

Sunday School Lesson.

LESSON V.—OCTOBER 31, 1880

JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.—Gen. 37: 1-5, 23-36.

TIME.—B. C. 1729. Ten years after Jacob's return to Canaan. Joseph 17 years old, Benjamin less than one.

PLACES.—Jacob's home was at Hebron, about 20 miles from Jerusalem. Joseph was sold at Dothan, 17 miles from Shechem, and about 70 miles north-east of Hebron, his home.

EXPLANATORY.

Joseph being seventeen years old. In chap. 41: 46, he is mentioned as 30 years old. His captivity, therefore, lasted about 13 years. Was feeding the flock. At this age of 17 Joseph became a shepherd with his brethren. Jacob did not send his favorite son too early to the herds; yet, though the favorite, he was to begin to serve below (not over) the rest as a shepherd-boy. The sons of Bilhah, and Zilpah. The slave-wives of Jacob. The sons of Bilhah were Dan and Naphtali; of Zilpah, Gad and Asher. The reader of Gen. 34 and 35 and 37 and 38 will see that the ten older brethren of Joseph were "hard-boys." Joseph had been trained in a religious home—which seems scarcely to have been the case with the ten older sons. Their shepherd life took them into distant parts of the country, and seems practically to have removed them much of the time from home and its domestic influences. Unfortunately the domestic influences of that polygamous home were by no means so wholesome as a religious home ought to furnish. Their evil report. The evil report of them,—of their doings. This was no backbiting, but a filial, confidential report to his father, showing his love of truth and right, and his unwillingness to be partaker of others' sins.

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children. Because he was the son of his best-loved wife, and of his old age, as Benjamin had not yet come into much notice (being only about one year old). Made him a coat of many colors, or "pieces." This expression occurs again, 2 Sam. 13: 18, of the garment worn by king's daughters. A long tunic with sleeves, worn by youths and maidens of the richer class. Its name seems to signify a tunic reaching to the extremities. It may have been both long and of many pieces and colors. In the well-known scene from the tomb of Chnoumhotep at Beni Hassan, a tomb of the 12th dynasty, the Semitic visitors who are offering presents to the Governor are dressed in robes of rich coloring, apparently formed of separate small pieces or patches, sewn together.

Joseph dreamed a dream. Jacob's partiality in giving Joseph the coat of many colors might have passed. But the lad began to have dreams of distinction and honor, confirmatory of the pre-eminence with which his father's partiality had seemed to invest him. The brethren were binding sheaves in the field, when their sheaves bowed down to his sheaf, or fell to the ground while his remained erect. Another dream was stronger still; the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars did obeisance to him. Told it to his brethren. Whether Joseph acted wisely in telling his dream, may be questioned. He probably thought that he would thereby win their confidence, and disarm their hate. They hated him yet the more. By dreams and visions of the night God was accustomed, in former ages, to convey to his servants intimations of his will and their future lot. Joseph was to pass through scenes of bondage and of suffering, and these dreams were designed to comfort him in his distress.

When Joseph was come unto his brethren. Jacob had bought land in Shechem, and thither his flocks were sent for pasture at the proper season. It was over 50 miles from Hebron. Not finding the brothers at Shechem, Joseph goes on in search of them, expecting, doubtless, to find them near. A stranger gives him the information he seeks; for he had heard them say, Let us go to Dothan, which was 12 Roman miles north of Samaria (Sebaste), and about 17 miles north of Shechem. To this spot he hastens on; and when the brothers saw him coming they conspired against him to kill him, and were only prevented by Reuben. They stripped Joseph. Where shall we find nine men conspiring at once to kill a brother,—a brother whose amiable qualities deserved their warmest love. Every one is capable of the meanest of crimes, as it is itself the meanest of feelings. Out of his coat. That was on him. According to Eastern habits, it would be his only garment (except a cloth around the loins). He entered Egypt naked, as was the custom with slaves and captives (Isa. 20: 4), in strange contrast to his subsequent array of pomp (chap. 41: 42).

