he wanted God to have pity on the gourd, but to have no pity for the great city of Nineveh, in which there were thousands of little children, so young that they knew not their right hand from their left. So his anger and selfishness were rebuked.

LESSON—Jonah showed a streak of very ordinary human nature, but although we cannot justify it, we cannot help sympathizing with him. Most people have their weak moments, but should have fewer of them. A bad-tempered person ought to be compelled to give warning to all comers, like the lepers of old. Avoid them.

Beware of it ourselves. Cultivate the graciousness and patience that so adorned the life of Christ, that the beauty of the Lord our God was upon Him.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—The Lord Witness Against Israel,—Micah 1:1-6.
- []—Social Sins Condemned,—Micah 2:1-5.
- []—Sins of the Rich,—Micah 3:1-8.
- []—Future Kingdom of Messiah,—Micah 4:1-5.
- []—Christ Shall Be Born at Bethlehem,—Micah 5:1-4.
- []—The Lord's Requirements,—Micah 6:1-8.
- []—God Delighteth in Mercy,—Micah 7:15-20.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Micah.

Lesson No. 31

LESSON THEME:—MICAHA

Micah 4:1-5.

- **KEY WORD**—"SOCIAL SINS."
- **KEY VERSE**—Micah 2:2.
- **KEY PHRASE**—"GOD REBUKES THE RICH, THE UNWORTHY RULERS, AND THE FALSE PROPHETS."

WRITER—Micah was born at Moresheth, some 25 miles south of Jerusalem. He prophesied in the reign of Hezekiah, Jeremiah 26:18, and lived at the same time as Isaiah, about 758-700 B.C. Micah was a representative of the common people, and of the country life of Judea, while Isaiah preached to the city and the court. "To Micah the villager, the unjust treatment of the helpless poor by men of wealth and power is the sin that cries aloud to heaven. He has little to say about idolatry." He saw and felt keenly the social wrongs of the age.

TIMES OF MICAHA—During his lifetime the northern kingdom, Israel, was taken into captivity. Israel would not heed Micah's warning, but Judah did and was saved for the time being. With all the other prophets he taught that national sins would lead to national downfall.

PURPOSE—To show that God's plan to redeem men should not be frustrated, even though He had to punish His chosen people for their sins.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Threat.
2. Salvation.
3. Controversy.

Great Fact I -- Threat of Judgment.

Micah 1-2.

Micah begins with an account of the coming of the Lord to call Israel to account for its wrongs. Samaria, which was first in wickedness, shall be the first to fall before the avenging enemy. A similar fate shall befall Judah, and its people shall

be deported, for among them is oppression, injustice and violence. The false prophets only pander to their evil ways. However, God will not cast them off altogether.

LESSON—Like the Master Himself, Micah had no quarrel with the worthy rich, but he knew the perils of wealth, and he saw that many who were exposed to that peril quickly went wrong. He insisted that too often the worst citizens were not the wretched poor who had everything to drag them down, but the idle rich, who had everything that was supposed to lift them up. Of course there were then, as now, bad men among the poor, but the proportion seems to have been greater among the rich. Here is Micah in the age-long trinity of evil; the idle rich, the unworthy ruler, the false prophet, and the worst of these is the false prophet, for he winked at their vices and justified the wicked with a reward. More and more, men are coming to realize the social value of the gospel. In spite of injustices and wrongs, the teachings and power of Christ are bringing in a better social order. God helps us to be brothers by making us His sons. The gospel is the real hope of the world, Luke 4:18.

Great Fact II -- Salvation in Messianic Times.

Micah 3-5.

Micah was no mere prophet of judgment and of gloom. His heart was full of hope and his voice full of song. He looked beyond the discipline that would come through failure to the day when royal power shall again be seated in Jerusalem. Christ Himself shall reign there in the midst of universal peace, nations will flock unto it to learn holiness and true religion, His kingdom shall extend to the ends of the earth, every man shall sit under His vine and fig tree and none shall make Him afraid.

Micah assures us:—

1. Of the future establishment of Christ's kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital, Micah 4:1
2. That the future kingdom will be universal, Micah 4:2.
3. That lasting peace shall prevail, Micah 4:3.
4. That peace shall lead to general prosperity, Micah 4:4.

The picture of triumph, righteousness and peace is followed by a distinct promise of restoration from exile, Micah 4:6, although Micah does not disguise the fact that

the Babylonian captivity will be a period of anguish. His great prophecy as to where the Christ-child shall be born, Micah 6:2, was accepted as final by the Jews.

LESSON—Micah describes the ideal conditions that will exist in an ideal world, in the ideal age of Christ's reign. As the center of all peace, freedom and love, he places the religion of the Lord, for "He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths," Micah 4:2. Let us look for and hasten the coming of the Lord, and the beginning of His glorious reign on the earth, by praying and working for the salvation of individual souls through the gospel. The god of this world will one day be dethroned, and Christ shall be acknowledged by all to be Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

Great Fact III -- God's Controversy with Israel.

Micah 6-7.

In his part God is represented as holding a controversy or lawsuit with his people. He recounts how He was good to them and how He kept His covenant with them. The conscious-stricken people have to plead guilty to the charge of continual backsliding, and the prophet identifying himself with the people, repents of the sins which have occasioned the punishment, looks patiently to God, puts his sole trust in Him, and in answer to his prayers is rewarded by the promise of deliverance.

Micah contains many special predictions, which summed up are as follows:—

1. The destruction of Samaria, Micah 1:6.
2. The invasion of Judah, Micah 1:9.
3. The overthrow of Jerusalem and the temple, Micah 3:12.
4. The deportation to Babylon, Micah 4:13.
5. The return from exile, the supremacy of Israel, and her peace and happiness under the Messiah, Micah 4:1-8.
6. Christ should be born at Bethlehem Micah 5:2. This prophecy was so unmistakable that the Wise Men were guided by it.
7. The kingdom that Christ shall set up shall be world-wide, peaceful and prosperous, Micah 4:1-5.

