

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON.

Abridged from Peloubets' Notes.

Second Quarter, 1902.

APRIL TO JUNE.

Lesson IX. June 1. Acts 14:8-19

PAUL AT LYSTRA.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.—2 Tim. 2:3.

EXPLANATORY.

I. THE MISSIONARIES AT ICONIUM.—A. 15. Driven away from Antioch, the missionaries proceeded southeast along the military road, called "the Royal Road," which led from Antioch to Lystra, and the East. Before they reached Lystra they turned off to the left and went off to Iconium, the modern Konich on the borders of Phrygia and Lycaonia. Iconium was a city of growing importance, situated on the western edge of the vast plains of Asia Minor, amid luxuriant orchards and gardens, about seventy-five miles in an air-line southeast of Antioch. It is now the terminus of a railway from the Bosphorus. Here the missionaries had large success among both Jews and Greeks.

II. THE MISSIONARIES AT LYSTRA.—Vs. 6-13. Lystra was the chief city of another region, that of Lycaonia, interpreted traditionally as Wolf-land (the local legend derived it from Lycan, who had been transformed into a wolf), representing but too faithfully the character of the inhabitants. It was about eighteen miles south-southwest of Iconium; a Roman colony, and used the Latin language officially. There were few Jews here, as no mention is made of a synagogue. Here the missionaries preached the gospel, and Timothy was one of the converts.

8. AND THERE SAT A CERTAIN MAN in some company Paul was addressing. "We must suppose that Paul gathered groups of the Lystrans about him, and addressed them in places of public resort, as a modern missionary might address the natives of a Hindu village."

9. THE SAME HEARD PAUL was listening to, was an habitual hearer. STEPFESTLY BEHOLDING HIM. "Fastening his eyes upon him." PERCEIVING THAT HE HAD FAITH TO BE HEALED. The lame man had faith in Christ as a Saviour, and as one able and willing to do for him everything that was wise and best, though he may not have expected to be healed.

10. SAID WITH A LOUD VOICE, to attract the lame man's attention as well as that of the audience, and by the voice, expressing in its tones "heart, blood, fire, music, life," he inspired courage and faith in the man. STAND UPRIGHT ON THY FEET. To say this publicly required great faith in Paul. To do it required strong faith in the lame man. AND HE LEAPED AND WALKED. A public proof that the cure was instantaneous and complete. "He sprang up with a bound (scurry), and then continued to walk (imperfect) with restored vigor."

The Apostles looked upon as Gods. II. LIFTED UP THEIR VOICES (shouted, with a sudden outburst) SAYING IN THE SPEECH OF LYCAONIA. What that language was is unknown. The apostles probably preached in Greek, though Paul of Tarsus may not have been wholly ignorant of the Lycaonian dialect. Canon Tristram says, "They had partly understood Paul when he addressed them in Greek, as a gathering of Welshmen might understand English, but they expressed their own excitement of their native dialect." THE GODS ARE COME DOWN TO US IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN. "The knowledge of the story of Baucis and Philemon, according to which Jupiter and Mercury visited in human

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form the neighboring district, would render such words quite natural."

12. THEY CALLED BARNABAS, JUPITER. Probably because he was the older and more imposing man. AND PAUL, MERCURIUS, BECAUSE HE WAS THE CHIEF SPEAKER. "Mercurius" was the messenger and spokesman of the gods, and the god of eloquence.

13. JUPITER. That is, the statue, or the temple containing the statue, WHICH WAS BEFORE, outside of the city gates. BROUGHT OXEN (for sacrifice) AND GARLANDS, with which animals led to sacrifice were adorned. They were "in exultant haste" to honor the gods. UNTO THE GATES. Probably of the city; but some think, of the temple; others, of the house where the apostles were lodging. WOULD HAVE DONE SACRIFICE. To honor the apostles, "and to turn the religious festival to their own ends."

14. THE APOSTLES... HEARD. They were in the house, or more probably about their missionary work in the city. RENT THEIR CLOTHES. As a visible expression of their sorrow and disapprobation. RAN IN TO THE CROWD. But the better reading is, "sprang forth" hastened away from their house, or the place where they were speaking.

Paul's address, Introduction. 15. MEN OF LIKE PASSIONS WITH YOU. Of the same nature, with human body, subject to death, on your level, not in the rank of gods, but we preach unto you, proclaim good tidings, the gospel, while we are preaching Jesus who brought the good news of the living God. He is no Jupiter, no idol, but the maker of HEAVEN, AND EARTH, AND THE SEA. Therefore, TURN FROM THESE VANITIES, who cannot help and save you; who are not worthy of your worship.

