

## LESSON NOTES.

## THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

B.C. 1451.] LESSON V. [July 29.

THE READING OF THE LAW.

Josh. 8. 30-35. Commit to memory vs. 33-35.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing.—Deut. 30. 19.

## CENTRAL TRUTH.

Obedience is the way to life. Disobedience is the way to death.

TIME.—B.C. 1451. Spring or early Summer. Immediately after the capture of Ai.

PLACE.—Shechem, in the valley between Mts. Ebal and Gerizim, 30 miles northwest of Jericho, 7 miles south of Samaria.

THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM.—Shechem was the first settlement of Abraham in the Promised Land, and here God renewed his promise to him. (Gen. 12. 6, 7.) Here Abraham built the first altar in Canaan. Here Jacob settled and dug "Jacob's well." Here he bought a field for burial, and the bones of Joseph were afterwards placed here.

THE COMMAND OF MOSES.—Before he died Moses commanded that this ceremony should be performed as soon as the people entered Canaan. (Deut. 11. 29; 27. 1-10.)

THE REASONS.—(1) To make a deep impression of the necessity of obeying God. (2) It was a formal consecration of themselves to God. (3) It was a taking possession of the land in the name of God. (4) It was a coronation of God as king of this land. (5) It was a taking an oath of allegiance to him as King.

EBAL AND GERIZIM.—Ebal is 3076 feet high above the sea, and 1200 above Shechem. Gerizim is 2849 feet high. The valley between is perhaps the most beautiful in Palestine. The spot was specially fitted for this ceremony. The two mountains form a natural amphitheatre. The voice can easily be heard by all the multitudes as has been repeatedly proved by experiment.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—30. *An altar.—They begin with religion.* 31. *Of whole stones.—*(1) To turn the chief attention to the sacrifice itself; (2) as a symbol of the natural heart needing atonement. *Burnt offerings.—*For atonement for sin. Without forgiveness no one could approach God. *Peace offerings.—*Offerings of communion with God, and of thanksgiving, part being burned, part given to the priests, and part eaten by the offerer and his friends. 32. *Wrote upon the stones.—*Large stones were set up and covered with plaster (Deut. 27. 4) on which was written the law, either in the soft plaster, or with red paint. Such writings in that dry climate have lasted 2000 years. *The law.—*The precepts of the law, not the whole history. 33. *All Israel.—*The tribes to be on each mountain are named in Deut. 27. 12, 13. 34. *Read all the words.—*By the Levites, and the people said Amen. *Blessings and cursings.—*Deut. 27 and 28.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Ebal and Gerizim.—The altar.—The law written on the rocks.—The people arranged on the two mountains.—The blessings.—The curses.

## QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where were the Israelites now encamped? What two cities had they already captured? What was the season of the year?

SUBJECT: THE TWO WAYS.—OF BLESSING OR OF CURSING.

1. THE COMMAND.—What did Moses command the people to do as soon as they entered the Promised Land? (Deut. 27. 1-14.) At what place was this ceremony to be held? What had taken place before this on the same spot? (Gen. 12. 6, 7; 33. 18-20.) How far was this from the place where Israel was encamped? Could they go safely so far through an enemy's country? What was the object of the ceremony? Why should it take place on their first entrance into Canaan? Describe Ebal and Gerizim. Show the fitness of the place for this purpose.

2. THE PREPARATIONS (vs. 30, 31).—Of what three parts was this celebration to consist? (vs. 30, 32, 34.) Where was the altar to be built? Why upon Ebal, the mount of cursing? How was the altar to be made?

(Ex. 20. 25.) Why of unhewn stones? What two kinds of offerings were made? What was the meaning of burnt offerings? of peace offerings? Why did they begin this great ceremony on the twin mountains with religious services?

3. THE TWO WAYS (vs. 32-35).—What was the next thing Moses did? On what was the law written? (Deut. 27. 2, 3.) Would this be durable? Could the words be read by the people? How much of the law was written on the rocks? What was the reason for this writing? Where was the ark now placed? Who surrounded it? How were the people arranged? Which tribes were on Ebal? (Deut. 27. 13.) Which on Gerizim? (Deut. 27. 12.) What was read to the people? How many people were there? (Num. 1. 46.) Could they all hear? Why were the children to be present? For what would they receive "cursings"? (Deut. 27. 14-26.) What were the people to say? (Deut. 17. 26.) What were the curses that would fall on disobedience? (Deut. 28. 15-58.) Was it possible to escape them if they were disobedient? (Deut. 28. 15, 45, 58.) What were the blessings? (Deut. 28. 3-13.) How could they obtain these blessings? (Deut. 28. 1, 13, 14.) Was there any other way to obtain them? Did these things come true in the history of the Israelites? Will they be true for us? (Matt. 25. 31-46.) Will they be true for our country?

## PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Two ways are placed before every person in their youth.
2. Disobedience is the certain road to cursing.
3. Obedience the only way to blessing.
4. Every one must make his choice of one way or the other.
5. That choice is usually made early in life.
6. People do not directly choose death, but the disobedience that leads to death.
7. Our consciences say Amen to the blessings God awards.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in Concert.)