LESSON—While Micah paints a charming picture of future blessings, he also insists that the people must have a change of heart, and as evidence of this change they must "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God." Micah 6:8 is an especially priceless message, and has been called the greatest verse of the Old

Testament. If men would “do justly,” they must be conscientious in business, not untrue or unfair in criticism, ever seeking to carry out the Golden Rule.

Mercy and justice, joined together, are the qualities that make men God-like. Mercy is nobility’s true badge. It radiates a spirit of sweet kindness about the sinful, the suffering and needy. It makes smooth and glad the path through life.

The third demand is the highest, for it requires us to be real friends of God, to have close personal fellowship with Him, to walk the fields of truth, climb the heights of the promises, and soar the watchtowers of prophecy with Him. To walk with Him so often that we get to walk like Him. Three times blessed is the man who has learned to “walk humbly with his God!”

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—The Majesty of Yahweh,—Nahum 1:1-8.
- []—The Yoke of Nineveh Shall Be Broken,—Nahum 1:9-15.
- []—Approach of Enemy to Destroy Nineveh,—Nahum 2:1-10.
- []—The Nation Shall Fall Because God is against it,—Nahum 2:11-13.
- []—Sins of the City Charged to it,—Nahum 3:1-7.
- []—Like Judgments Brought Upon Other Places,—Nahum 3:8-11.
- []—Break Down of Things Depended Upon,—Nahum 3:12-19.

Lesson No. 32

Lesson Theme:—NAHUM

Nahum 1:1-8.

- **KEY WORD**—“NINEVEH.”
- **KEY VERSE**—Nahum 1:3, First Clause
- **KEY PHRASE**—“GOD DEALING WITH THE SIN’S OF NINEVEH.”

WRITER—The name Nahum means “consolation,” and indeed he did console Israel with the promise of their own deliverance and the destruction of their enemies. He was born at Elkosh, a small town in the province of Galilee. He most likely prophesied about 640 B.C., in the reign of Josiah, king of Judah. He saw the Assyrians threatening Judah, but saw also that they would be overcome and destroyed.

PURPOSE—To foretell the destruction of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria which held sway for centuries, and has been regarded as the most brutal of the ancient heathen nations.

NOTE ON ASSYRIA—Assyria and Babylon were two great empires that grew up on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, northeast of Palestine. Babylon first became an empire about 2280 B.C., and was by turn strong and weak until about 1100 B.C., when the Assyrian empire arose, overpowering Babylon. The Assyrian empire lasted until 625 B.C., having taken the Ten Tribes captive about one hundred years before it fell. In 625 B.C. Babylon again rose to power, and it was they who took Judah, the southern kingdom, captive about 588 B.C.

The Assyrians boasted of unheard-of savagery. They flayed captive kings alive and dressed columns with their skins; others they walled-up alive. They burnt boys and girls in the fire, put out eyes, cut off hands, feet, noses and ears. All this they professed to do at the commands of their god, Asshur. No wonder Nahum indignantly and gratefully prophesies the end of Nineveh, the capital of the wicked empire. The city was destroyed nearly a century later, exactly as he predicted. They had thought themselves absolutely safe in their capital with its 1,200 towers, and their wall a hundred feet high and so broad that three chariots could drive on it abreast. But they were swept away, as this book declares they would be, and the nations shouted for joy.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. The Decree.
2. Attack.
3. Cause.

Great Fact I -- The Decree of Nineveh's Fall.

Nahum 1.

The prophet begins by laying down the principle that God, although slow to anger, must avenge all crimes. His power is seen in the storm and the earthquake, Nahum 1:1-6. The principle is next applied to Nineveh. God is a refuge to His faithful one, but He will destroy Nineveh with a sweeping flood. Although its drunken armies get together in close formation as compact as a hedge of thorn, yet this will not save them, Nahum 1:6-12. Judah is promised deliverance from the yoke of Nineveh, and is pictured as rejoicing at the news of its ruin, and celebrating her feasts in safety, Nahum 1:12-15. As a matter of fact the immediate fall of Nineveh was caused by a great flood from the River Tigris.

LESSON—Nineveh stands for those nations that turn back from following God. About 150 years before this time, the city had repented under the preaching of Jonah. Now it has turned from the true and living God to serve idols. Those who were converted under Jonah were eternally saved, but a new generation has arisen who “Changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and beasts,” Romans 1:23. The chief god of Nineveh was the bull god, with the face of a man, and the wings of a bird. Because of this national falling away from the religion of Yahweh, Nahum does not call them again to repentance, but threatens certain judgment. Antagonism to God can end only in disaster. A dying atheist appeared unhappy and frightened. Another atheist who stood at his bedside said to him, “Don’t be afraid, hold on, man; hold on to the last.” The dying man replied: “That is what I want to do, but tell me what to hold on to!”

Great Fact II -- Attack Upon Nineveh.

Nahum 2.

This chapter tells us very vividly of the siege and sack of the city. Outside the walls are gathered the Medes; their shields are brightly painted; their robes are of

purple. Their terrible spears, and the knives on their chariot wheels glitter in the sunlight. Inside the city all is excitement as the king tries to rally his drunken nobles to its defense, but it is too late. The flood, together with their enemies is upon them. Huzzab, the queen, is taken captive, while her maidens, like a flock of doves moan around her. The Median soldiers cry one to another, “Rob Ye silver, rob ye gold, for there is no end of the precious treasures!” So the city is plundered while the knees of the people of the city smite together for fear. Nineveh shall terrify the nations no longer because God is against her.

LESSON—We often wonder why wicked nations are allowed to exist so long. The answer is found in 2 Peter 3:9. However, at the right time God will balance all accounts and render justice to all. So thorough was the destruction of Nineveh, that in 401 B.C., when Xenophon and his ten thousand passed over it, they did not know where they were, and when Napoleon encamped near its site he was not aware of it. So will all wicked nations be destroyed.

It is also a remarkable fact that Nineveh was destroyed by a people as wicked as themselves—the Medes and Babylonians. Thus God uses wicked men to punish wicked men, as in the Pit, fiends are the tormentors of fiends. If men will not knowingly further God’s holy purposes, then He will lead them to do so unknowingly!