16. WHO IN TIMES PAST SUFFERED, permitted. For wise reasons he permitted men to see what they could and would do, and to become prepared to receive newer light. This is apparently in answer to the objection, Why did not God send the gospel before?

17. NEVERTHELESS. During all this time God attracted men by his goodness toward them.

18. SCARCELY RESTRAINED THEY. It was contrary to their gospel to preach themselves. Their business was to lead men to Christ and to God. They put away from themselves the temptation to honor which belonged to their Master.

III. THE MISSIONARIES LEAVE LYSTRA FOR DERBE.—Vs. 19-21. 19. THERE CAME THITHER JEWS FROM ANTIOCH more than one hundred miles, by road. This shows how intense was the opposition to the gospel as preached by Paul. HAVING STONED PAUL. This was by a mob. What a crowd of memories this must have brought to Paul when he remembered Stephen ten or eleven years before. Compare 2 Cor. 11:25; Gal. 6:17. SUPPOSING HE HAD BEEN DEAD. The opponents of truth often think it dead, when it is only stunned, and will be restored and live longer than its opponents.

20. The disciples, among whom may have been Timothy, tenderly cared for Paul. HE ROSE UP AND CAME INTO THE CITY. The next day he left and went to Derbe, a two days' journey according to Professor Ramsay, but his map makes it thirty-five miles. Derbe was the farthest limit of Paul's first missionary journey. How long he remained is uncertain. But he preached the gospel while he was there, and made many disciples.

IV. REVISITING THE CHURCHES.—Vs. 21-23. Paul retraced his steps, and stopped at each of the three cities where churches were founded by him, in addition to the one at Derbe. The excitement had subsided in the places where he had been persecuted, for weeks and months had passed since then. And Paul seems to have devoted himself to the churches rather than to evangelizing the heathen.

22. CONFIRMING THEIR SOULS, to establish more, to render more firm, as a tender shoot is confirmed into hard wood which can endure frosts and hard usage. EXHORTING THEM strengthened, comforted them by his words. THROUGH MUCH TRIBULATION. Our word "tribulation" is derived from the ancient threshing implement by which good wheat is separated from chaff. They must expect trouble, but it will be a means of entering more fully into the spirit of the kingdom of heaven.

"I WONDER."

"Wonder who's moving in? Wonder if they've got boys? Wonder what kind of a fellow that new boy is?" Bob stood by the window and watched for two rainy days. Then he went out to play; so did the new boy. Bob's ball rolled Frank's way; he tossed it back and the play began.

"I think he's a good kind of a boy for me to play with, mamma," Bob said at

bedtime. "He plays fair, and he laughs when things happen, 'stead of saying words or getting cross."

"I wonder if you are a good kind of a boy to play with him?" mamma queried, with her arm around Bob. "For my boy doesn't always laugh, and I thought it looked as though things had to be done Bob's way pretty often."

"I wonder what he is saying to his mother 'bout me?" Bob said, slowly. "I didn't mean to be selfish. If it isn't good to-night it shall be to-morrow, mamma."—Little Ones.

IMPROVE THE TIME.

Time is fleeting. It is uncertain. It is like a vapor that appeareth and then vanishes away. Time is short. While these statements are all true, at the same time the injunction given is very important. We can improve our time. Do it to our great advantage here and hereafter. Few, comparatively speaking, place a proper estimate on the value of time. The one who is deeply interested in the use and appropriation of the golden moments of life, so that they may redound to their present and eternal welfare, is inspired by the highest wisdom known. Time is valuable; it is precious. "Let us no number our days as that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Habits of industry in the use of time should be cultivated. often we allow habits of carelessness to develop and much precious time is allowed to run to waste. The amount of time wasted in idle conversation is simply amazing. To idle away the precious moments that our Heavenly Father gives us is very wrong. No man has ever reached the high plane of scholarship without the cultivation of studious habits. And these habits are conditioned on the proper use of time. We do not mean that such people do not have times of relaxation from study, for this is absolutely necessary. And this diversion of the mind is placing the right value on the improvement of time. Time which is allowed to pass without improvement is gone forever. We may beckon to the future, but cannot call back the past. How striking are the words of Dr. Young: "The bell strikes one—we take no note of time. But from its loss:—to give it then a tongue. Is wise in man. As, if an angel spoke, I feel the solemn sound; if heard aright, It is the knell of my departed hours." Reader, be more careful of your time. Do not let the blessed moments of life pass without a proper estimate by you of their importance.—Baltimore Methodist.

WORDS OF HOPE.

TO ALL WHO SUFFER FROM A RUN DOWN SYSTEM.

Mrs. Harriet A. Farr, Fenwick, Ont., Tells How She Obtained a Cure After Suffering for Two Years.

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