



"HAPPY NEW YEAR!"

**LESSON NOTES.**

**FIRST QUARTER.**

**LESSON II.—JANUARY 8.**

**REBUILDING THE TEMPLE.**

Ezra 3. 1-13.] [Memory verses, 10, 11.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**

They praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.—Ezra 3. 11.

**CENTRAL TRUTH.**

It is a privilege and a joy to have part in building God's spiritual temple.

**TIME.**—From October, B.C. 536, to May, 535.

**PLACE.**—Jerusalem and vicinity, from this time called Judea.

**RULERS.**—Cyrus, king of the Medo-Persian empire. Zerubbabel, governor of Judea.

**INTRODUCTORY.**

The 50,000 returning exiles of our last lesson reached Jerusalem about July, B.C. 536. Their first work was to provide some kind of homes for themselves and their families in the towns near Jerusalem, where their ancestral estates lay. This took two or three months. Jerusalem was in ruins, and they were surrounded by people who did not sympathize with their plans.

**HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.**

1. "The seventh month"—October. It was the seventh of their year, and the seventh since they left Babylon. 2. "Builded the altar"—before there was any temple, so that they could begin their regular public services of worship. 3. "The altar upon his bases"—the old altar foundation in front of the temple that was to be rebuilt. "For fear"—lest their neighbours should prevent them, or lest they should fail to secure the favour of God. 4. "The feast of Tabernacles"—held from the 15th to 22nd of the month. It was the great thanksgiving day. Two other feasts were held the same month, the feast of trumpets on the 1st, and the great Day of Atonement on the 10th. 7. "They gave money"—see 1. 6; 2. 69. 61,000 darics of gold—English guineas, or \$300,000, and 5,000 pounds of silver (\$100,000) had been raised before. "Joppa"—the seaport of Jerusalem. 8. "Second year, second month"—May, 535. 10. "Their apparel"—which for such occasions was very beautiful (Ex. 39). "Sons of Asaph"—a choir of singers, named from David's chief singer. 11. "Sang by course"—

responsively. 12. "Ancient men . . . wept"—the house was to be larger, but there was no wealth like Solomon's to lavish upon it. "Young men rejoiced"—that they had a temple at all, and that they could have a part in building it. It was much more than they had dared, two years before, to expect.

**PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.**

The first duty of a people is to institute and sustain religion and education. The poorest place will suffice for worship if it be the best we have. The family altar should be set up in every family. Worship should be regular and continual. Giving to the Lord is a part of worship. The foundation of true character and life is the Lord Jesus Christ. Every power of music should be used in the worship of God. While we regret that we cannot do all we would, we should rejoice with great joy that we can do something toward building up God's kingdom. We must expect opposition, but not stop on account of it.

**REVIEW QUESTIONS.**

1. Where did the returned exiles live? In the towns near Jerusalem. 2. What was their first work? To build an altar in the accustomed place and institute the public worship of God. 3. What next? They contributed money and made preparations for rebuilding the temple. 4. Then what did they do? They laid the foundation of the temple with great enthusiasm and rejoicing. 5. What hindered them? Their enemies rose up against them, and for fourteen years the work was neglected.

**CATECHISM QUESTION.**

What is your duty toward your neighbour? My duty towards my neighbour is to love him as myself, and to do to all men as I would they should do unto me: to love, honour, and succour my father and mother; to honour and obey the king, and all that are put in authority under him: to submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters; to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters: to hurt nobody by word or deed: to be true and just in all my dealings: to bear no malice nor hatred in my heart: to keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering; to keep my body in temperance, soberness, and chastity; not to covet nor desire other men's goods; but to learn and labour truly to get my own living, and to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me.

**The Child.**

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea . . . behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem.—St. Matt. 2. 1.

From the far East they came,  
Toil stained and foot-sore, yet with stately  
men,  
"Tell us," they asked, "the name  
Of him whose beacon star our eyes have  
seen?  
Long have we followed it across the wild,  
Seeking a monarch. Lo! we find a Child."

Versed in all Orient lore,  
Adepts in horoscopes and reading dreams,  
Ever demanding more,  
That star has led them by its lambent beams  
To find a sager sage serene and mild,  
Skilled to decipher mysteries. Lo! a Child.

O Bethlehem! Where the star  
Has led true-hearted men whose patient feet  
Have crossed the desert far  
To find, instead of sage, an infant sweet;  
Thrice-favoured manger, where in weakness  
smiled  
Priest, prophet, king, is one—a little Child!

To thee all seeking hearts  
Reaching forever out to higher things,  
Bring wearily the smarts  
Of balled soaring with imperfect wings,  
To hush their crashing discords fierce and wild  
In the soft gurgling laughter of thy Child.

Star of the East! We pray,  
By thine epiphany guide thou our race  
From East or West the way  
That leadeth to the cradle-home of grace,  
Until, quite-satisfied, across the wild  
It kneels before and clasps that Holy Child.

Child of all time! We bring  
Our gold and incense, all else flung away,  
Tribute to Sage and King  
Made manifest in every land to-day  
Rejoicing that on yearning souls hath smiled  
God's answer to all questionings—the Child!

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

You say it cheerily? You wish it in your heart—"a happy New Year!" If it could only "come true!"

But for whom do you wish it, this happy New Year? For yourself?

Or do you wish first of all for those about you, that they may find the New Year full of kindly thoughts and friendly deeds and helpfulness? Then you yourself may help your own wish to "come true" for them. It will come true for you yourself when you try to make it true for others.

Wish it then, heartily, cheerfully and help your wish to come true—"a happy New Year!"

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