Great Fact III -- The Cause of Nineveh’s Fall.

Nahum 3.

As Nineveh sowed, so must she reap. She deserved her doom because of her cruelties, immorality, idolatry and greed. So she shall be stripped and scorned, and those who see her shall fly from her, astonished at her desolation, Nahum 3:2-7. Why should Nineveh expect a better fate than other nations who were likewise destroyed for their sins? Nahum 3:8-11. All its efforts and resources cannot stave off its just punishment, Nahum 3:12-19.

LESSON—In Matthew 26:24 and Luke 6:24-26, Christ utters as great woes upon the nations in general as is here uttered against Nineveh, and the wicked can no more escape them than did this city escape. The resources of civilization are powerless against Heaven’s artillery. As we are no better than some who have already fallen, let us keep in holy fear of the judgments of God.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Why does sin go unpunished,—Habakkuk 1:1-4.
- []—I will work a work,—Habakkuk 1:5-11.
- []—Are they to continue as evil as ever,—Habakkuk 1:12-17.
- []—God will humble the Chaldeans,—Habakkuk 2:1-8.
- []—4Woes to those who do iniquity,—Habakkuk 2:9-20.
- []—A prayer of faith,—Habakkuk 3:1-6.
- []—Strong confidence in God,—Habakkuk 3:16-19.

Lesson No. 33

LESSON THEME:—HABAKKUK

Habakkuk 3:1-6.

- **KEY WORD**—“**FAITH.**”
- **KEY VERSE**—Habakkuk 2:4. *Last Clause.*
- **KEY PHRASE**—“**THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.**”

WRITER—Habakkuk was probably a Levite and connected with the music of the temple. He prophesied in Judah in the reign of Josiah about 608 B.C.

TIMES OF THE PROPHET—The world-empire of Assyria had fallen 607 B.C. as prophesied by Nahum. Egypt and Babylon then fought to see who should be the master of the earth. At the battle of Carchemish, 605 B.C., the Babylonians were conquerors, and under Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon and Chaldees became one kingdom, so that their names became synonymous, and either meant the same kingdom. Habakkuk realized that Judah must fall before the rising Chaldean power but that one evil nation should put down another troubled him. That looked like evil triumphing over evil and no advance in righteousness.

PURPOSE—To discuss the problem of why the wicked prosper, and to vindicate the righteousness of God.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Problem.
2. Answer.
3. Prayer.

Great Fact I -- Problem of Why Is Evil Unchecked?

Habakkuk 1.

Earlier prophets had pointed to the crimes and idolatry of God’s people as the cause of their catastrophes, but Habakkuk was living after the great reformation days of the good king Josiah, who had destroyed the idols, restored the Passover, and brought Judah back into the covenant relationship with Yahweh. It was therefore a great mystery to the prophet as to why the chosen people of God, the

only nation that did not worship carved images and vain gods, the heirs of divine promise that they among all the nations should be threatened by calamities. Habakkuk could understand why the Ten Tribes had been carried off, for they had constantly violated God's law, and given themselves over to Baal worship, but Judah had repented of her sins with fasting, weeping and vows of obedience. Yet, the Chaldeans, a wicked heathen nation, were preparing to swoop down upon them with the fierceness of a wild beast, and the prophet could see no prospect of deliverance.

LESSON—The prosperity of the wicked was a great problem to the Jews, who believed so strongly in temporal punishment and rewards. Job, David, Solomon and the prophets often wrestled with the problem. Spiritually-minded Christians realize quite often that outward prosperity is not real prosperity. That there is a curse wrapped up in the wicked man's mercies, and a blessing concealed in the righteous man's crosses.

It is true that the wicked attain their objects and seem to enjoy their prosperity, but the believer looks forward to the day when everything will be set right, and he never loses faith in the justice of God. We cannot judge a building while the scaffolding is up, neither can we fully measure God's dealings in the days of our limited vision. An insect, slowly crawling up a column of the White House, could as well judge the perfection of its architecture as we the wisdom of God's plan.

Men do not live great and good lives because of their ease or many pleasures, but because they nobly work, and lift and fight and dare! The best men of all times are those who have made the most sacrifice!

Livingston, the great missionary who suffered such terrible hardships in darkest Africa, said: "I do not call my privations 'sacrifices,' for I think the word ought never to be applied to anything we can do for Him who came down from Heaven and died for us."

Great Fact II -- Yahweh's Answer.

Habakkuk 2.

The prophet ascends his watchtower to listen to God's answer to the problem. God points out that the Chaldeans are full of pride and that they are living by robbery and wrong. In their injustice lie the germs of their future destruction, although it

may be long delayed. On the other hand for the righteous there is preservation from evil; and salvation, provided they based their hopes upon faith.

LESSON—Habakkuk was a prophet of a tried but triumphant faith. He draws for us a contrast between the unjust and the just man. He pictures the unjust Chaldeans as puffed up with pride and full of drunkenness, boasting, ambition and oppression, and rejected of God because not justified. As pride is the cause of much wickedness, so faith is the root of all moral and spiritual excellence in the soul of the just man. As pride leads to disobedience, as in the case of Eve, so faith leads to obedience, as in the case of Abraham.

We must live by faith and not by sight or by sense. These are like two buckets, the lower sense goes, the higher faith goes. Luther says: “If you would believe, you must crucify that question, why?” God would not have us so full of wherefores. If we would live by faith we must be willing to walk in the dark with God, rather than to walk alone in the light.

Great Fact III -- Habakkuk's Prayer.

Habakkuk 3.

The prophet having heard the answer of Yahweh, and being still in fear, pours out his troubled soul in prayer, Habakkuk 3:1-2. The prayer is scarcely uttered before the congregation's hymn of praise rings out. It describes the glorious way in which He put their various enemies aside, and how all nature bowed before His Majesty, Habakkuk 3:3-15. The fact that the Chaldean is at hand still fills the prophet with trembling, yet he is blessed with the hope of salvation, and rejoices in the Lord.

