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Teachers' Preparation Leaflet

LESSON 5.

FEBRUARY 4th, 1894.

1ST QUARTER.

Beginning of the Hebrew Nation. Gen. 12: 1-9.

GOLDEN TEXT: "I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing." Gen. 12: 2.

MEMORY VERSES, 1-3. LESSON HYMNS, 127, 28, 232, 135.

INTRODUCTORY DRILL—NOAH TO ABRAM.

The Bible is not an epitome of human history. The events which it records are connected with God's plan of saving men. The shameful story of Noah's intoxication is told because it gave occasion for the utterance of a prophecy which pointed out the part which each of the three great sub-divisions of the race was to take in the unfolding of God's purpose of grace to the world. Nor was Gen. 11: 1-9 written to satisfy the curiosity of philologists. It narrates how God frustrated man's impious design, and sent forth the nations to work out their several destinies, while the covenant line was specially safeguarded from the fate which had befallen the "sons of God" in the antediluvian world.

1. It is expressly stated in ch. 9: 19; 10: 32, that from the three sons of Noah the earth was re-peopled. The latest results of scientific research confirm the scriptural account and point to a common centre in Mesopotamia. From this the descendants of Shem spread over Syria and Arabia; the Hamitic races occupied Phenicia, Canaan and Africa; and the nations sprung from Japheth peopled Europe and India. After a short pre-eminence in Ninevah, Babylon, Phenicia and Egypt, the race of Ham sank into historical insignificance. To the Semites, through their representative family, the Hebrews, belongs the glory of preserving for the world the knowledge of Jehovah and of producing the Redeemer of mankind, "according to the flesh." The nations sprung from Japheth, Greeks, Romans and all modern Europe and America, have been specially "enlarged" by Providence. They have ruled the destinies of the civilized world, and led the van of human progress. On them too has come the blessing of Shem and they dwell, in a religious sense, "in his tents" as believers in the God of Abraham, (Read "The Ages Before Moses," by Rev. J. Munro Gibson, D. D., chapter vii.)

PROGENITOR.

LOCATION.

DESTINY.

Shem.

Mesop. Sy. Ar.

Religion.

Ham.

Ph. Ca. Af.

Servitude.

Japheth.

Eu. Ind.

Power.

2. The human race for some time after the flood spoke one language; the eleventh chapter explains how a diversity arose. There is no doubt that the language of any people will change somewhat in the course of centuries through the operation of "natural causes," and separation from the parent stem, especially if little intercourse is maintained, will result in tongues ultimately "foreign" to each other. But in this case there was no sufficient lapse of time and no isolation of tribes. The avowed object of the

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builders was to perpetuate the unity and solidarity of the race. Now this contravened the divine plan in two directions, (1) it prevented the rapid re-peopling of the earth, and (2) increased the power of evil by concentration, with every facility for rapid diffusion throughout the whole mass of humanity. Very soon the condition described in ch. 8, 11-13 would have again resulted. Accordingly by direct interposition, yet doubtless through agencies in harmony with the laws governing grammar and speech, God introduced rapidly operating tendencies to variation in language, and those who understood each other were compelled to "hive off" and emigrate. (Drill on the following sentences, writing the key-words on the slate).

Man's ambition aimed at preserving the unity of the race by concentration of all power and influence, and thus bidding defiance to God, and re-establishing the universal reign of worldly self-gratification. God's purpose, on the other hand, embraced the world re-peopled with separate nations, working out, each for itself, the problem of existence apart from Him, and proving the futility of its own efforts to regenerate itself, while the truth was preserved for a more favorable epoch by a covenant line, through which the redemption of the world was to come.

MAN'S AMBITION.

Unity.
Concentration.
Defiance.
Self-gratification.

GOD'S PURPOSE

The World Re-peopled.
Separate Nations.
A Covenant Line.
The World Redeemed.

The list of nations in chapter 10 is beautifully compared by Dr. Gibson to the record in a family Bible. It is the "Family Register" of Man in the world's Bible. The names of wandering prodigals are not forgotten, but stand here as a testimony to the Father's unforgetting love. John 3: 16, 17 is a New Testament commentary upon Gen. 10.

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON PLAN. I. God's Call. vs. 1-3. II. Abram's Obedience. vs. 4, 5. III. Taking Possession. vs. 6-9.

