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Teachers' Preparation Leaflet

LESSON 6. FEBRUARY 11th, 1894. 1ST QUARTER.

God's Covenant with Abram. Gen: 17: 1-9.

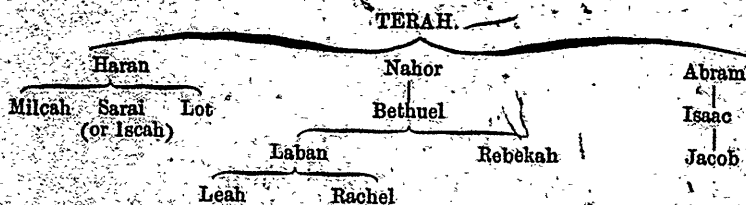
GOLDEN TEXT: "He believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Gen. 16: 6.

LESSON HYMNS; 16, 151, 185, 229.

INTRODUCTORY DRILL—ABRAM.

1. No more august name than that of Abraham stands upon the page of history. To his contemporaries, he was but one of themselves, a powerful chief of a nomadic clan; but to subsequent ages, he has become the "fountain and source" of every spiritual blessing and the father of all them that believe. Outside of the four Gospels, no other biography is so significant as his. In it we read the charter of the church, and trace the principles on which it is founded. (Read Gibson's "The Ages Before Moses," chap. 8).

His father Terah was the eighth in direct descent from Shem. The following table will shew the most important relationships.



(For a description of Chaldea in the time of Abram, see the text-book for senior scholars, "Abraham; His Life and Times," by Rev. W. J. Deane, chapter 1. Every teacher should read this book. Its price is only 70 cents).

Abram was born at Ur, now beyond dispute identified with *Mugheer*, on the right bank of the Euphrates, about 125 miles from the Persian gulf. The family had come from the borders of Armenia in the north, and Terah, at least, seems to have been an idolater (Josh. 24: 2). Numerous legends, however, testify to the sturdy constancy of Abraham, whose strength of character marked him out as a fitting agent for the execution of the divine purpose (ch 18; 19). The covenant of grace, made known to our first parents, and ratified to Noah on behalf of mankind, is now to be re-confirmed to Abram as the depository of its blessings. He is separated by a divine call from surrounding idolatrous influences, full revelation is vouchsafed to him and more definite promises are given. To him the "God of glory appeared" bidding him remove to a land which would in due time be shewn him, and in obedience to the divine command the whole family returned to the north and dwelt for a time at Haran, where Terah died. Our last lesson narrated Abram's departure from Haran and arrival in the promised land.

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2. As we have come to one of the pivotal points of history, it may be well to remember some of the others and their chronological perspective. Fix in the memory, the names of the following representative characters. They appear at intervals of nearly 500 years.

B. C.	4004	3500,	3000.	2500.	2000.	1500,	1000.	500.	4.	B. C.
Adam.	Lamech.	Enoch.	Noah.	Abram.	Moses.	Solomon.	Ezra.	Christ.		

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

The intervening portions of Scripture since last lesson embrace (1) Abram's sojourn in Egypt; (2) Lot's choice; (3) Lot's rescue by Abram, (4) The solemn and formal covenant; and (5) The story of Hagar. Our series of lessons is evidently intended to illustrate the covenant relationship in which the patriarchs stood, so that, interesting and important as are the lessons which these chapters teach, we must treat them as aside from our course and bestow upon them merely passing remark. But they must be studied by the teacher in order to get a clear conception of Abram's character.

LESSON PLAN. I. A Covenant God. vs. 1-3. II. A Covenant Head. vs. 4-5. III. Covenant Promises. vs. 6-8. IV. Covenant Obligations. v. 9.