LESSON—The prophet's prayer was a model one, for it recounted God's goodness in the past, and sought blessings and mercies for the hour. It was full of adoration, petition, loving appreciation of God's works and joyous trust. Webster regarded Habakkuk 3:17-18; as one of the most sublime passages of inspired literature.

The power of prayer may be increased in our lives if;

1. We ever remember the importance of it, in that God will be inquired of for the blessings He is willing to bestow. If we would receive, the condition is that we ASK. We should do this in secret, family and public prayer.
2. We must put away all doubts as to the reality of divine answers to prayers.

3. We must feel that we cannot get along without God, or we will not pray. Self-sufficiency is atheistic. All true prayer is the cry of conscious weakness, “Save, Lord, or I perish.”

Holiness is essential to a life of prayer, as is also love. Prayer is the measure of love. He who loves much will pray much. A humble beggar hates to bother your door often, but a son bounds in with confidence whenever in need. It is only when we forget that we are “sons of God and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ” that we knock feebly at mercy’s door!

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—A sweeping threat,—Zephaniah 1:1-6.
- []—Judgment upon irreligious and worldly,—Zephaniah 1:7-18.
- []—Seek ye the Lord,—Zephaniah 2:1-8.
- []—Punishment of various nations,—Zephaniah 2:9-15.
- []—The moral state of Jerusalem,—Zephaniah 3:1-7.
- []—The Lord will deal with the nations,—Zephaniah 3:8-13.
- []—Future blessings and honors for Israel,—Zephaniah 3:14-20.

Lesson No. 34

LESSON THEME:—ZEPHANIAH

Zephaniah 2:1-3.

- **KEY WORD**—“**REMNANT.**”
- **KEY VERSE**—Zephaniah 2:3.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“**A REMNANT HID FROM THE WRATH OF GOD.**”

WRITER—The prophet was a grandson of King Hezekiah of Judah, and his name means “Hid of the Lord.”

TIMES OF THE PROPHET—He prophesied about 630 B.C. in the reign of the young and good King Josiah. Two wicked and idol-worshipping kings had preceded Josiah on the throne, so that the land was full of evil practices. Social injustice and moral corruption were widespread. The rich heaped up fortunes and indulged in luxuries by grinding down the poor. The religious situation also was as bad as it could be. To remedy this, Josiah, when but sixteen years of age, undertook to promote a religious revival, and became one of the best and most-loved kings. Under the counsel and help of the prophet, Josiah took an active part in the great reforms. Taking a hatchet and pick-axe he personally broke down altars and images. How encouraging to the reformers must have been the words of Zephaniah in the key verse.

PURPOSE—

1. To show that a faithful remnant (remaining few) should be delivered from captivity.
2. To show that the heathen shall be converted.
3. To show that instead of men having to worship God at Jerusalem, they might do so anywhere, Zephaniah 2:11, which is confirmed in John 4:21.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Judah.
2. Heathen.
3. Remnant.

Great Fact I -- Judah Denounced.

Zephaniah 1-3.

After a sweeping threat in the first verse, the prophet then denounces three classes of false worshippers of Judah.

1. The black-robed unlawful priests of Baal, together with the unworthy priests of Yahweh, and those who worship the stars from the housetops. Zephaniah 1:4-5.
2. Those who so waver that at one time they swear by the Lord, and at other times swear by the god Moloch. Zephaniah 1:5.
3. Those who turn backward from outwardly following the Lord, and now despise Him. Zephaniah 1:6.

Upon all these shall come a series of punishments “in the Day of the Lord.” This phrase is an important one and is often used in prophecy. The word “day” in Scripture is used exactly as we use it today. When we use a numeral in front of the word, and speak of 3 days or 40 days we always mean 3 or 40 literal days of 24 hours each. It is so with Scripture, and for this reason we are confident that the days of Creation were literal days. On the other hand, both Scripture, and we ourselves, use the word “day” in another sense. We speak of Washington’s day or Luther’s day, meaning in the time of Washington or of Luther. So when the Scripture speaks of the “Day of the Lord” it means “the time of the Lord’s special working.” This day of the Lord for the Jews of Zephaniah’s time was the Lord’s special working in events and punishments of the captivity. The future Day of the Lord is the period of the Great Tribulation and the Millennium, Revelation 6:1-17.

LESSON—We learn that it is not possible to serve two masters, as many of Judah were trying to do at the same time. Christ teaches this in Matthew 6:24. God says “Defraud not, never lie, be honest and just in thy dealings.” Satan says, “Cheat your own father if you can gain by it.” God says, “Keep holy the Sabbath Day.” Satan says, ‘Make it a day of worldly pleasure.’ No one has success or joy trying to serve two masters. The secret of happiness is wholeheartedness. Therefore Joshua 24:15.

We learn also the certainty of coming judgment. A king of Hungary had a brother who would never think of this. It was a custom of that country that if an executioner sounded a trumpet before any man’s door he was presently led to execution. The king, in the dead hour of the night sent the executioner to sound the

trumpet before his brother's door, who, hearing it was greatly alarmed and at once tried to make peace with his brother. "Brother," said the king, "if a summons to judgment from an earthly king causes you so much fear, how much more the trumpet of the last day, therefore 'prepare to meet thy God.' "

Great Fact II -- Heathen Nations Denounced.

Zephaniah 2:4-15.

Five heathen nations, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Ethiopia and Assyria, shall be visited with wrath for their scorn and pride towards the Lord's people. Their idols shall be broken up, and the heathen shall worship God, everyone in his own country. Instead of all men making pilgrimage to Jerusalem, they may worship God anywhere.

LESSON—The Jews taught that Jerusalem alone was the place of worship and the Samaritans that Gerizim should be the religious center, but the prophet saw that spiritual worship did not depend upon so-called holy places. Since this time scores of places, like Rome and Mecca, have been set aside as holy, and men have superstitiously undergone every hardship in order to worship at these shrines.

