

✻ The Sunday School ✻

BIBLE LESSON

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.

Fourth Quarter.

OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY—AFTER THE EXILE.

JOY IN GOD'S HOUSE.

Lesson I. October 1. Psalm 122.

Read Psalm 84. Commit Verses 6-9.

GOLDEN TEXT.

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord, Psalm 122:1.

EXPLANATORY.

A SONG OF ASCENTS TO THE NEW JERUSALEM.

I. THE JOYFUL SUMMONS.—V. 1. I WAS GLAD WHEN THEY SAID. It is always a joy to be summoned with others to something good. This Psalm is supposed to have been sung just as the pilgrim band climbed up the hill to the walls of Jerusalem for one of the great feasts, the social joyous occasions of the year to the Jews. It was so good to be at the Holy City, the center of life and religion of country and of nation, the focus of all that made the nation what it was; it was so good to be at the end of their exile, at the close of their long, hard journey,—that they sang out their praises so loud that the other pilgrim bands could hear them and take courage.

This expresses the fact that true religion in its nature is joyful. The Christian has sorrows, but they are not the fruit of religion. Religion throws light on the darkness, brings comfort in sorrow, awakens songs in the prison and in the night.

II. THE PLACE.—Vs. 1-3. LET US GO INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD. The temple, the chief glory of the city, the central light, the source of religion, the symbol of God's presence, the gate of heaven.

2. OUR FEET SHALL STAND. R. V., "are standing." "This is a lively expression of the satisfaction and delight of one who finds himself on this high day of festal joy within the sacred walls, mingling with the throng of worshippers who crowd the courts of the temple, and taking his part, with a full sense of his privileges as an Israelite, in the solemn services of the feast." JERUSALEM, the capital city, "the joy of the whole earth," the symbol of all that was highest and best in the nation, the type of the New Jerusalem.

3. BUILT AS A CITY THAT IS COMPACT TOGETHER. Either in contrast with the scattered dwellings of the country villages, "a compact line of stately buildings which form so imposing a feature of the capital," or, more probably, in allusion to the fact that "there are no more waste places, no more gaps and heaps of ruin." Practical. I. The house of God is the gate of heaven for the individual and for the nation. Religion is the heart of a man, the central fact of his existence. The institutions of religion, and its sister allies, the school and the library, should be the visible center of every community and every nation.

2. Jerusalem is the type of the church of God; not the outward city of narrow, dirty streets and common buildings, but that for which the city stands, the religious forces that have gone out from it, the ideas it represents; as Athens and Rome represent infinitely more than appears to the eye of a stranger.

III. THE COMPANY.—V. 4. WHITHER THEY TRIBE GO UP. This expression is a strong proof that this is an early Psalm; for "it was a part of the Machabean policy of Jeroboam to put a stop to this custom, lest such occasions should be made the means of restoring the national unity (1 Kings 12:26)." Jerusalem was the place to which it was commanded that the tribes go up; this act was a part of the divine system, and the custom was restored at a later day. UNTO THE TESTIMONY OF ISRAEL. Better, as R. V., "for a testimony unto Israel," proving their devotion to God and his cause.

Practical. The unity of the church of God lies in its central object, in its central person, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the unity of its character and heart. There are many tribes, but there is but one city. There are twelve gates to the New Jerusalem, so that from all directions men may enter in.

IV. THE CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE.—Vs. 4, 5.

First. They GIVE THANKS UNTO THE NAME OF THE LORD. The very joy of life is to praise God. Those who dwell in God's house will have the spirit of praise, and they will always have an abundance of things for which to praise him. The shining from God's house brightens everything, puts sunset glories even on the clouds, and transfigures the whole of daily life. At a camp-meeting not long ago, one man remarked that for years he had lived at Grumble Corner, but had lately moved up to Thanksgiving Street, and he found the air purer there, the people more charming, the sunlight brighter, everything better. Those who dwell in God's house will find that house always on Thanksgiving Street.

Second. Righteousness. 5. FOR THERE, IN JERUSALEM, ARE SET THRONES OF JUDGMENT. It was the civil and religious metropolis. Justice, righteousness, the hatred of all oppression, all wrong of every kind, and the characteristics of the true city of God. THE THRONES OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID. David and his successors, especially "great David's Greater Son," who rules in the city of God, and his rule is righteousness evermore. All sin is treason to the great King.

Note 1. Every true revival of religion is a revival of righteous living.

Note 2. The power that makes for righteousness in the world must come through God's people.

Note 3. "How much is said in the Word of God about the joy of his people. The language of David is richer than our own in terms of joy."

V. THE BLESSING.—Vs. 6-9. 6. PRAY. Because God is the source of the blessings needed, and they can be given only to those who so put their trust in God, and so love and care for the city of God, as to pray for her. The best blessings cannot be received by a prayerless soul. They fall on it as rain on a desert. THE PEACE. Rest from enemies, peace among its people, peace with God, peace in the soul.

OF JERUSALEM. Jerusalem means "Habitation of Peace." There is a play upon the word "peace." "The Hebrew word for 'peace' is 'shalom,' and the Hebrew word for 'prosperity' is 'shalvah,' while the Hebrew form of 'Jerusalem,' which means 'City of Peace,' is 'Yeru-shalaim.'" So that, in effect, the poet wishes "shalom" and "shalvah" on "shalaim"—peace and prosperity on the City of Peace. THEY SHALL PROSPER THAT LOVE THEE. Because that means the love of what Jerusalem stood for and was the means of imparting to the world,—the knowledge of God, the character of God, all that was holy and loving and true.

