

fell upon him; "a horror, a great darkness." God's voice speaks in the darkness. **Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs.** "Sojourner," implying a temporary resident, is better than "stranger." **Shall serve them; be slaves.** This is fulfilled in the captivity of the children of Israel in Egypt. **They shall afflict them four hundred years; a round number.** That nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge. The story of the punishment of the oppressor is told in the Book of Exodus. **Shall they come out with great substance; wealth (see Ex. 12:35). Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; not buried with his fathers, for they were buried at Haran and Ur, but united with them after death. Thou shalt be buried in a good old age.** Abraham died at the age of one hundred and seventy-five years, Gen. 25:7. **In the fourth generation.** Evidently one hundred years are reckoned for a generation. **For the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full (Rev. Ver.).** "Amorite" is a general name for the inhabitants of Canaan. The time for their punishment is not ripe.

17, 18. **Behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between.** These were the symbols of Jehovah, and their passing between the divided animals signified Jehovah's ratification of the covenant. **Made a covenant; literally, "cut a covenant,"** referring to the custom of dividing the animals, as we have seen. **From the river of Egypt; the Nile.**

Ch. 17:1-19 tells of another promise of God, which shows that Abraham's heir is not Ishmael the son of Hagar, but will be a son of Abraham by Sarah.

#### ABRAHAM'S OAK

There still remains a tree near Hebron that is associated with Abraham's story. A great many places in Palestine that were thickly wooded long ago are entirely bare of trees now. The tree is desirable because it provides a shade from the fierce heat of the Syrian sun. But, more than this, the forest laid up and provided an equable supply of water all the season, so that the various streams did not become dry channels in the rainless season of the year.

#### LESSON QUESTIONS

5-7 What was the first promise made to Abram in this Lesson? What did God point to as the token

of His promise? Did Abram believe in God's words? For what did God take this belief? What promise did God make about the land?

8-18 What question does Abram ask of God? What animals were taken for the making of the covenant? Why were they divided? What came down upon the sacrifice? What happened to Abram at sunset? What did God tell Abram regarding his descendants? Where and how long were they to serve? What was to befall the nation that oppressed Israel? In what book of the Bible do we read the fulfilment of this? At what age did Abram die? What people were not yet ripe for judgment? What did the passing of the furnace and the lamp between the sacrifices signify?

#### FOR DISCUSSION

1. Are God's promises always promises of benefits?
2. Is the asking for signs always justifiable? Is it ever?

#### A LESSON FOR LIFE

Confucius, the great teacher of the Chinese, said, "Have respect for the gods, but keep them at a distance." How different this is from the spirit of the teaching of the Bible regarding the relation between God and man. Enoch and Noah walked with God. They were the friends of God. So here God enters into a covenant with Abraham. The Bible teaches us, not how far we must keep from God, but how near God and man may draw together.

**Prove from Scripture—That we should be patient with God.**

**Shorter Catechism—Ques. 48.** *What are we specially taught by these words [before me] in the first commandment?* A. These words [before me] in the first commandment teach us, That God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God.

**The Question on Missions—9.** What is the present population of Africa? About 127,000,000, mostly Mohammedans and heathen. There are 2,729 missionaries, and 15,016 native preachers and teachers at work, and there are 378,561 Protestant church members.

**Lesson Hymns—Book of Praise : 7 (Supplemental Lesson), 295, 301, 37 (Ps. Sel.), 546 (from PRIMARY QUARTERLY), 221.**

#### FOR WRITTEN ANSWERS

1. What are the two promises of this Lesson?
2. What are the two tokens of the promises?
3. What prophecy is made?