

LESSON NOTES.

THIRD QUARTER.

B.C. 1451.] LESSON III. [July 15.

THE PLAINS OF JERICHO.

Josh. 5. 10-15; 6. 1-5. Commit to memory vs. 13-15

GOLDEN TEXT.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days.—Heb. 11. 30.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Christ is our victory.

TIME.—B.C. 1451, April.

PLACE.—Gilgal and Jericho. Gilgal (a circle or a rolling away) is about five miles west of the Jordan. It lay in the eastern edge of a beautiful forest of palm trees, 8 miles long and 3 miles wide, while Jericho was about a mile and a half distant in the western edge. Jericho was the largest city in these parts, and was the key to Palestine.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—The Israelites, after crossing the Jordan on the 10th of Nisan, went up the western slope of the valley about 5 miles to Gilgal, where the memorial stones were set up. Here they renewed the rite of circumcision, and then held their greatest religious feast, as consecrating themselves anew to God at the very outset of their new life.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—10. *The Passover*—See Exod. 12. 1-27. 11. *Eat of the old corn*—This is a mistranslation; it means simply *eat of the corn or produce of the land*. It was barley harvest, and the fields could now support them. 12. *When Joshua was by Jericho*—He was probably out to reconnoitre, to see and learn what to do to take the city. *A man—a person*. *With a drawn sword*—As ready to fight. Joshua probably thought him some Canaanite chief. 14. *Captain of the host of the Lord*—Of angels, of all beings. This was no doubt Jesus himself, who, in Old Testament times appeared as The Angel of the Lord. In ch. 6. 2 he is called Jehovah. He came to tell Joshua what to do. 15. *Less thy shoe*—An oriental mark of reverence. The shoes being defiled with dust, were removed on entering a holy place. 6. 1. *Stratagem*—strictly. This verse is a parenthesis. 2. *The Lord said*—Here is resumed the narrative broken off at the close of the last chapter. 3. *Compass*—March around. It was done in the morning, v. 13. *Six days*—Once each day. The delay tested the faith of the Israelites, and called the attention of the Canaanites to God's wonder soon to be done. 4. *Trumpets of rams' horns*—Not the war trumpets, but those used in calling to religious services. *Seven times*—If it took an hour to go round the city, with half-hour rests between, it would take till toward evening to complete the task. 5. *All the people about*—Each one join in doing his part, and showing his faith.

ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CANAANITES.—1. The right of Israel to Canaan, was because God gave it to them. 2. He took it away from the Canaanites on account of their wickedness. Their religion was the foulest and most degrading idolatry. 3. It was as right for God to use the Israelites as the instrument of destruction, as it would be to use an earthquake or pestilence. 4. This instrumentality showed clearly that the punishment was from the God of Israel. 5. It inspired the Israelites with a horror of the Canaanites' sins. 6. Their total destruction was necessary to prevent the true people and the true religion from being contaminated. 7. Otherwise all true religion would have been lost from the earth.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Gilgal.—Jericho.—The Passover.—The old corn.—The casting of the stones.—The captain of the Lord's host.—Why he appeared to Joshua.—The method of destroying Jericho.—Why blow the trumpets and shout.—Why the Canaanites were to be utterly destroyed.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTION.—On what day did the Israelites cross the Jordan? In what place did they encamp? How near was this to Jericho? How far from the Jordan?

SUBJECT: THE BEGINNING OF THE CONQUEST.

1. PREPARING TO CONQUER (vs. 10-15).—How did they begin to prepare for the great conquest? Why with religious services? The meaning of the Passover? Why had it not been kept in the wilderness? What are we taught by this preparation as to our conquest over sin? As to the conquest of the world for Christ? What change was now made in their food? Was the natural food better for them now than the miraculous food? Was it so truly the gift of God? What lesson do we learn from this?

2. THE CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION (vs. 13-15).—Where did Joshua go to reconnoitre. Who met him there? What did the drawn sword signify? Whom did Joshua think him to be? What question did he ask? Whom did the stranger announce himself to be? What is the host of the Lord? Who was this? (ch. 6. 2.) What was the object of this appearance? What was his first command to Joshua? The meaning of this ceremony? Why should we express our reverence by outward acts? Who is the captain of our salvation? (Heb. 2. 10.) Why is he so called? Give some description of him. (Rev. 19. 11-16.) Where is the rest of this account of Joshua's interview recorded?

3. THE FIRST VICTORY (vs. 1-5).—What can you tell about Jericho at this time? Why was it important to take this city? Give an account of the plan of its capture. Why did they go around the city so many times? Give the order of the procession. Why was the ark carried around? What part had the people in this victory? How was it by faith? (See the Golden Text.) In what respects is Jericho a type of the sinful heart? Of the world opposed to Christ? In what respects were the means of this victory like those for bringing the world to Christ? (1 Cor. 1. 17-24.) Who only was saved alive? (6. 17.) What was done with all the rest of the people? (6. 21.) What with the city? (6. 24.) What with the silver and gold? (6. 24.) Can you explain how this destruction of so many people was right and just? What right had the Israelites to the land of the Canaanites?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Begin every great work with religion.
2. Our ordinary blessings are as truly from God, and as truly blessed as the extraordinary.
3. God comes to our help when we are doing all we can.
4. The reverent and loving spirit will express itself in natural forms.
5. Jericho, walled in and shut up, is a type of the sinful heart, and of the world.
6. God by the simplest means.—His spirit, the word of the Gospel, the crucified Jesus,—conquers the world.
7. God gives us the Promised Land, but there are many battles to be fought before we gain full possession.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in Concert).