7. PEACE BE WITHIN THY WALLS. To those who belong to the city and that which it represents,—true Jews, true people of God, within the fold. PROSPERITY WITHIN THY PALACES. The inner dwellings, the homes of the people.

8. FOR MY BRETHREN AND COMPANIONS' SAKES. He was not selfish in his hopes and prayers. His was a lonely heaven. He "breathed a spirit of the noblest and most unselfish patriotism."

9. BECAUSE OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD. He will seek the good of the city, for the sake of God's house within it.

* * *

If I Were You.

BY SIDNEY DAYRE.

If I a little child could be,
Well—just like you,
With lips so rosy, cheeks so fair,
Such eyes of blue and shining hair,
What do you think I'd do?
I'd wear so bright and sweet a smile,
I'd be so loving all the while,
I'd be so helpful with my hand,
So quick and gentle to command,
You soon would see
That every one would turn and say,
"Tis good to meet that child to-day."
Yes, yes, my bird, that's what I'd do,
If I were you.

Or, if I chanced to be a boy,
Like some I know,
With crisp curls sparkling in the sun,
And eyes all beaming bright with fun—
Ah, if I could be so,
I'd strive and strive with all my might
To be so true, so brave, polite,
That in me each one might behold
A hero as in days of old.

"I would be a joy
To hear one, looking at me, say,
"My cheer and comfort all the day."
Yes, if I were a boy, I know
I would be so.

* * *

Happiness.

Happiness has found me out,
Found me out at last!
O, she's dogged me round about;
All my hurrying life she's chased me,
Treading hard and hot she's raced me,
Almost touched me, all but faced me,—
Here she is at last!

"Weary were you, Happiness!
Patient to the last!
From your thankless business
Laggard Time has come to free you,
Always driven by Fate to flee you,
Never did I think to see you
Track me down at last!

—British Weekly.

Betake Thyself to Prayer.

When bitter winds of trouble blow,
And thou art tossing to and fro,
When waves are rolling mountain high,
And clouds obscure the steadfast sky,
Fear not, my soul, thy Lord is there,
Betake thyself, my soul, to prayer.

When in the dull routine of life
Thou yearnest half for pain and strife,
So weary of the commonplace,
Of days that wear the self-same face;
Think softly, soul, thy Lord is there,
And then betake thyself to prayer.

When brims thy cup with sparkling joy,
When happy tasks the hours employ,
When men with praise and sweet acclaim
Upon the highways speak thy name,
Then, soul, I bid thee have a care,
Seek oft thy Lord in fervent prayer.

If standing where two pathways meet,
Each beckoning thy pilgrim feet,
Thou art in doubt which road to take,
I, O Master, show thy footprints fair,—
I'd follow thee." Christ answers prayer.

The tempter oft, with wily toil,
Seeks thee, my soul, as precious spoil;
His weapons never lose their edge,
But thou art heaven's peculiar pledge,
Though Satan rage, thy Lord is there,—
Dear soul, betake thyself to prayer.

—Margaret E. Sangster.

* * *

At a Board of Trade inquiry at Cardiff on Saturday judgment was given respecting the loss of the steamer Gorsedd of Cardiff which was lost off the Isle de Seve, Finistère, on June 23. The court found that the casualty was caused by improper steering and not making allowances for the tide and current, and by neglecting to use the lead. The fault lay with the master, and the chief officer was deserving of censure for the manner in which he kept his log. The certificate of the master was suspended for six months. When called upon to produce it the captain, Edward C. Williams, rose, and with a dramatic air, drew from his breast-pocket his certificate, and pressing it to his lips exclaimed, "Farewell to a good and faithful friend, never sullied for a quarter of a century, and not tried by his peers!"

* * *

Black Will Be a Fashionable
Autumn Color

Diamond Dye Blacks Are the
Richest, Fastest and Best.

Black dresses, capes and jackets will be much worn this Autumn; this will be a blessing to the woman who wishes to look well and who cannot afford to buy much new clothing. Any woman can, by using the Diamond Dye Fast Blacks, color their old cloths a black that will not fade or wash out.

There are three special Diamond Dye Fast Blacks—for wool, for cotton and mixed goods, and for silk and feathers, and if the proper dye is used, any woman can get better results than the majority of experienced professional dyers can produce.

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Mrs. S. Horning, Glasgow Street, Guelph, Ont., says: "Doan's Kidney Pills are grand. I have not been ill since taking them, which was over a year ago last winter, and can give them my warmest praise; for they restored me to health after 25 years of suffering. Twenty-five years ago I sprained my back severely, and ever since my kidneys have been in a very bad state. The doctors told me that my left kidney especially was in a very bad condition. A terrible burning pain was always present, and I suffered terribly from lumbago and pain in the small of my back, together with other painful and distressing symptoms, common in kidney complaints. I could not sleep, and suffered much from salt rheum.

"When I first commenced taking Doan's Kidney Pills I had little or no faith in them, but I thought I would try them; and it proved the best experiment I ever made. I had only taken two boxes when the pain left my back entirely. Three boxes more, or five in all, made a complete cure.

"After 25 years of suffering from kidney disease I am now healthy and strong again, and will be pleased to substantiate what I have said, should anyone wish to enquire."

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FIND

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