The sacredness of worship, however, depends not on the place, but on the divine Presence that comes in response to prayer. Men are to lift holy lands in prayer in every place from the rising to the setting of the sun, Malachi 1:11. If God's people shall meet with humble and devout souls, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit then no matter the place, it will be "none other than the House of God and the gate of heaven."

Great Fact III -- A Remnant Shall Be Blessed and Honored.

Zephaniah 3.

A faithful few will be delivered, and must wait with patience until the judgment of the wicked nations is past. Then the remnant shall call upon Yahweh with pure lips and a pure heart and shall be accepted. Then the prophet speaks in glowing language of the safety and glory of the purged and purified people of Zion.

LESSON-The blessings of the remnant would depend, as with us, upon them being spiritual.

1. They should be humble in spirit.

2. Upright in conduct.
3. Depending upon God.

This would result in them being:

1. Cleansed from shame.
2. Delivered from spiritual pride.
3. Redeemed from proud oppressors.
4. Specially protected by God.

Tell the sailor he shall have no more storms at sea. Tell the laboring man he shall have no more financial worries. Tell the farmer he shall have no more bad crops, and he would have some idea of the joy that must have filled the hearts of the Jews when the prophet predicted that a time was coming when evil should exist no more among them. This prophecy shall yet be blessedly fulfilled in the Kingdom age.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Arise and build,—Haggai 1:1-11.
- []—The prophet urges on the work, Ezra 5:1-6.
- []—The governor and priest obey,—Haggai 1:12-15.
- []—The House shall be glorious,—Haggai 2:1-10.
- []—Disobedience caused delay,—Haggai 2:10-19.
- []—Kingdoms of this world to be overthrown,—Haggai 2:20-23.
- []—Temple finished and dedicated,—Ezra 6:14-18.

Lesson No. 35

Lesson Theme:—HAGGAI

Haggai 2:4-9.

- **KEY WORD**—“REBUILD.”
- **KEY VERSE**—Haggai 1:8.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“THE LORD’S HOUSE COMES BEFORE MEN’S HOUSES.”

WRITER—Haggai was born in Babylon and was the first of the three prophets of the Restoration, the other two being Zechariah and Malachi. He was a prophet of great faith and was used of God to weaken the consciences and stir up the enthusiasm of the Jews to rebuild the temple. He appeared at a very critical time in the nation’s history, and it was through the pressure of his faith and prayers and appeals that the great task was accomplished.

DATES: 536 B.C. Return of exiles under Zerubbabel and Joshua.

535 B.C. Jews attempt to rebuild temple, but are discouraged by opposition.

520 B.C. Haggai and Zechariah urge the people to rebuild.

516 B.C. Temple finished and dedicated.

458 B.C. Ezra returns at head of 6,000 more exiles.

445 B.C. Nehemiah returns as governor of Jerusalem and rebuilds city walls.

TIMES OF THE PROPHET—When the Jews returned to their own land from the 70 years exile in Babylon, they were eager to set up again the public worship of the sanctuary, so at once built the altar of Burnt Offering upon the old site. Plans were also made for the immediate rebuilding of the temple, and the foundation stone was laid. When, however, the jealous, half-caste, semi-pagan Samaritans were refused a part in the work, they induced the king of Persia to stop the work, and for 15 years nothing was done. The Jews then lost heart, and thought only of good houses for themselves until Haggai and Zechariah stirred them up with fiery preaching.

PURPOSE—To show that the building of the Lord’s House should come before the building of fine homes by the people.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Call.
2. Glory.
3. Chastening.
4. Victory.

Great Fact I -- Call to Rebuild the Temple.

Haggai 1.

Haggai’s first discourse was delivered on September 1st, 520 B.C. In it he sternly reproaches the people for not rebuilding the temple, and warns them to consider their ways, for the delay is not due to a want of means, Haggai 1:4. He assures them that God is withholding crops from them because of their neglect, Haggai 1:10. The effect of his appeals was that 24 days later the chiefs and all the people began the good work, Haggai 1:14.

LESSONS—

1. Hard times are sometimes of God’s sending, and that because of our indifference to our religious duties, and our self-interest. It is true that crop failures and trade depression are due to natural laws, yet the Almighty is behind these laws. Repentance and prayer are the best remedies for hard times.
2. The building and upkeep of Christian sanctuaries is the urgent duty of the Lord’s people everywhere. Without them vice and iniquity would abound. Worship would be a lost art. Men would forget not only to love God, but also to love their fellows.
3. It is not commendable when the Lord’s people allow their church building to be dilapidated, as to be unworthy of the great head of the church, because of poor location, miserable accommodations or scanty furnishings. It is a noble ambition to make the sanctuary as convenient and as beautiful as possible. 2 Samuel 7:2.

Great Fact II -- The Glory of the New Temple.

Haggai 2:1-8.

This address is one of encouragement to those who felt that the new temple would be much poorer than the one Solomon built. The prophet on the contrary assures them that the glory of the new House shall be much greater than Solomon's magnificent temple, for it shall not consist of riches and jewels as did the glory of the first house, but rather the presence of Christ, the desire of all nations shall fill this house with glory. This prophecy was fulfilled by the presentation of Jesus in the temple 5110 years later, by His teaching therein, by His expulsion of the traders, and by His miracles in its precincts. Whenever He entered the temple it was filled with the glory of the Lord.

LESSON—There is but one thing necessary in order that the sanctuary may be filled with the glory of the Lord, and that is the realized presence of the divine Redeemer. Without His spiritual presence it matters not who occupies the pulpit, nor how exquisite the music. Except He shall meet each waiting soul and bestow His pardon, purity and love, there will be no consecrated worship, and no gate to heaven. The divine presence will enlighten our minds and fire our hearts, move our souls to the very depths, and rouse a great desire for holiness. In glowing fervor may the glory of the Lord ever come upon us.

Great Fact III -- Chastening Because of Neglect.

Haggai 2:10-19.

This third address was delivered three months after work on the temple had started. In it the prophet explains why the prayers of the people go unanswered. It is because they have put off so long the completing of the temple, everything they did was spoiled because of this guilt, therefore blasting mildew and hail had made the seasons unfruitful. On the other hand, if they would renew their zeal and press on with the great work, then the Lord will bless them, and the earth shall yield her increase.

