

TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of Bible Classes

Ask when the Lesson psalm is commonly believed to have been written. It was evidently written when the people were rejoicing in the tokens of God's favor so manifestly bestowed. There are three points:

1. *Thanksgiving*, vs. 1-3. Question out the reasons for the psalmist's thankfulness, bringing out the three wonders involved in the restoration of the Jews from exile. Dwell on the facts that sin is regarded as the root cause of Israel's sufferings, while the restoration is looked upon as an indication that sin has been pardoned and God's wrath removed. Bring out the force of the two words "iniquity" and "sin" and also of "forgiven" and "covered".

2. *Earnest prayer for the removal of remaining national afflictions*, vs. 4-7. Discuss these verses in detail, bringing out the meaning of the words and phrases (see Exposition) and making clear the respects in which the restoration of God's people was still incomplete and the earnestness of the psalmist's desire that it should be perfected.

3. *A picture of the restored people*, vs. 8-13. Bring out the features in this portraiture of the social and political conditions desired in Israel. Make vivid the psalmist's patient waiting for an answer to his prayer, and his assurance that God will speak an answer of peace. Discuss the place which the mercy and faithfulness of God each have in the salvation of men. Show how "peace" depends upon "righteousness", and dwell on the beautiful description in v. 11 of men on earth reflecting the character of God in heaven, and the picture in vs. 12, 13 of the prosperity that results from obedience to God.

Show that this psalm is Messianic. In Jesus the glory has come. Point out how He has united heaven and earth, that through Him human love, peace and service have become acceptable to God.

The practical lesson is that human life can only find its real joy and power in Jesus Christ. Seek to show the class the real heart of Christianity. Salvation is more than

pardon of sin: it is development of all powers,—social, industrial, commercial and personal—in the spirit of righteousness and fellowship with God. The world is asking the way to satisfaction. What is Jesus' answer? What does the Lesson teach?

For Teachers of the Senior Scholars

A good introduction to this Lesson will be a talk with the class about their favorite Psalms. Why are these favorites? How many can repeat Psalms 23, 91, 103?

Get the scholars to tell you about the period and circumstances in which the Lesson Psalm is commonly believed to have been written. Dwell on the wonderful deliverance which God had wrought for His people in bringing them back from captivity to their own land. The Psalm may be divided into three stanzas:

1. *Thanksgiving for what God had done*, vs. 1-3. How do these words fit into the history of Ezra's day? To what extent can we make use of these words to-day? God has been favorable to our land in our religious privileges, in our educational advantages, in our Canadian home, in our Canadian Sabbath, in our temporal prosperity. Are these things indications that God has forgiven the iniquity of our people? Flourishing Christian institutions of all kinds are an evidence of God's favor in any land.

2. *A prayer for more mercy*, vs. 4-7. How does this prayer fit into the history of the returning exiles? God had done much for them, but they were still in great need of His favor. Much was still to be done in making the old home land what it ought to be. Dwell upon the thought that the writer of this Psalm realized that the success of the people in working out a happy destiny depended altogether upon their right relationship to God. This is as true to-day in the history of our own country and in the history of our own life as in the days of Zerubbabel and Ezra. We cannot impress this thought too deeply upon the scholars.

3. *Great expectations cherished*, vs. 8-13. The writer is sure of a favorable answer to his prayer, v. 8. A talk upon looking confidently for an answer to our prayers when we

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