I. A COVENANT GOD. 1. When Abram was ninety years old and nine.—B. C. 1897, twenty-four years after he came into the land, and fourteen since the covenant was solemnly entered into (ch. 15: 7-21). God's delay tested Abram's faith, see 2 Pet. 3: 9. **I am God Almighty** (R. V.)—Hebrew, *El Shaddai*. *Elohim* (God) is the Being who creates and sustains nature, *Jehovah* (printed in our Bibles, LORD) is the covenant God of his people, by whom grace triumphs over sin, *El Shaddai* (almighty God) is the omnipotent One who makes all subservient his eternal purpose and fulfil his decrees. This name occurs frequently in the book of Job. Walk before me—live as one who appreciates the honor and privilege of my service. Compare ch. 24: 40; 48: 15; 1 Kings 2: 4; 3: 6; 2 Kings 20: 3, also Enoch (ch. 5: 22), Noah (ch. 6: 9) and Job (1: 1). **Be thou perfect**—order your life by my standard. "Not sincere merely, unless in the primitive sense of purity, but complete, upright, holy, not only in walk, but in heart." (Murphy). The root meaning of "holy" is "whole," or perfect. **2. I will make—execute**, as in the case of legal documents. A token or seal is now to be given, and ratifications exchanged, as in ch. 6: 12. The covenant is already entered into (ch. 15: 7-12); it is now, as it were, solemnly read over, signed and sealed. This occasion is referred to in Gal. 3: 17. **3. Fell on his face**—The lowliest posture of reverence, indicating humble and grateful acceptance of the promised blessing. See verse 17, where the joy bursts forth. It was a common posture in worship, Gen. 24: 52; Num. 16: 22; Mark 14: 35. **God—Elohim**. This is the third name for God in the course of as many verses. Surely it is more reasonable to believe that this is an intentional variation on the part of one writer, than that scraps from three different documents are here pasted together, so to speak. The "Creator" promises a numerous posterity.

II. A COVENANT HEAD. 4. As for me—So far as concerns my part of the covenant. Verse 9 stipulates Abram's part. The father of a multitude of nations (R. V.)—(Gen. 13: 16; 22: 17). "This was true in a literal sense. The twelve tribes of Israel, and many Arab tribes, the twelve Princes of Ishmael, Keturah's descendants and the dukes of Edom sprang from him. But it is to be more magnificently realized in a spiritual sense." (Murphy). See Gal. 3: 7, 9, 29. **5. Abraham**—"Father of a great multitude" (Neh. 9: 7). It required some courage to assume this name and endure the covert ridicule it would excite. A change of name as indicative of a change of rank or condition may be illustrated by the titles of nobility. Plain Mr. Pitt becomes Lord Chatham. But names meant something in Bible times and lands. Compare Jacob's change of name Gen. 35: 10, 11.

III. COVENANT PROMISES. 6. Kings—Best fulfilled in Christ. Micah 5: 2; Rom. 4: 16, 17. **7. An everlasting covenant**—To continue, that is, to the close of time and the blessings to be procured by it to be enjoyed throughout eternity. The promise is made to the church of all ages. The seed of Abraham will eventually embrace the whole human family in fellowship with God." (Murphy). Ps 105: 8-11. **A God to**

thes—"An instructor, guide, governor, friend, a wise and loving father, who would confer on them whatever was for their good, chasten them when they did wrong, and fit them for the high and important destiny to which he had called them." (Jamieson) Rom. 11: 16; 15: 8, 9. Compare ch. 26: 24; 28: 13; Heb. 11: 16; Rom. 9: 7-9. 8. The land of thy sojournings (R. V.)—Abraham never owned any of the land except a burying place (ch. 23: 4). The Israelites were only God's guests in the land and therefore might not alienate their property (Lev. 25: 23). David devoutly recognizes his position as dependent upon the divine hospitality (1 Chr. 29: 15). We are to cherish the same sentiments in regard to our whole earthly sojourn (Heb. 11: 13), and this should be an incentive to holy living (1 Pet. 2: 11). The land did not come into the possession of Abraham's descendants for 430 years (Ex. 12: 40, 41). The reason for the delay is given in Gen. 15: 16. An everlasting possession—"The everlasting covenant and the everlasting possession show that the covenant and the promised inheritance included the spiritual seed and the heavenly Canaan." (Cosman). The land of Canaan has ceased to be in possession of Abraham's descendants, but many think it will be again restored to them. However that may be, the full meaning of the promise can be found in nothing short of the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and unfading" "reserved in heaven" for the true seed of Abraham (1 Pet. 1: 4). Their God—This is the sum of all blessings. Ex. 6: 7, 29: 45; Lev. 26: 12; Deut. 4: 37; 14: 2; 26: 18; 29: 13; Ps. 48: 14; Rev. 21: 6.

