

Lesson VI.

ABRAM CALLED TO BE A BLESSING February 10, 1907

BETWEEN THE LESSONS—The descendants of Noah at first spoke the same language. Ch. 11 : 1-9 tells how, at the building of the city and tower of Babel, God introduced a variety of languages, so that people scattered into different countries. Among the descendants of Shem, Noah's eldest son, was Terah, who, more than three hundred and fifty years later than the flood, or about B. C. 2000, dwelt, with his family, at Ur, a city near the Euphrates, 125 miles from its present mouth. In ch. 11 : 31, 32, we are told how Terah and his family, including his eldest son, Abram, removed, under divine guidance (ch. 15 : 7), from Ur to Haran.

GOLDEN TEXT—I will bless thee, and make thy name great ; and thou shalt be a blessing. — Genesis 12 : 2.

Memorize vs. 1-3. THE LESSON PASSAGE—Genesis 12: 1-8. Read Genesis, chs. 10 to 12.

1 Now the Lord had said unto A'bram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee.

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing;

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

4 So A'bram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and A'bram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

5 And A'bram took Sar'ai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had

Revised Version—Omit had; ²the; ³be thou; ⁴him that curseth thee will I curse; ⁵went; ⁶Shechem; ⁷oak; ⁸Al.

Daily Readings—(Courtesy, I. B. R. A.)—M.—Abram called to be a blessing, Gen. 12 : 1-8. T.—Abram's faith, Heb. 11 : 6-10. W.—Stephen's reminder, Acts 7 : 1-7. Th.—Moses called to service, Ex. 3 : 1-12. F.—Jesus calls disciples, Mark 1 : 14-21. S.—Matthew called, Mark 2 : 13-20. S.—Reward of followers, Mark 10 : 23-31.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

I. THE CALL.—1. The Lord had said unto Abram ; ch. 11 : 31. Abram had lived till he was over seventy in a city (Ur) noted for its worldliness and idolatry and immorality. Now he was to worship and serve the one living and true God. Get thee out, etc. God trained Abram by separation. Note the three things from which he was to be separated—kindred, home, and country, things that men hold dearest. Thy country; Haran. A land that I will shew thee. By withholding the name of the "land", God puts a severe test on Abram's readiness to trust Him without question.

II. THE PROMISE.—2, 3. A great nation; a wonderful promise, but also a further test of faith. Abram was a childless old man. How, then, could a great nation come from him? Bless thee. It is not particular gifts that are promised, but, far better, the favor and friendship of God, who is the Source of every good gift; James 1 : 17. Name great; a promise of honor, power and influence. A blessing. Abram was to be noted, not, like so many of the great and rich of the world, for what he took from others, but for what he gave to them. Them that bless thee. So completely was Abram to be one with God, that his friends would be God's friends, and so share God's favor. Curseth thee. In like manner, those unfriendly to Abram will be visited with God's

gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

6 And A'bram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

7 And the Lord appeared unto A'bram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.

8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, having Beth-el on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord.



"THERE BUILDED HE AN ALTAR"

This altar is built of loose boulders gathered from the hillside, with a larger, flat stone as a top.

displeasure. All families. So the prophets (for example, Isaiah, chs. 2 : 2-4; 19 : 23-25), point to the extension of Israel's blessings to all nations. The promise and the prophecies were fulfilled when Christ came to be the Saviour of the world. "What a vision that was!" says a recent writer. "Others have had visions of better countries, of ideal peoples,—Plato's Republic, the Greek Hesperides, Moore's Utopia, Bacon's New Atlantis, the Spanish Eldorado; but none will begin to compare with the vision and promise given to Abraham, which will be completed only in the New Jerusalem."

III. THE JOURNEY.—4, 5. Departed; with his household and his followers, his flocks and his herds. On his way southward he would likely pass through Damascus. In ch. 14 : 14, Abram appears as the leader of 318 fighting men. This would imply a total following of some 2,000 persons. Abram was a tribal chieftain. Souls; persons. Canaan; originally the lowland on the Mediterranean coast, but afterwards extended to include all Palestine.

IV. THE ALTAR.—6-8. Shechem; afterwards Shechem, an important town in Central Palestine. Oak (Rev. Ver.) of Moreh ("Moreh" means "soothsayer", literally, "director"); a sacred tree, supposed to give divine oracles, which were interpreted by priests. It was now to become a