

LESSON IV.

EZRA'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

October 22, 1899

Ezra 8: 21-32 Commit to memory vs. 21-23. Read: chaps. 7 and 8: 15-36

21 Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

22 For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.

23 So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.

24 Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests: Sherebiah, Hahabiah, and ten of theirs brethren with them.

25 And weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, even the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors and his lords, and all Israel there present, had offered:

26 Even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, and of gold an hundred talents;

27 Also twenty basons of gold, of a thousand 10 drams; and two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold.

28 And I said unto them, Ye are holy unto the Lord; the vessels are holy also; and the silver and the gold are a free-will offering unto the Lord God of your fathers.

29 Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the Lord.

30 So I took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem unto the house of our God.

31 Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and as of such as lay in wait by the way.

32 And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.

Revised Version—1 Humble; 2 Straight; 3 Ask; 4 Chiefs; 5 Add even; 6 For; 7 Princes; 8 Into; 9 Bowls; 10 Daries; 11 Bright brass; 12 Lord the God; 13 Princes of the fathers' houses of Israel; 14 Received put after Levites; 15 And the lie in wait.

GOLDEN TEXT

"The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him."
Ezra 8: 22.

DAILY READINGS

M.—Ezra 7: 6-20. The king's decree.

T.—Ezra 7: 21-23. The king's gifts.

W.—Ezra 8: 21-32. Ezra's journey to Jerusalem.

Th.—Ezra 9: 1-9. Ezra's prayer.

F.—Ezra 9: 10-15. The prayer continued.

S.—Psalm 46. God our refuge.

S.—2 Cor. 6: 11-18. Be separate.

TIME

B.C. 458; seventy-eight years after Zerubbabel's first return, and fifteen years after the deliverance through Queen Esther.

PLACE

Babylonia, on the way, and at Jerusalem.

CATECHISM

Q. 76. Which is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

LESSON PLAN

I. The Fast, 21-23.

At the river of Ahava, and with earnest prayer to God for His help.

II. The Trust, 24-30.

The offering for the house of God, given into the hands of twelve of the priests for safe-keeping and safe carriage.

III. The Journey, 31, 32.

Accomplished in peace.

LESSON HYMNS

Book of Praise—1, 19 (Ps.), 271, 275, 308.

CONNECTION

The little colony that had returned to Jerusalem from exile under Zerubbabel was not prospering. Many abuses had crept in among the people. And Ezra, more than seventy years later, went up to set things right.

EXPLANATION

21. I proclaimed a fast, at the beginning of the journey. The purpose of the fast was (1) That we might afflict ourselves, Rev. Ver., "humble ourselves" before our God, by submission to His will and by repentance from sin; (2) To seek of him a right way—that God would not suffer them to be turned aside from the direct road by enemies. Ahava; one of the Babylonian rivers, a branch of the Euphrates.

22, 23. For I was ashamed. Ezra had professed his confidence in God's power to protect, and he would not, therefore, ask for an armed escort. The enemy in the way; the plundering Arabs of the desert. Fasted; in token of penitence. Intreated of us; heard and answered us. (8: 31.)

24, 25. I separated twelve; to take charge of the treasure. Weighed. Money was weighed not counted. Silver. See 7: 15, 16.

26, 27. Six hundred and fifty talents. The silver talent was worth about \$1,600. Silver vessels an hundred talents; that is, valued at one hundred talents. Of gold. The gold talent has been reckoned at from four to eighteen times the value of the silver talent. A thousand drams; about \$5,000. Vessels of fine copper; perhaps some kind of an alloy, as copper would not be as precious as gold. The whole treasure has been estimated at from two to five million dollars.

28, 29. Ye are holy; set apart for