Cast him into a pit. An empty cistern or reservoir dug in the ground, in which the rain-water is collected, of which there are many in the Arabian deserts. Such pits or cisterns were often used in the East instead of prisons, so that the Hebrew word signifies both a pit and a prison. (See Jer. 38: 6. Ps. 40: 2)

They sat down to eat bread. To stifle the workings of conscience in their bosoms, Joseph's brethren probably sat down to a joyous feast, eating, drinking, and making merry. His cries for mercy they remembered many years afterwards (chap. 42: 21). A company of Ishmaelites. In vers. 25 and 28 they are called Ishmaelites; in vers. 28 and 36, Midianites. The former seems to be a generic name, equivalent to Arabs; the latter denoting the tribe to which the merchants actually belonged. Spicery. From India. A species of resinous gum called storax. —a perfume. Balm. Balm of Gilead, the juice of the balsam-tree, a native of Gilead, always highly esteemed in the East as a cure for wounds. Myrrh. Ladanum, the resin of the cistus-rose, an Arabian gum of a strong, fragrant smell. It was burned in the temple, and employed in embalming. Trading in the produce of Arabia and India, they were in the regular course of traffic on their way to Egypt.

Judah said, &c. Judah, relenting, proposes to sell Joseph to the merchants. What profit. Knowing their character, he appeals to the motive most likely to influence them.

Sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver. The money was probably in rings or pieces (shekels), and silver is always mentioned in the records of that early age before gold, on account of its rarity. The whole sum, if in shekel weight, did not exceed three pounds (\$15). This is the rate at which Moses estimates a male from five to 20 years old (Lev. 27: 5).

Reuben returned unto the pit. Reuben had planned to rescue Joseph, and send him home safely, as soon as his brothers had left him. He probably went into another part of the field to draw off the rest. When he returned he found his brother gone. Probably his brethren suspected that he intended to rescue Joseph.

The child is not... whether shall I go? i.e., what will become of me? How shall I account to his father for his disappearance? But Reuben, though thus affected at the moment, had not courage afterwards to disclose the crime committed by his brothers.

They took Joseph's coat. One transgression gives birth to another. With the consciousness that tried to conceal their guilt, there mingled the old grudge concerning the coat of many colors, which here turns itself even against the father.

Rent his clothes. The common signs of Oriental mourning. A rent is made in the skirt, more or less long according to the afflicted feelings of the mourner, and a coarse, rough piece of black sackcloth or camel's-hair cloth is wound round the waist.

Rose up to comfort him. This announcement is startling after the deed which they have done. But there is no limit to human hypocrisy. Into the grave. Not the earth, for Joseph was supposed to be torn in pieces, but the unknown place,—the place of departed souls, where Jacob expected at death to meet his beloved son.

Midianites. See on ver. 25. Sold him into Egypt. He was brought down to Egypt; and at Heliopolis or On, at the head of the Delta, which was then the seat of government, offered for sale, perhaps publicly in the market. The traffic in slaves was tolerated by the Egyptians, and it is reasonable to suppose that many persons were engaged, as at present, in bringing them to Egypt for public sale. Potiphar... captain of the guard. More literally, captain of the executioners, or chief of the slaughtermen, because all penal inflictions from the king were executed by the soldiers of the royal guard.

The House and Farm

To stone raisins easily, pour boiling water over them, and drain it off. This loosens the stones, and they come out clean and with ease.

A writer in the British Medical Journal declares that glycerine in half teaspoonful doses is a simple and effective emetic for children.

"I honestly believe," says the New England Farmer, "that the farmer who will work his brains until noon, and his hands the balance of the day, will outstrip him who rises at 5 and toils until 9 at night."

This month offers the most favorable time usually for the painting and repair of farm buildings, and putting them in order for the winter. A great part of this work may be well done during this month by the farmer and his boys.

To benefit to the full extent by raising and keeping a numerous flock of sheep; roots must be grown for winter use, and when this is found to be true, and roots are sown on a proper field system, so as to cut but from 5 to 8 cents per bushel, sheep husbandry will go ahead.

Clothes must not be thrown carelessly and unevenly upon the line, but be well snapped out, and hung up straight and smooth. Blankets, bed spreads, sheets and table linen, particularly, require to be thus carefully hung up, bringing the hems or selvages together, straight and true, and pinned strongly to the line.

A pot of English ivy makes one of the most agreeable and cheap ornaments for the sitting-room in the winter. A common four, or five-inch pot with a strong plant can be bought of the florist for fifty cents or less. It is easy to make a basket of interlacing coarse wire to hold the plant.—American Agriculturist.

Plowing for spring crops may be done at any time now, where the soil is not too light, and not likely to wash during the winter. The ground should be left rough to be subjected to the fullest action of the weather, freezing, thawing, wetting, drying, etc. Should a crop of weeds come up, it will very likely pay to harrow and plow again.