LESSON—Providence is God's care exercised everywhere. That He controls the outward successes and failures of men's lives is seen from Psalm 75:7. That He is responsive to our prayers is seen from Matthew 6:33 and Philipppians 4:19. At this time the Jews had forgotten that the hand of God was in their affairs. He therefore took away the prosperity of their pocketbooks in order that they might get back prosperity for their souls.

Great Fact IV -- The Final Victory.

Haggai 2:20-23.

In this address the prophet tells of the establishing of Christ as the head of the nation and the representatives of the house of David, when God shall shake or judge the nations, Matthew 25:31-32. The promise contained special blessedness for Zerubbabel, who was the head of the house of David at that time. That he should be a signet meant that he should be most precious in the Lord's sight. No events in Zerubbabel's time satisfied this prediction which awaits fulfillment in the Messianic age.

LESSON—When God destroyed His enemies. He will honor His servants, Revelation 20:6. There is a legend of 40 brave Christians soldiers who were called upon to give up Christ or be exposed on the ice of a lake on an extremely cold winter night. They said, "Let us ask God to send us forty to our reward together." The heroes encouraged one another to stick with it until they fell frozen into their last sleep. One, however, could not endure the suffering and sought relief of the fire. A soldier of the guard was so impressed with the faith of these martyrs that he immediately took the weak one's place, and they received a triumphant entrance into everlasting glory, singing, "Forty wrestlers we have entered the arena, let forty victors receive the prize!" Final victory ever perches upon the banner of faith.

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—A call to listen to God,—Zechariah 1:1-6.
- []—The Lord shall yet comfort Zion,—Zechariah 1:7-17.
- []—Jerusalem in the kingdom age,—Zechariah 2:4-13.
- []—The priest cleansed and crowned,—Zechariah 3:1-7.
- []—Cure of the thief and liar,—Zechariah 6:1-4.
- []—Jerusalem yet to be the religious center of the world,—Zechariah 8:20-23.
- []—The return of the Lord in glory,—Zechariah 14:4-9.

BONUS READING PRIOR TO THE NEXT SESSION:

[] The entire book of Zechariah.

Lesson No. 36

LESSON THEME:—ZECHARIAH

Zechariah 14:9.

- **KEY WORD**—"TEMPLE AND KINGDOM."
- **KEY VERSE**—Zechariah 14:9.
- **KEY PHRASE**—"ENCOURAGEMENT IN VIEW OF FUTURE GLORY."

WRITER—Zechariah, like Haggai, with whom he labored, was born in Babylon, and returned with the captives. He was likely both priest and prophet, and began to preach as a young man. Uninspired records say that he died a martyr.

DATE—520-518 B.C.

PLACE—Jerusalem.

TIMES OF THE PROPHET—The Jews back from exile had given up hope of rebuilding the temple, when under the preaching of Haggai, two months before that of Zechariah, a splendid start was made. It was left for Zechariah to bring the task to completion.

PURPOSE—To assure those who had returned from captivity, that, although the Promises that their glory should be restored, had not been fulfilled, yet they would be in the Messianic age.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Visions.
2. Obedience.
3. Messiah.

Great Fact I -- Vision Intended to Encourage the People.

Zechariah 1-6.

After a call to the people to turn from their evil ways and hearken unto the Lord the prophet then tells of eight symbolical visions which he had, and which were intended to encourage the Jews in rebuilding the temple.

1. The horsemen among the myrtle trees. Zechariah 1:7-17. This vision reveals Israel in dispersion, Jerusalem under foreign rule, but the nations apparently prosperous and at ease. The Lord points the people to a time when He shall yet comfort Zion.
2. The four horns and four smiths, Zechariah 1:18-21. A horn is a symbol for a Gentile king so this is a vision of the four world empires: Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece and Rome, as in Daniel 2:37-44. These nations oppressed Israel, but they shall be destroyed.
3. The measuring line, Zechariah 2. This teaches that God will re-people, protect and dwell in Jerusalem as soon as the sacred house of worship has been built. The city itself shall expand until it becomes a great metropolis without walls, for the Lord shall be as a wall of fire round about it. The promise will be truly realized in the Kingdom age.
4. Joshua, the High Priest and Satan. Joshua clothed in filthy garments and bearing the sins of both himself and the people is accused by Satan, as was Job, but he, being a type of Christ, is cleansed, clothed and crowned.
5. The golden candlesticks, Zechariah 4. With the candlesticks were seven lamps, and two olive trees were emptying their oil into them. Throughout the scriptures, oil is used to represent the Holy Spirit. The teaching is, that just as the oil “was not supplied by human hands,” so it will “not be by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,” that the House shall be built and supplied with spiritual life.
6. and 7. The flying roll and the woman in the ephah, or seven-gallon measure. This teaches that when the temple is rebuilt and God’s law is taught, that wickedness in commerce, typified by a woman in a measure, shall be carried back to Babylon, the proper home of all that is wicked.
8. Four war chariots. According to Zechariah 6:5 these are angels who have a mission of judgment. The future fulfillment of this as seen in Revelation 7:1-3 will be in the period of the Great Tribulation.

These eight visions are followed by a symbolic act. Certain exiles had come from Babylon and brought with them gold and silver as gifts to the temple. The prophet is to take this gold and silver to make a crown for the High Priest Joshua, and show that he was a type of Christ who would be the spiritual king of the world and the glory of the temple.

LESSON—Pilate fulfilled the words of 6:13 when he led Christ before the frenzied multitude and cried, “Behold the man.” If the Jews had known their Bibles, they would have been struck with the fulfillment of scripture, and would have not rejected Christ. Then they pressed a crown of thorns upon His unresisting brow. But when again the cry shall go forth, “Behold the man!” there will be another and more glorious temple in Jerusalem, and the long exiled nation will bring its silver, its gold, and all its glory and lay it at the feet of their King. Let us pray with new meaning “Thy kingdom come!”