IV. COVENANT OBLIGATIONS. 9. The covenant relation set forth in baptism is identical with that of which circumcision was the type. We have an excellent opportunity in this lesson of impressing upon our scholars the duties and privileges which rest upon them as "children of the covenant." What circumcision meant to the Jew, baptism means to the Christian. It is simply a historical fact that the latter took the place of the former in the Christian church. Urge the scholars to cherish the affections and perform the duties belonging to those who have been solemnly consecrated to the Lord. He expects it of them, and will reward their earnest and faithful effort by a confirmed Christian character. Show also that it is their duty and privilege to confess Christ and take their places at the Lord's Table. If unprepared to do this "worthily," then encourage them to self-examination that hinderances may be removed. God commands, Christ invites, "the Spirit and the Bride say Come,"—the sinful heart alone forbids. Before you teach this lesson will you not ask that it be blessed to yourself and to each of your scholars, praying for each one by name and in accordance with what you believe to be his, or her, spiritual condition?

SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

Twenty-four years of Abram's life have passed since our last lesson. He is now early a hundred years old. Perhaps sometimes he wondered if God would really do that he had promised. It seemed impossible without a miracle. So God appeared again to him and announced himself by a new name. Abram knew him as Jehovah, the covenant God, whose promise of a Saviour was confirmed to Noah and himself. He knew him too as Creator, he who made and sustained everything, the Lord of nature. Now for the first time he is reminded that he is the Almighty, who is able to make nature's laws bend to carry out his gracious purpose as Jehovah. So we have the precious truth in these three names—Our covenant God and Saviour, who made us, able to make all things work together for good to them that love him. (Rom. 8: 28).

Abraham did not receive the promises for himself alone. He is made the head and representative of an innumerable posterity. But most of Abraham's descendants were fit outside of the covenant. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Although the Israelites became a great people it would be extravagant to say that they were like the sands on the sea shore, or the stars in the sky. Abraham stands for the whole race, just as Adam and Noah did. For a time one little nation alone enjoyed the favor of God, but since Christ said "Go ye into all the world and tell men that God so loved the world &c.," the true meaning of this covenant has become clearer. The kingdoms of this world shall yet become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign for ever and ever over a redeemed race. (Rev. 11: 15). Abraham stands as the covenant head of Israel until the time of Christ, and under the Gospel dispensation, of all believers who are ultimately to embrace mankind restored to fellowship with God. Shall we not work, give, and pray for this glorious triumph of missions.

In every covenant there are two parts, promises and obligations. In this one God promises and all Abraham's "seed" are under reciprocal obligations. Abraham assured that this time the covenant shall not be frustrated by a flood or a Babel, but an innumerable multitude shall enjoy its blessings. Next the land was assigned to them which was to be their home until "the fulness of the time" (Gal. 4: 4). Out of the nation was to spring One who was in a special sense his "Seed" (Gal. 3: 16), who would eventually draw all men unto him (John 12: 32). Through Christ the promise would receive its amplest fulfilment and the eternal inheritance, heaven, would be the inalienable possession of all believers.

But these promises involve corresponding obligations. While we enjoy covenant privileges we must remember covenant responsibilities. If God is graciously our God we must not prove disloyal to Him. He deserves our love; he has proved worthy our trust, to serve him is our highest honor and happiness, and to confess him before men is the condition of acceptance at last.

A COVENANT GOD.	A COVENANT HEAD.	COVENANT PROMISES.	COVENANT OBLIGATION.
Jehovah.	Israel.	Land.	Love.
Creator.	Believers.	Christ.	Trust.
Almighty.	Mankind.	Heaven.	Serve.
			Confess.

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,* and prepared by Principal Kirkland of the Toronto Normal School.

PRINCIPLES OF MEMORIZING.

Amongst the Principles of Teaching Dr. Morrison includes the principle of Association. This is a principle of memorizing, rather than a principle of teaching, and is one of the most important principles, for no piece of mental or spiritual experience is isolated. Every thought and action in our life is associated with some other thought or action.

Different kinds of Association.

(1) *Contiguity of Place*, by which the locality is associated with the events that happened there. Ex.—Patmos with John, Jacob's Well with Jesus, &c. Give other examples.

(2) *Association by Similarity*.—When two objects that resemble each other have been contemplated together, the one cannot be recalled without recalling the other. Give other examples.

(3) *Association by Contrast*.—By this is meant that one impression, object or event tends to call up the image of its opposite or contrast. Ex.—The house on the rock suggests the house on the sand, Peter boasting suggests Peter denying.

(4) *Cause and Effect*.—This is the most important principle of association. The cause should suggest the effect, and the effect should lead us to look for the cause. See J. 3. 28. What is the Association here? Give other instances.