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Teachers' Preparation Leaflet

LESSON 7.

FEBRUARY 18th, 1894.

1ST QUARTER.

God's Judgment on Sodom. Gen. 18: 22-33.

GOLDEN TEXT: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right." Gen. 18: 25.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VERSES 23-26. LESSON HYMNS, 10, 49, 145, 173.

PROVE THAT—We should pray for all men. 1 Tim. 2: 1.

SHORTER CATECHISM: Quest. 89. What are the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?

DAILY PORTIONS.

(The Selections of the International Bible Reading Association.)

MONDAY.	TUESDAY.	WEDNESDAY.	THURSDAY.	FRIDAY.	SATURDAY.	SABBATH.
Gen. 18: 20-33	Gen. 13: 5-13	Gen. 19: 12-17	Gen. 19: 23-29	Matt. 11: 20-26	Luke 17: 26-33	2 Pet. 2: 4-9

INTRODUCTORY DRILL—THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The following is condensed from Prof. Hamill's Normal Sunday School Drills in the *Trumpet Call*.

The Old Testament has 39 books. The number of letters in *Old* is three, and the number of letters in *Testament* is nine, and the two placed together give 39. It has three kinds of books, 17 of History, 5 of Doctrine, and 17 of Prophecy. The whole was written by about 30 principal authors, during a period of nearly 1100 years.

The first 17 are the *Historical* books. The history of man up to Abraham, the lives of the patriarchs and their descendants, with the establishment of the Mosaic church, are narrated in the *Pentateuch*, or five books of Moses—GELND. The next nine contain the history of the Israelites up to the captivity—JJRSSKCC. The last three give the history of Jews after the return from exile—ENE. The principal writers were Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Ezra and Nehemiah.

There are five *Doctrinal* books—JPPES, written chiefly by three persons; Moses, David and Solomon.

The remaining 16 are the *Prophetical* books, four of which are called the *major*—IJED, because they are larger than the other twelve—the *minor*. These 16 books were written by the 16 prophets whose names they bear.

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(Drill your class on the following outlines, taking one each week, until they can give the facts without hesitation).

Old Test.	Historical.	Doctrinal.	Prophetical.	The
39	17	5	16	Minor Prophets,
17H+5D+17P	5P+9HI+3HJ	J P P E. SS.	4 major 12 minor	Ho Jo Am
30	14	3	16	Ob Jo Mi Na
				Ha Ze Ha Ze Ma

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

Around our lesson cluster all the incidents connected with one of the most awful judgments that ever smote mankind. The dark background of the picture must be viewed in order that the true beauty of mercy interceding with justice may be perceived.

Where were the cities of the plain? They were visible from Bethel, and were not far from Mamre (13: 3, 10; 19: 27, 28). The geological evidence proves conclusively that they cannot lie at the bottom of the Dead Sea. They must have been situated either at the northern or at the southern end of it. The preponderance of opinion is decidedly in favor of the former locality.

How were they destroyed? The simple and unscientific terms of the narrative are consistent with the view of Sir William Dawson, who suggests that the description is that of a bitumen, or petroleum, eruption similar to those which have been so destructive in the "oil districts" of Canada and the United States. We have only to suppose that reservoirs of condensed gas and petroleum were suddenly discharged, say by an earthquake, and we have all the conditions necessary for the terrific conflagration which consumed the cities and burnt up the soil. This would also account for the peculiarly dense smoke seen by Abraham.

Why were they destroyed? For the same reason that the antediluvian world was destroyed. They were past reforming, and had become a moral cancer. The only cure was to cut it clean out. Better that this should come on them, than that their utter corruption should infect their neighbors. Their destruction was an unmitigated blessing to the world, and a wholesome warning to man. Note how frequently it is referred to in the New Testament (Matt. 10: 25; 11: 24; Mark 6: 11; Luke 10: 12; 17: 28, 29; Rom. 9: 29; 2 Pet. 2: 6-8; Jude 7; Rev. 11: 8). The actors in the vile attempt narrated in chapter 19 were not the mere "hoodlums" of the town but "the men of the city, both old and young, all the people from every quarter." This one incident reveals a depth of immorality fortunately unparalleled in the history of our race.

The utter vileness of Sodom is thus vigorously illustrated by one of the editors of Hurlbut's "Illustrative Notes."