Great Fact II -- Obedience is Better than Fasting.

Zechariah 7-8.

In this section we have the prophet’s answer to the committee which came from Bethel to ask if the national fasts should be kept. The Jews had been used to fasting on the anniversaries of four great events in their history:—

1. Day when siege of Jerusalem had been begun.
2. The day when Jerusalem was captured.
3. The day when the temple was burned.
4. The day when Gedaliah (the good governor of the poor Jews left in the land when the people were taken off to Babylon) was murdered.

Zechariah’s answer to the questions was four-fold:—

1. Fasting affects only yourselves. God requires obedience, Zechariah 7:4-7.
2. Learn a lesson from your fathers, they fasted but forsook justice and mercy, and God punished them, Zechariah 7:8-14.
3. The Lord has returned to Jerusalem, and it shall be a city of truth and holiness. Israel had been a curse among nations, but they shall now be a blessing, Zechariah 8:1-7.
4. Therefore their fasts shall be changed into cheerful feasts of joy and gladness, and many peoples shall seek the Lord in Jerusalem, Zechariah 8:18-23. This will be fulfilled in the day of Israel’s glory, when the Jews converted and filled with the Spirit, will be the means of the conversion of the nations.

LESSON—Fasting is valuable only as an outward sign of repentance and confession of sin. Merely refraining from food will not bring the blessing. Along

with it must be a humble and contrite heart. Any observance, however, is good that gives us room to deny ourselves and provides a path to bring us daily nearer God.

Great Fact III -- The Messiah in Rejection but afterwards in Power.

Zechariah 9-14.

This section contains promises of a return from exile, a land in which to dwell, victory over hostile world powers, temporal blessings and national strength. In Zechariah 11; the prophet as a shepherd seeks to save Israel but is rejected, and sold for the price of a slave, thirty pieces of silver, foreshadowing that Christ should also be rejected and betrayed for such a sum. In Zechariah 12; we have a prophecy of the siege of Jerusalem by the anti-Christ and his armies, in the last days. The repentance of the Jews, Zechariah 12:12, and the fountain opened to them, Zechariah 13:1. The Lord's return upon Mt. Olive, which shall be cleft asunder by an earthquake, Zechariah 14:4. The Lord shall be king over all the earth, and all things, and all people shall be holy unto the Lord, Zechariah 14:9-20.

LESSON—The power of the world has shifted from many things, and will continue to shift until it is in the hands of Christ. The Jew proudly smiled and thought it all resided in the temple, The Greeks pointed to their learning and art and thought it the mightiest force in the world. The Romans said it rested in their splendid laws and armies. But the Jews, the Greeks and the Romans with all their ancient glories have gone down, and the once rejected and crucified Christ will yet reign in everlasting glory and power. Let us lift up again and again our hearts and hopes to the King of Glory!

REQUIRED READING PRIOR TO NEXT SESSION:

- []—Love of God for Israel,—Malachi 1:1-5.
- []—Sins of the Priests,—Malachi 1:5-14.
- []—Against Idolatry and Divorce,—Malachi 2:1-17.
- []—Mission of John the Baptist,—Malachi 3:1-6.
- []—People have robbed God,—Malachi 3:7-12.
- []—A Message to Doubters,—Malachi 3:13-18.
- []—Elijah Will Come Again,—Malachi 4:1-6.

Lesson No. 37

LESSON THEME:—MALACHI

Malachi 3:1-3.

- **KEY WORD**—“**FORERUNNER.**”
- **KEY VERSE**—Malachi 3:1, *First Clause*, and Malachi 4:5.
- **KEY PHRASE**—“**JOHN THE BAPTIST AND ELIJAH WILL BE FORERUNNER.**”

WRITER—The prophet Malachi. His name means “My Messenger.” He was the last of the Old Testament prophets.

TIME—About 430-420 B.C., during the times of Ezra and Nehemiah.

THE STATE OF THE TIMES—Malachi Prophesied after the Jews had returned from Babylon, when Judas was a Persian Province. As given in the book of Ezra, the temple had been rebuilt and its worship restored. Nehemiah had rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, as stated in the book of Nehemiah, and had returned to Babylon, according to the promise he had made the king. During his absence the people grew very discouraged and doubting because the Messiah had not come and set up His reign upon the earth, as foretold by the prophets. The people neglected the worship of the Lord, the priest became lax and degenerate, God’s covenant was forgotten, tithes were unpaid, and divorce and other social evils became common.

PURPOSE—

1. To condemn the social evils of the day.
2. To show that God is the moral ruler of the world, and that it would pay to serve Him.
3. To foretell the coming of John the Baptist before Christ’s first coming, and that of Elijah before Christ’s second coming.

GREAT FACTS:—

1. Reproof.
2. Sins.
3. Fore-runners.
4. Tithes.

5. Elijah.

Great Fact I -- Reproof of the Priests.

Malachi 1:2-9.

In a brief introductory message Malachi shows that the Lord's love for Israel was far greater than that of Edom. For Israel was disciplined only for a time, but Edom was forever punished. This is the difference in God's dealings with the righteous and the wicked.

The priests are then reproofed because they despised the table of the Lord, offered polluted bread upon His altar, and brought blind, sick and lame victims for sacrifice, which they would not dare to offer to an earthly ruler. Better no worship at all than that they should insult God with their selfishness. At the time that God's name was great among the heathen it was no time for it to be profaned by Jewish priests.

If they did not lay the Lord's reproof to heart, He would send a curse upon them. Indeed, they are already vile in the eyes of the people because of their bad influence.

LESSON—The divine reproach is that the priests do not care how lightly and unworthily they lead in the worship of God. Their lack of faith and moral soundness showed also the spirit of their age. It is all too easy for us to follow the evil example of the Jews in bringing blind, lame and sick offerings. We do this when we bring:

1. Cold, formal and half-hearted worship. "Blind is the sacrifice of the soul which is not illuminated by the light of Christ. Lame is his sacrifice of prayer who comes with a double mind to entreat the Lord." There is far too much Christianity without Christ and without heart in it. Some of the worst enemies of the cross of Christ keep all the forms of religion.
2. When we offer to God anything less than our best. David nobly refused to offer unto God that which cost him nothing, 2 Samuel 24:24. Indeed there is no heart to the religion of the man who is always trying to serve God cheaply. Christianity is not a thing of convenience, but of sacrifice. We should dedicate to God the best of our time, our influence, our talents and our means, and always feel that nothing is good enough or great enough for Him who spared not His own Son, Romans 8:32.