1. What did the Israelites do soon after entering Canaan? *Ans.* They all went to the valley between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. 2. What took place there? *Ans.* The law was written on the rocks in the presence of the people. 3. Then how were the people arranged? *Ans.* Half were placed upon Mt. Ebal, and the other half facing them on Mt. Gerizim. 4. What was then done? *Ans.* The law of Moses was read to them, with the blessings upon obedience, and the cursings upon disobedience. 5. What did the people say? *Ans.* And all the people said Amen.

B.C. 1444.] LESSON VI. [Aug. 5.

## THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

Joshua 20. 1-9. Commit to memory vs. 1-9.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.—Heb. 6. 18.

## CENTRAL TRUTH.

Christ is our refuge from sin and its punishment.

TIME.—B. C. 1444. Six years after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Shiloh (place of rest), 17 miles north of Jerusalem, half way between Bethel and Shechem; 9 or 10 miles from each. Here was the tabernacle and ark. Here was the religious centre of the nation during 300 years, the whole period of the Judges.

JOSHUA, between 78 and 85 years old, living at Shiloh.

INTERVENING EVENTS.—The Gibeonites stratagem (ch. 9). A great combination of kings overthrown (ch. 10). Sun and moon stand still (ch. 10. 13). An immense army with horses and chariots defeated (ch. 11). A list of 31 kings conquered in the seven years' war (ch. 12). The land divided among the tribes (chs. 12-19).

INTRODUCTION.—After the impressive ceremonies upon Ebal and Gerizim, the Israelites continued the war till after six or seven years (Josh. 14. 7, 10) the country was so far subjugated that it was divided among the tribes, and the people settled down in their homes. It was therefore time for Joshua to proceed with some civil institutions as in to-day's lesson.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—2. *Cities of refuge.—*(1) *Their need.* In the early ages any one who had committed murder must be slain by the nearest relative of the murdered person. This relative was called the *Avenger of blood.* (2) *Their object.* For the safety of accidental murderers. Wilful murderers were always to be executed. Those who killed another by accident fled to the city of refuge where they were tried. (3) Their number was six. (4) Their situation, three on each side of the Jordan, one in the north, one in the centre, and one in the south of each section. (5) Roads were built, bridges kept in repair, guide-boards put up, to aid the escape of those who had a right to the refuge. (6) Here the murderer was tried. If guilty, he was delivered up to execution; if innocent, he was safe in the city. (7) He was safe only within the limits of the city. (8) He must remain till the death of the high priest. (9) This hardship of absence from home and business, was to guard against carelessness. (10) The avenger is a type of the conscience, and the penalty of sin. (11) The cities of refuge were a type of Christ.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Intervening history.—The avenger of blood.—The cities of refuge.—The punishment of wilful murder.—The treatment of accidental murder.—Conscience as an avenger.—Christ as a refuge.

## QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—How long a time between this lesson and the last? (Josh. 14. 7, 10.) What events took place in the interval? How many kings were overcome? What was the general condition of the nation at this time? Where were the tabernacle and the ark placed? How long did they remain?

SUBJECT: THE CITIES OF REFUGE.—A TYPE OF CHRIST.

1. THE AVENGER (vs. 3-5).—What is meant by "the avenger of blood"? What was the ancient custom as to murderers? What was the reason for it? What evil effects might follow? What two kinds of murderers are described? What was done according to Jewish law with wilful murderers? (Num. 35. 30-33.) Why is this the proper punishment? How were those charged with murder guarded against injustice? (v. 8. Num. 35. 24, 25, 30, 31.)

2. THE CITIES OF REFUGE (vs. 1-9).—What was the object of the cities of refuge? How many of them were there? Point them out on the map. Why were they thus situated? What was done to aid refugees in reaching them? Who only had the right of refuge there? How were their cases tried? What if they were found guilty of wilful murder? (Deut. 19. 12.) What was done if he were innocent of wilful murder? How long must he remain in the city of refuge? Why was this exile and hardship inflicted upon him? What would happen if he left the city before the time expired? (Num. 35. 26-28.)

3. CHRIST OUR REFUGE.—Is there an avenger pursuing every sinner? What is this avenger? Can one who has sinned save himself? Who is our refuge? In what respects is Christ like the cities of refuge? Could any Saviour be easier of access than an ever-present Jesus? What has God done to help us to come to Jesus? Can we be safe any where else? What is it to go to Christ for refuge? When should we go to Jesus? Give reasons why we should not delay. Repeat texts about God and Christ as a refuge.

## PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Every sin has its avenger: (1) in conscience; (2) in the laws of nature; (3) in the justice of God.
2. Christ is our only refuge from sin and its penalties.
3. God has done all he can to aid the escape of the sinner to the refuge: (1) the salvation is easily understood; (2) Christ is ever present; (3) God continually invites us; (4) Bibles and Sabbaths invite and prepare us; (5) His Holy Spirit aids us.
4. We are safe only while we abide in Christ.
5. We should haste to the refuge.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in Concert.)

6. How long were the Israelites in conquering Canaan? *Ans.* About seven years. 7. What was then done? *Ans.* The land was divided among the tribes by lot. 8. What was one of the first acts of Joshua after this? *Ans.* The appointment of cities of refuge. 9. What were they for? *Ans.* For the safety of any who had accidentally killed another. 10. Who is our refuge? *Ans.* Jesus Christ.

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