

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

LESSON VIII.—NOVEMBER 19
PUBLIC READING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Neh. 8. 1-12 Memory verses, 1-3
GOLDEN TEXT.

The ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.—Neh. 8. 3

OUTLINE.

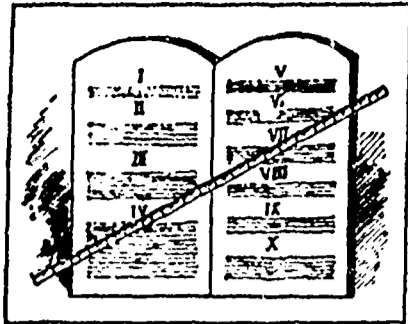
1. Reading the Word, v. 1-6.
 2. Teaching the Word, v. 7, 8.
 3. Receiving the Word, v. 9-12.
- Time.—About B.C. 444.
Place.—Jerusalem.

LESSON HELPS.

1. "The street that was before the water gate"—This gate led from the temple to the brook Kidron. "Ezra the scribe"—The scribe was more than a scribe or copyist; he was a man of learning, and edited what he wrote and prepared a commentary upon it. "To bring the book of the law of Moses," which Ezra had revised and written out in the Chaldean character.
2. "All that could hear with understanding"—One must hear and then understand. To comprehend spiritual truth there must be a spiritual state of mind. Prayer aids the intellect. "Upon the first day of the seventh month"—On the first day of the civil year, which was ushered in by the sound of trumpets, and on this first day was held the feast of the trumpets. It was about the time of the autumnal equinox. The ecclesiastical year began in the spring of the month Nisan, at which time the Jews came out of Egypt.
3. "The ears of all the people were attentive," as well they might be, for they were not familiar with the book of the law.
4. "A pulpit of wood"—A raised platform, so that the reader of the law could be seen and heard. Many so-called pulpits seem intended to partly hide the preacher from his congregation. Ezra's pulpit was not of that kind. "Beside him stood," etc.—Thirteen men whose names live in history because they aided Ezra in a religious service.
5. "All the people stood up"—Out of respect for the sacred word. Let us reverence the service of the church.
6. Blessed be the Lord for the law which he had given and which was now to be read. Let us be thankful for the Holy Scriptures.
7. "Caused them to understand the reading"—Ancient Hebrew was partly lost by the Jews in their seventy years of captivity. The law in Hebrew was read by Ezra, and those beside him translated it into the Chaldean dialect, and gave brief explanations. Besides the interpretation, some of the rites and ceremonies had to be explained, as the feast of the tabernacles. The law was (1) distinctly, which refers, not to pronunciation, but means with some exposition, (2) the sense was given—its value shown, and (3) in such a way as to make the truth clear and impressive.
8. "This day is holy"—The holidays were then holy days. This was the first day of the civil year. All the people wept, partly for joy over a long-lost national treasure. They heard Jehovah speaking to them out of the past. Joy prompted tears.
9. "Send portions unto them," etc.—While feasting think of those who of necessity are fasting, and give something to them out of your abundance. As God gives his truth, and we joy over it, let the hand of charity be open, that the poor and needy may also rejoice.
10. "Because they had understood"



PUBLIC READING OF THE SCRIPTURE.



Truth prompted to joy and joy to charity. Truth does not sadden, but the memory of sins may, and ought to, until we repent and are forgiven.

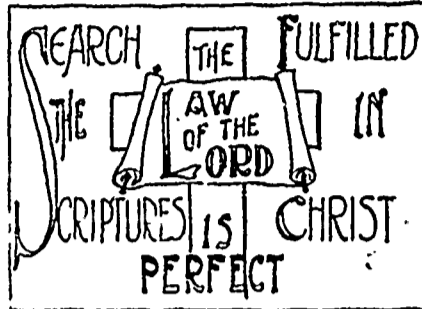
HOME READINGS.

- M. Public reading of the Scriptures - Neh. 8. 1-12.
- Tu. Obeying the law.—Neh. 8. 13 to 9. 3.
- W. God's word to be studied.—Deut. 11 13-21.
- Th. Delight in the word.—Psalm 119 1-16
- F. The Scriptures believed.—2 Kings 22 3-13.
- S. The word rejected.—Jer. 36. 9-24.
- Su. Reward in keeping.—Psalm 19. 7-14.

By whom was it given?
Why was this command necessary?
How were the people to show their joy?
What was a source of strength to them?
What did the Levites say to the people?
Why did the people obey promptly?
Who is a wise hearer of the word?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where in this lesson have we a good example—
1. For Sunday-school scholars?
2. For Sunday-school teachers?
3. For all of God's people?



THE ALPINE GOATHERD.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. Reading the Word, v. 1-6.
Where did the people assemble?
For what did they ask Ezra?
Why did they ask this of Ezra? See Neh. 7. 10.
Before whom was the law brought?
Upon what day and month?
How long was the law read?
How did the people receive the word?
Who were with Ezra as helpers?
How did the people show their reverence for the word?
To whom did Ezra offer thanks?
How did the people respond?
What is the duty of all who have ears? Rev. 2. 7.
2. Teaching the Word, v. 7, 8.
Who were the teachers in this Bible school?
What clause in verse 7 shows that they were good teachers?
What three things are stated of their teaching? Verse 8.
Under what king of Judah had the people been taught the law? 2 Chron. 17. 9.
3. Receiving the Word, v. 9-12.
What command was given to the people?

THE ALPINE GOATHERD.

Many pleasing pictures have been drawn for us, by travellers, of the Alpine goatherd and his flock. The grassy slopes of the Alps afford fine pasturage for the herds of cows, goats and sheep owned by the mountaineers. Both men and women tend these flocks, often along the precipitous sides of the mountains, where it would be death to any foot less sure to tread. The short skirts of the women and the bobtalled jackets of the men, give them the appearance of boys and girls, until their faces are seen. These Swiss mountaineers are sturdy, hardy people, generally honest and polite, though always on the sharp lookout to make whatever fee they can by guiding travellers over the precipitous slopes of the mountains. Their flocks consist chiefly of goats. These goats are usually belled, and each bell is said to possess a different tone. When they are all clanging together, travellers declare that it is really like listening to music to hear them. Each goatherd carries, in addition to his alpenstock—a stick for climbing—a great horn, known as the "Alpine horn." This horn is truly a huge affair, and it

is often the source of wonder to travellers how the goatherd can bear to be burdened with it. Sometimes it is as much as eight feet long, and nearly always from four to six. It is made either of wood or metal, and often a most musical combination of sounds can be produced upon it by a skilful player. Sometimes an entire air is played, the principal one being the Swiss "Ranz des Vaches," or the cattle call. When they hear it the flocks always quit their browsing, and find their way to the goatherd in answer to the summons. In this way they are gathered together for their homeward journey. The goatherd in the picture does not seem to have a horn anything like so long as the Alpine horns are said to be. Doubtless he is too sensible to provide himself with one so cumbersome.

The I. B. R. A. The International Bible Reading Association (known by the initials I. B. R. A.) was organized in London in 1882 for the purpose of promoting Bible reading in the home, as well as to aid teachers and scholars in studying the Sunday-school lesson. Since that time there have been issued 630,000 membership cards, an average of over 37,000 yearly. The work has spread into sixty different countries, and the same daily portions of the Scriptures are read by members speaking thirty different languages. We have several times had occasion to refer to this association, and with pleasure refer to it again. Those interested and desiring further particulars may apply to Dr. Price, Dental Surgeon, Toronto.

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