"There are squares in Chicago where only depraved men and women live; but the worst slums of our worst cities are Sunday Schools compared with Sodom. Make up a town of "dives" and "joints" and rum-shops and "gambling hells;" leave out of it all churches and police and street lights and city directories and true moral sentiment—every safeguard and every means of tracing crime to its source—then draw men's hospitality and art and love and worship, all into the service of loathsomest sin; and that is Sodom. Such sinners, in Paul's words, "received in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet," and their territories became as pestilential and as infectious of physical disease as the foulest of lazar houses. There was but one way to preserve the human race, and that was to destroy these sinners. What would we do with such a community if we had it on our hands to-day? Even where such sin is "localized" and overawed by the religious sentiment of Christians (as it is in our own land) the problem is perplexing beyond measure.

But suppose that the whole world were of that sort, and only a small remnant remained with pure hearts and pure minds and pure bodies. Only one course could be safely pursued—the whole world must be quarantined and “boycotted” in days of peace, and exterminated on the first declaration of war. The agony of sufferers from God’s floods and fires and swords was small when compared with the agony which he prevented by the destruction of these corrupt races. After all, is it not the spectacular quality of these judgments of God which makes us shrink from them? When we realize the picturesque horror of a city doomed in one hour we forget for the moment that every citizen was doomed to death anyhow. Many a moral and physical wreck reels through our streets to-day of whom even we are ready enough to say, “Better he had died twenty years ago.” Do not doubt that God is tenderer-hearted than we. The destruction of Sodom was an unmixed blessing to the world.”

The opening portion of our chapter gives a beautiful picture of patriarchal hospitality. The venerable chief, resting beneath the shade of his tent sees three travellers approach. To him a stranger and a guest were the same. He hastens out to meet them and with the utmost courtesy, requests the honor of offering them some rest and refreshment. Nor does he delegate the duty of caring for them to menials. Sarai herself prepares the bread, and his own hand selects the fatter and tenderest of his herd. The host serves the meal and stands by to wait upon them while they eat. In thus shewing his wonted kindness he found himself entertaining angels unawares (Heb. 13: 2).

The strangers bring a blessing to the home in that they announce the speedy fulfilment of the promise given so many years before. When or how their true character was disclosed, we are not informed, but ere they part, Abraham recognizes in the principal Personage, the One who had already appeared to him at Ur, at Sichem, at Bethel and, on a previous occasion at Mamre.

LESSON PLAN. I. Abraham’s Intercession. vs. 22-26. II. Persistent Pleading. vs. 27-33.

I. ABRAHAM’S INTERCESSION. 22. The men—In ch. 19: 1 they are called two angels. Stood yet—i. e. remained in his presence, loath to leave until he had pleaded for the doomed cities. Before the LORD—In outward appearance as a man, (v. 2) but distinguished from the other two by superior dignity. Note other appearances of God in human form, to Jacob (ch. 32: 24-30), to Joshua (Josh. 5: 13-15). Compare Ek. 3: 2, 14 with Acts 7: 30, 38 and you will see that the “angel of the Lord” was Christ before his incarnation. The traditional spot commands a view of the Dead Sea and the adjacent plain (ch. 19: 27, 28). 23. Drew near—The word suggests boldness (Heb. 4: 16; 10: 22; 1 John 4: 18). He moved nearer in his earnestness, but spiritual approach is chiefly meant (Isa. 29: 13; Jer. 30: 21). This is the first prayer recorded in the Bible. Read Prov. 15: 3; Jas. 5: 16; Luke 11: 5-8; 18: 1-8. The righteous with the wicked—In the ordinary dispensations of Providence, and even in divine judgments, both suffer alike. But (1) there is often a share of the guilt to both; (2) what is punishment to one is fatherly discipline to the other; (3) God makes “all things work together for good to them that love him” (4) the apparent injustice here is fully compensated for hereafter; (5) as in this case the righteous do often escape the punishment meted out to the wicked. Compare the case of Korah (Num. 16: 22), of David (2 Sam. 24: 17), God never punishes one person for the sin of another (Ezek. 18: 4). The wicked are spared for the sake of the righteous (Matt. 13: 29; 5: 13; 24: 22). Note the following instances in which the presence of a good man was a source of blessing to others; ch. 19: 21; Acts 27: 24; 1 Kings 17: 15, 16. In this passage “righteous” has its ordinary meaning, upright and Godfearing. The New Testament sense of “accepted for Christ’s righteousness sake,” was unknown at this early stage in revelation. 24. Abraham had some idea of the moral condition of Sodom when he did not dare to begin higher than fifty. His intercession is not for Lot, but solely for the others who were not of the fifty. “His importunity was prompted by the love that springs from the consciousness that one’s own preservation and rescue are due to compassionate grace alone; love, too, which cannot conceive of the guilt of others as too great for salvation to be possible.” (Delitzsch). 25. God does not deal with both alike. Isa. 3: 10, 11; Job 8: 20; Ps. 58: 11; Ezek. 9: 4-6; Rev. 7: 3. 26. Compare Jer. 5: 1; Ezek. 22: 30; Matt. 24: 22; 2 Pet. 3: 9.