Great Fact II -- The Sins of the People Rebuked.

Malachi 2:10-17.

The prophet first denounces sins against brotherhood. He urges that God is the Father of the Jewish nation, and as the Jews sinned against each other they offended their common Father and broke the family covenant, Malachi 2:10. He next tells them that they are guilty of sins against God in family life, for women came weeping and wailing to the altar of Yahweh and covering it with tears because men obtained divorces on the flimsiest grounds and dealt treacherously with the wives of their youth, to marry heathen women. "No one," said the prophets, "who does this has even a remnant of the Spirit."

LESSON—When we are untrue to God we injure our brethren. When we are careless about God's claims, we will hold lightly His standards of morality. On the other hand God expects us not only to aid a brother in distress, but help him to be a good Christian.

The Africans have a beautiful custom they call the "Brother Rite." One man will open a vein over the heart of another, and rub the blood from it into his own wound; this is to signify that they are halves or part of each other. Henceforth when either is in trouble the other feels "It is myself that is in trouble," and thus does for the other what he would do for himself.

Every Christian, because of his blood fellowship, should think of others as he would they should think of him. Talk of others as he would they should talk of him, and aid others as he himself would be aided.

Great Facts III -- A Forerunner Shall Come.

Malachi 3:1-6.

The prophet announces the appeasing of a forerunner of Christ, which was fulfilled in John the Baptist. He should go before the Lord in the Spirit and power of Elijah. Isaiah 40-43, and Matt. 3:3. He should not come unprophesied or unsent, even if to a careless generation he was unexpected. He should prepare the way of the Lord by taking away their confidence in their relation to Abraham, Matthew 3:9, by calling them to repentance, and by proclaiming that Christ was at hand, Matthew 3:2.

LESSON—God in this way gave Jews a sign. For thirty-six hundred years He had been telling them that the Messiah should come and here he adds that a little while before Christ should appear a great prophet would arise, and call to the everlasting gates of their hearts to lift up their heads and receive the King. It is one of the marvels of the ages, that after a prophetic silence of 400 years, that when John the Baptist did appear, his witness to Christ was not accepted.

Great Facts IV -- Tithes Unpaid.

Malachi 3:7-18.

Here the prophet tells the people that they have not only run away from the Master, but have runaway with the Master's goods. "Ye are gone away from my ordinances. Return unto me." "Ye have robbed me." They had brought some tithes but like Ananias and Sapphira, they had kept back part of the price. They had robbed Him from Whom all blessings come! Had robbed Him of themselves and their service, of Sabbath-time and the tithes which were for the spread of His religion. God therefore punished them through unseasonable weather or insects that ate up the fruits of the earth, and through short crops and famine. He also earnestly exhorts them to bring all the tithes into the storehouse, which was the temple, and then He would not only give an abundance of rain, but superabundance of Heavenly blessings, so that there should not be room enough to receive them.

LESSON—Christians die spiritually and lack God's favor when they covetously withhold from God His dues. A robber cannot be happy! Some of the advantages of tithing are:—

1. It is founded on scripture.
2. The tither has the satisfaction of giving systematically.
3. He generally has money on hand for the Lord's work.
4. Appeals for funds never evoke from him the comment, "Too much talk about money in the church."
5. Tithers almost without exception are joyful Christians, informed on missions and benevolences, and delighting to help every good object.
6. They inherit the great and exceedingly precious promises of God, both temporal and spiritual. Let every Christian earner dedicate one-tenth of his earnings to the Lord!

Great Facts V -- Return of Elijah.

Malachi 4.

It is very significant that in the last words of Malachi, and of the Old Testament, the people are called upon to remember the Law of Moses, and to treasure the hope of the return of Elijah before the “great and dreadful day of the Lord.” That this does not refer to the coming of John the Baptist in the spirit of Elijah as some think, but is seen in the fact that Christ’s first coming was not a great and dreadful day, but a day of grace and of salvation. Neither did John the Baptist do the work set forth here of reconciling the hearts of the nation to one another. On the other hand, the second coming of the Lord will indeed be a great and dreadful day of judgment and of wrath, and as seen in Revelation 11:3-7, Elijah will be one of the witnesses who will prepare the way for the Lord’s second coming, as John the Baptist did for the first.

LESSON—In a day when men are falsely calling themselves Elijahs, we should remember that when the true Elijah comes, he will be a Jew, and that he will testify for the Lord, not in America or in Europe, as many have sought to do, but in Palestine, and that, after the churches have been caught up to meet their Lord, 1 Thessalonians 4:17. At the Passover feasts of the Jews, they still set a place for him at the table and leave the door wide open in case he should appear. Let us be such Christians, and live such lives, that if all Christians were like us, the world would be ready and watching for the King!

Malachi is the last prophet of the Old Testament. Four centuries were to elapse before the next prophet, John the Baptist, should speak for God. He startled the world with the thrilling message that the Divine Son of God had become flesh, that we might behold His glory, the glory of the Only Begotten Son sent from the Father!

GRADING SHEET OLD TESTAMENT COURSE

	Read Lesson (50 points)	Required Reading (50 points)	Bonus Reading (50 points)
Lesson 01			
Lesson 02			
Lesson 03			
Lesson 04			
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Add Totals Together: _____			

NOTE TO SELF-STUDY STUDENT: Give 50 points for Reading the Lesson, 50 points for Required Reading, and 50 Bonus Points if you read the entire book of the Bible. The Lesson sections that do not include points are blacked out.

Possible Totals: Read Lesson: 1,850 Required Reading: 1,800 Bonus Reading: 1,450

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