The finest paste for all purposes is made as follows: To a teaspoonful of flour add gradually half a pint of cold water, and mix quite smooth; add a pinch of powdered alum (some add a small pinch of powdered rosin) and boil for a few minutes, stirring constantly. The addition of a little brown sugar and a few grains of corrosive sublimate will, it is said, by practical chemists, preserve it for years.

CASTLE ST. ST. JOHN, N. B., Jan 1, 1873. MESSRS. T. GRAHAM & SON.—About four years ago I got my ankle badly sprained, causing it to swell so much that I could not put on my boot, the pain so severe that I could scarcely move about for two weeks. I used different popular remedies without benefit till I tried Graham's Pain Expeller, which cured me by a few applications. I recommended it to a friend who had suffered from a sprain more than six months, and he was cured by less than a bottle. I have used it in other forms of pain with equal success, and for Coughs, Colds, Sore Throat, etc., it is the best remedy I have ever known. STEPHEN N. CRAWFORD.

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SEE WHAT PHYSICIANS AND THE PEOPLE SAY ABOUT IT.

Messrs. Scott & Bowne: 66 West Thirty-sixth street, New York, Sept. 2, 1876. GENTS—I have frequently prescribed SCOTT'S EMULSION OF COD LIVER OIL with HYPOPHOSPHITES during the past year, and regard it as a valuable preparation in scrophulous and consumptive cases, plethoric and effacious. C. C. LOCKWOOD, M.D.

Messrs. SCOTT & BOWNE—Gentlemen—Within the last year I have used in my own family, and in my private practice prescribed very extensively SCOTT'S EMULSION OF COD LIVER OIL with HYPOPHOSPHITES and found it a most valuable preparation, especially in diseases of children. It is agreeable to the most delicate stomach; which renders it a very reliable agent as a nutritive remedy in consumptive and scrophulous cases. Yours respectfully, A H SAXTON, M.D. Baltimore. October 12, 1879.

Messrs. SCOTT & BOWNE—Gentlemen—Within the last two months I have fairly tried SCOTT'S EMULSION OF COD LIVER OIL with HYPOPHOSPHITES, and I candidly declare that it is the finest preparation of the kind that has ever been brought to my notice; in affections of the lungs and other wasting diseases, we consider it our most reliable agent, in a perfectly elegant and agreeable form. December 10th, 1878. Very truly J. SIMONAUD, M.D., New Orleans, La.

Messrs SCOTT & BOWNE—Gentlemen—In September 1877, my health began to fail and my physician pronounced it spinal trouble; under his care I got some relief from pain, but my general health did not improve, and early in the winter, I began to raise blood and rapidly grow worse. In May last I was taken with a violent bleeding which brought me to my bed and my life was despaired of for many weeks; violent symptoms appeared, night and morning coughs, night sweats, short breath, and a return of the spinal trouble. My physician stopped the bleeding and then ordered Cod Liver Oil and Lime; and I used various preparations, but they did me no good. I lost all hope of life, and was an object of pity to all my friends. Last September I purchased a bottle of your Emulsion, before it was all taken I was better. I then bought a dozen bottles and have taken all with the following results: Cough subsiding, night sweats stopped, appetite returned, pains in spine disappeared, strength returning, and my weight increased from 118 to 140 pounds in sixteen weeks. I have taken no other medicine since commencing with your EMULSION and shall continue its use until I am perfectly well. I frequently meet some friend on the street who asks, what cured you and I answer SCOTT'S EMULSION OF COD LIVER OIL, &c. I have a friend who has not spoken aloud for 18 months and he is getting better. I gave him a bottle, and he bought two more, then got a dozen and says that it is food and medicine for him. He was given up to die a year ago; but he is improving wonderfully. My recovery is exciting the surprise of many people, and I shall do all I can to make known your valuable medicine. Very truly yours, H F SLOCUM, Lowell, Mass.

About the 25th of last April I got a bottle of your EMULSION, and at that time I was so prostrated that no one who saw me thought I could live but a few days at most. I could retain nothing on my stomach and was literally starving. I commenced the use of the EMULSION in small doses; it was the first thing that would stay on my stomach; I continued its use, gradually increasing the dose; and from that hour I commenced mending, and now am able to ride and walk and am gaining flesh and strength rapidly. I have advised other parties to try it, and some two or three have already tried it. I am sure I shall entirely recover. I am yours R W HAMILTON, M.D. For Sale by all Druggists at \$1 per bottle.

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