

Lesson IX.

ABRAHAM PLEADING FOR SODOM

March 3, 1907

BETWEEN THE LESSONS—Ch. 16 tells the story of Hagar's banishment from Abram's encampment, owing to Sarai's jealousy, of her return after the Lord's appearance to her in the wilderness, and of the birth of Ishmael. In ch. 17, we have an account of the change of Abram's and Sarai's names to Abraham and Sarah, respectively; of the institution of circumcision; and of a definite promise of the birth of a son to Sarah. The Lesson chapter opens with the arrival of three "men" (v. 2) at Abraham's tent door, one of whom, called by Abraham, "My lord" (v. 3, Rev. Ver.), renews the promise that Sarah shall have a son.

GOLDEN TEXT—Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.—Luke 18: 1.

Memorize vs. 23-26. THE LESSON PASSAGE—Genesis 18: 16-33. Read the chapter.

16 And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sod'om: and A'braham went with them to bring them on the way.

17 And the Lord said, Shall I hide from A'braham that I thing which I do;

18 Seeing that A'braham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon A'braham that which he hath spoken of him.

20 And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sod'om and Gomor'rah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;

21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sod'om: but A'braham stood yet before the Lord.

23 And A'braham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

24 Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?

25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far

Revised Version—¹Omit thing; ²have known him, to the end that he may command; ³that they may; ⁴to the end that; ⁵Omit their faces; ⁶Wilt thou consume? ⁷that so; ⁸sake; ⁹I will not destroy it, if I find there forty and five; ¹⁰the; ¹¹Omit unto him.

Daily Readings—(Courtesy, I. B. R. A.)—M.—Entertaining angels, Gen. 18: 1-8. T.—Abraham pleading for Sodom, Gen. 18: 16-33. W.—Destruction of Sodom, Gen. 19: 1-3, 13-25. Th.—Intercession of Moses, Ex. 32: 7-14. F.—Daniel's prayer, Dan. 9: 9-19. S.—Encouragement, James 5: 10-20. S.—Persevering prayer, Luke 18: 1-8.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

I. THE VISITORS.—16-19. Men; Abraham's three visitors from heaven, who appeared in human form, vs. 1, 2 (compare Mark 16: 5). Looked toward Sodom; perhaps from an elevation, three miles east of Hebron, now the site of the village Beni Na'in. Here the Dead Sea, 18 miles away, can be seen through gaps in the hills. The Lord. Abraham now knew, as probably he did not at first, that one of his visitors was the Almighty Himself. Shall I hide...? Abraham was so loyal and trusty a friend, that God would share His plans with him. To the end that (Rev. Ver.), etc., v. 19. Abraham was to become the founder of a nation which should serve God and preserve the knowledge of God in the world. It was with this in view, that God revealed Himself so fully to him.

II. THE MESSAGE.—20-22. Cry of Sodom and Gomorrah; the report of their appalling wickedness, which, like the cry of Abel's blood (ch. 4: 10), had reached heaven. Go down (the wicked cities were 4,300 feet lower than Hebron) . . . and see. The Lord will not punish until He has found out the exact truth. The men; two of them, the Lord remaining with Abraham.

from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

26 And the Lord said, If I find in Sod'om fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

27 And A'braham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes:

28 Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it.

29 And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake.

30 And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall be thirty found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there.

31 And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.

32 And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.

33 And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with A'braham: and A'braham returned unto his place.

III. THE PRAYER.—23-33. Drew near; not



Grow on shores of Dead Sea; look like tempting apples or oranges, but explode on being pressed, leaving nothing but the empty rind.

merely in bodily presence, but in eager desire and strong faith (see Heb. 10: 22). Peradventure, etc. Lot, still a righteous man (2 Pet. 2: 7), was in Sodom, and Abraham hoped that there were more there like him. Destroy the righteous with the wicked. Abraham does not see how God can save the righteous without also saving the wicked. Judge . . . do right? Abraham was sure of this, as