II. PERSISTENT PLEADING. 27. See the same self abasement in God’s presence, Job 42: 6; Isa. 6: 5. Dust and ashes—“Dust at first and ashes at last.” (Murphy). Burning the dead seems to have been practised in Abraham’s time. Compare similar de-

scriptions of human frailty, Job 4: 19; Gen. 3: 19; Ecc. 12: 7; 1 Cor. 15: 47, 48; 2 Cor. 5: 1. 28. "Abraham was climbing the ladder of faith and hope. With each promise he took courage to ask for more. He grew into larger visions of God's goodness." (Peloubet). He advances with respectful impetuosity and childlike boldness. Compare Jer. 14: 21. 29. Yet again—See 1 Thess. 5: 17-30. Angry—There was no danger of that. Isa. 55: 8, 9. 31. Did he cease too soon? Compare 2 Kings 4: 6; 13: 18, 19. Read Ex. 34: 6, 7. He did not destroy the righteous with the wicked. He even spared Zoar to save Lot a little fatigue. 32. This divine Being seems to have rejoined the other two. Ch. 19: 17-22.

SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

Tell the story of the three strangers and by questions ascertain that the class are familiar with the first part of the narrative. Illustrate by a map the position of the Dead Sea, Sodom and Mamre. Why did God resolve to destroy the cities of the plain? Why did he tell Abraham about it? He was the "Friend of God." (John 15: 15). For whom did Abraham intercede? He does not seem to have thought of Lot. He was moved with the deepest pity for the wretched people whose "days of grace" had come to a close. His motives were Christlike. In what respect was Abraham here a type of Christ? (Heb. 7: 24). Note the plea which Abraham presents, and point out the stronger one presented by Christ on behalf of sinners. How does Christ execute the office of a priest?

How often did Abraham renew his prayer for Sodom? For whose sake did he wish the city spared? How many righteous persons were there in the city? Did God destroy the righteous with the wicked? Was God impatient with Abraham for asking so often? Refer to Luke 11: 5-8; 18: 1-8; Rom. 12: 12; Eph. 6: 18; Col. 4: 2; 1 Thess. 5: 17. Such prayer is pleasing to God. It is useless to ask what would have resulted had Abraham continued. Such prayers may not always be answered, but they always bring a blessing to the suppliant greater than the boon he craves.

A. I.

His Motives.
His Plea.

P. P.

Pleasing to God.
Brings a Blessing.

NORMAL DRILL

based on the text-book, "The Sabbath School Teacher's Handbook; or, The Principles and Practice of teaching, with special reference to the Sabbath School," prepared by Principal Kirkland of the Toronto Normal School.

PRINCIPLES OF MEMORIZING.—(Continued).

The following is a brief summary of the principles of memorizing:—

I. A complete and accurate knowledge of the thing to be memorized.

(1) Close association with something else that is well-known and frequently recalled. Always point out the relation between the different parts and the whole, and in this way bring association into play. See the previous LEAFLET.

(2) Undivided attention. The art of memory is the art of attention, says Dr. Johnston and this eminent thinker has declared that genius itself is nothing but the power of continuous attention.

(3) Close and accurate observation.

(4) Make the subject to be committed as attractive as possible. Excite pleasurable feelings at the time in connection with the object of acquisition.

(5) Point out the need, present or prospective, to the learner.

(6) Keep the thought before the mind as long as possible. Put the subject before the mind again and again, so that a deepening impression may be made.