11. What was the first city the Israelites captured? *Ans.* The city of Jericho. 12. What was their first act of preparation? *Ans.* They renewed their covenant with God in religious exercises. 13. Who appeared to Joshua? *Ans.* Jesus, the Captain of the Lord's hosts. 14. How did they capture Jericho? *Ans.* By marching around the city for seven days. 15. What was done on the seventh day? *Ans.* They marched seven times around the city, and blew their trumpets and shouted a great shout. 16. What was the effect? *Ans.* The walls of the city fell flat.

B.C. 1451.] LESSON IV. [July 22.

ISRAEL DEFEATED AT AI.

Josh. 7. 10-26. Commit to memory vs. 10-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Be sure your sin will find you out.—Num. 32. 23.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Sin one source of trouble and defeat.

TIME.—B.C. 1451. Spring. Soon after the last lesson.

PLACE.—AI, a city of 12,000 inhabitants, (ch. 6. 25.) 15 or 20 miles north-west of Jericho, and a short distance east of Bethel. It is 2,000 feet higher than Jericho, being situated in the high lands.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—Soon after the overthrow of Jericho, Joshua sent spies to learn the situation of Ai, who reported that it was a small city and could be easily taken. 8,000 soldiers were sent against it; but they met with a disastrous defeat. 36 men were slain; the rest were driven back to Gilgal. The whole people were in great consternation and trouble. Our lesson opens with Joshua bowed before the Lord in agony of prayer.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—10. *The Lord says*—Probably from the Tabernacle before which Joshua was bowed down, v. 7. 11. *Israel hath sinned*—All had sinned in Achan's sin; (1) he was a part of the nation, and could not be separated from it; (2) all had been guilty of the same covetousness in a degree; (3) so far as they yielded to any sin they were responsible for the out-breaking of sin in crimes. *My command*—His command to obey, and agreement to bless if they obeyed. *Assured thing*—Devoted to destruction, and hence with a curse upon it if used in any other way. 12. *Sanctify the people*—

do so through the ceremonial of purification, and purify your hearts from sin, as the ceremonial taught. 14. *Tribe which the Lord taketh*—Probably by lot. *Family*—Equivalent to clan. 19. *My son*—Showing great tenderness, and not anger. 21. *Babylonish garment*—Such as kings wear, very rich in material and brilliant in color, embroidered, for which the Babylonians were celebrated. *200 shekels*—about \$100. *50 shekels in weight*—18,700 grains of gold, worth \$500. 24. *The silver... and gold*—Destroyed because God would not have dishonest, accursed treasures used in his work. *Sons... daughters*—Probably they knew Achan's sin, and connived at it. 26. *Fierceness of his anger*—Not passion, but indignation and displeasure at sin, which led to its punishment. Severity was necessary in this case, in order to save the whole nation from ruin.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—AI.—The defeat before AI.—Why no prosperity with sin in the nation.—How far Israel was guilty of Achan's sin.—Sanctifying the people.—Casting lots.—Achan's confession.—His temptation and sin.—Babylonish garment.

QUESTIONS.

SUBJECT: FAILURE THROUGH SIN.

1. THE DEFEAT.—What city did the Israelites attack next after Jericho? Where was AI? How large a city was it? (Josh. 8. 25.) What was the report of those sent to investigate? How many soldiers marched against the city? What was the result of the attack? What was the effect of the defeat on the people? Why was it a great evil at the beginning of the conquest? (vs. 7-9.)
2. THE CAUSE OF THE DEFEAT (vs. 10-18).—What did Joshua do in view of the defeat? (v. 6.) Why should we always take our troubles to the Lord? In what place did Joshua pray? What did the Lord say to Joshua? What was the cause of the defeat. How could Israel be said to have sinned in the sin of one man? How far are we guilty of the prevailing sins and crimes of our nation? What had one man done? How many of the ten commandments were broken in this act? What is meant by "the accursed thing"? Why could not God give them success unless this evil was removed? Does the same principle hold good now? Can one man in the church hinder its prosperity? Can one man now ruin a community? What kind of sins are like this of Achan? What is it necessary for us to do in the case of scandalous sins in the church or community? How did the people "sanctify themselves"?
3. THE SINNER FOUND OUT.—THE CURSE REMOVED (vs. 14-26).—In what way was the guilty man discovered? Who was he? Why did Joshua call him "my son"? What confession did Achan make? Was this true repentance? Give the story of his temptation. Is this the history of many sins? What was a Babylonish garment? What was the value of the silver and the gold? What was done with Achan? Why were the stolen things also destroyed? Why were Achan's family punished with him? Is "the partaker as bad as the thief"? Can any one do wrong and his friends not suffer from it? Why was the punishment so severe? Is the Golden Text always true in this life? How does sin find us out? Where in the valley of Achor referred to again? (Hos. 2-16.) How did it become a door of hope? What valleys of Achor to us may become doors of hope?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Take every trouble to God in prayer.
2. The sin of one man is a trouble to all with whom he is connected, in family, church, or community.
3. The whole community are in a degree responsible for the crimes of its members.
4. Note the way to crime: (1) he saw; (2) coveted; (3) he took them; (4) he concealed them; (5) he deceived; (6) he was discovered; (7) remorse; (8) punishment.
5. There is a time when confession and remorse are too late.
6. Those who partake in the sin, partake also in the punishment.
7. God cannot prosper us so long as we harbour sin in heart or church or nation.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in Concert).

17. What city was next attacked? *Ans.* AI, 15 or 20 miles north-west of Jericho. 18. With what result? *Ans.* The Israelites were defeated. What did Joshua do? *Ans.* He carried his trouble to the Lord in prayer. 20. What was the cause of the defeat? *Ans.* Some of the people had deliberately disobeyed God. 21. What was done with them? *Ans.* They were solemnly and utterly destroyed. 22. What followed? *Ans.* Then God gave Israel the victory.

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