I. GOD'S CALL. 1. **Had said**—ch. 11: 31, while in Ur. (ch. 15: 7; Neh. 9: 7; Acts 7: 2, 3). **Abram**—"High father," i. e. "illustrious progenitor." He is called to sever three very strong and tender ties, those which bound him to his country, his kindred and his home (11. 31, 32). Christ demands a similar sacrifice (Matt. 10: 37, 38; 16: 24; Luke 14: 26, 27; Acts 14: 22; John 17: 14; Matt. 6: 24; Rom. 12: 12; 1 Jn. 2: 15, 16). He was not told where he was to go (Heb. 11: 8), but it was clearly intimated that he was to be the head of a new "dispensation," or method of preparing the world for a coming Saviour. "Abraham is chosen to be the head of a new dispensation, as Noah was; but with this difference, that the world is not taken away this time, but only left out. God has promised that there shall be no more flood, and so the world is left. The nations are left to walk in their own ways. But while the world is not taken away from Abraham the coming man, Abraham the coming man, is taken away from the world. Thus a new dispensation is begun." (Gibson) He was thus better isolated from surrounding idolatry. 2. **A great nation**—This seemed incredible (see ch. 11: 30). Compare ch. 17: 6: 18: 18; 46: 3; Num. 23: 10; Deut. 26: 5; 1 Kings 3: 8; it was also fulfilled in the Arabs (ch. 17: 20; 21: 13) and Edomites, descended from Ishmael and Esau. **Name great**—No name has been so honored by men. Jews, Mahometans and Christians vie with each other in reverence for his memory. **Be thou, a blessing** (R. V.)—a fountain of blessing to others. "All true blessedness the world is now, or ever shall be possessed of is owing to Abram and his posterity. Through them we have a Bible, a Saviour and a gospel. They are the stock on which the Christian church is grafted. Their very dispersions have proved the riches of the race." (Fuller) 3. Compare ch. 27: 29; Ex. 23: 22; Num. 24: 9; Zech. 7: 8. So Christ identifies himself with his people, Matt. 10: 42; 25: 40; Mark 9: 41. Those who bless are spoken of in the plural, and those who curse in the singular; as if multitudes would be found among the former, and only solitary individuals amongst the latter. (Jamieson).

II. ABRAM'S OBEDIENCE. 4. **Haran**—This is not the same name as Haran the father of Lot. In Acts 7: 2 it is correctly spelled Charran. Here Terah died (Acts 7:

4), and Abram married a number of years on his way to Canaan. Lot—Abram's nephew, a son of Haran, who had died in Ur. Nahor, Abram's other brother, remained at Haran. Both Rebekah and Rachel were descended from him. 5. Sarai—same as Isciah, Haran's daughter and Abram's niece (Josephus). "Daughter-in-law" in ch. 11: 31 must mean "grand-daughter." It may be that Terah had two wives, one the mother of Haran and the other of Abram (ch. 20: 12). In ch. 14: 14 Lot, Sarai's brother, is called Abram's brother. All their substance—He was now at the head of a very large tribe and the equal of any of the petty kings of Canaan. A few years later he could muster 318 armed men (ch. 14: 14). His delay at Haran had prepared him for entering the promised land with dignity and safety. The souls that they had gotten—slaves, or bond servants, and dependents. His immense flocks and herds would require a large number to attend to them. (For a graphic description of such a caravan as Abram's, see Brown, Jamieson and Fausset's commentary on this verse. Trace on the map the probable route. Across the upper fords of the Euphrates, through Aleppo and Damascus, over the Hauran and down the valley of the Jabbok to the ford of the Jordan).

III. TAKING POSSESSION. 6. Sichem—between mount Ebal and Gerizim. It is the *Sychar* of the New Testament (John 4: 5). The oak of Mereh (R. V.)—probably named from its owner. See also Judges 7: 1. The Canaanite was then in the land—The Canaanites gave the name to the whole territory (Gen. 10: 18, 19). They were still in this portion of the land when Deuteronomy was written (Deut. 11: 29, 30). This sentence does not necessarily imply that the Canaanites had been driven out before the time of the writer. It is a simple statement that the land was pre-occupied, and explains why Abram needed a confirmation of the promise and why he removed, so soon to another place. It may be that Abram was a little disappointed at finding that the Utopia of his hopes was in possession of alien descendants of Ham 7. The Lord appeared unto Abram—This is the first time that the Lord is said to have "appeared" to anyone, although he must have communicated directly with Adam, Cain, Enoch and Noah, and with Abram himself, before this. Unto thy seed will I give this land—Repeated ch. 13: 15, 17: 15: 18: 17: 8; to Isaac 26: 3: 28: 4; to Jacob 28: 13: 35: 12; to Moses Deut. 34: 4. Built an altar—formally taking possession of the land in the name of his covenant God. Jacob did the same when he purchased this spot (ch 33: 20) and Joshua here set up a stone at the renewal of the covenant (Josh. 24: 25-27). "The distance between Bethel and Ai is three-quarters of an hour's ride. The road passes over a ridge, on the top of which is a level plateau, stony but still fertile when compared with the rocky wilderness around" (Porter). 8. Bethel—not so named till the time of Jacob (Gen. 28: 19: 35: 15). Its ancient name was Luz, which name it bore at the time of the conquest (Judges 1: 22, 26). It was about 18 miles south of Shechem and 12 north of Jerusalem. Hai—same as Ai (Josh. 7: 2). 9. Moving as fresh pastures for his flocks were required. The south was known as the *Negeb* or dry region.

SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

Every rainbow repeated God's promise that the human race would not again be wiped out by a flood. Yet men looked at the rainbow and forgot the God of whose loving forbearance it was the beautiful token. (Speak of the building of Babel and God's interference to prevent foolish and obstinate men from thwarting his plan of redemption.) Evidently it would take a long time to prepare such a world for its Saviour. Wayward man must learn for himself that it is "an evil thing and bitter" to forsake the Lord his God (Jer. 2: 19). The impulse that led to the first sin will not be controlled. So God wrote down the names of all the nations of the world in order that when missionaries came to them in after ages they could see that he had never lost sight of them and that there was a place waiting for them when they came home again. Then he selected Abram and renewed his covenant with him as with Noah. He separated him from his idolatrous surroundings and promised him fame and riches for himself and blessing for the world. Read 2 Chr. 20: 7: Isa. 41: 8: Jas. 2: 23. (Dwell on the honor and privilege and profit of being God's friend).

It was doubtless hard for Abram to give up all and start off for an unknown land, but God made it as easy as possible. His father went with him as far as Haran and they staid there some years. Then Terah died, and it wasn't so difficult to say "good-bye" to Haran as to Ur; besides Abram was older and had become very wealthy. Try to do what God wants you to do and he will help you to succeed. Abram's obedience

was prompt, it was in faith, and it was a preparation for entering the promised land as a powerful Syrian chief.

We read not long ago how the "Union Jack" was hoisted on the Gilbert Islands to signify that they were taken under British protection. So Abram formally took possession of the land by building an altar and setting up the worship of Jehovah. He knew that God would keep his promise although there were other tribes there and so he prepared to make it his home. Long afterwards, when he had to provide a resting place for his beloved dead, he did not take the body back to the family home in Haran, but bought the cave of Machpelah, where he too, and Isaac and Jacob were buried, so sure were they all that their descendants would one day own it. Why did they love the little land of Palestine so much? Turn to Heb. 11: 10-16. Because Canaan stood for Heayen and Christ was the link between the two. Read John 8: 56. Is not Abram rightly called the "father of the faith-full?" (Rom. 4: 11).

B. H. N.

G. C.

A. O.

T. P.

Separated.
Fame and Riches.
Blessing.

Prompt.
In Faith.
A Preparation.

Canaan.
Christ.
Heaven.

THE FRIEND OF GOD.

A SYRIAN CHIEF.

THE FATHER OF
THE FAITHFUL.

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 TEACHING. (CHAPTER V).—(Continued).

Principle V. Our Teaching should be such as to foster the principle of self-development, self-instruction and self-activity to the fullest extent. The pupil must cooperate with the teacher.—The following corollaries naturally follow from this principle:—

- (1) Tell the pupil as little as possible and lead him to discover as much as possible. The connection between *doing* and *knowing* is deep and far reaching. We learn to *do* by knowing and to *know* by doing.
- (2) Never do for the pupil what you can lead him to do for himself.
- (3) The *less* the teacher talks to the pupil, and the *more* the pupil talks to the teacher the better will be the teaching.

Principle VI. Instruction should always excite the interest of the pupils, and therefore be pleasurable to them. If the pupil is not interested there is something wrong either in the method of teaching, or in the subject not being suited to the age and capacity of the pupil. Experience has abundantly shown that there is always a method to be found productive of interest—even of delight—and for this method the Sabbath School Teacher must diligently seek.

Principle VII. In teaching definitions and general statements we should first carefully teach the meaning of all the terms used, and then the individual truths on which the definitions and statements are founded. That is, definitions and general statements should be taught inductively. The inductive should lead up to the definition and general statement. By induction we mean the process of drawing a general conclusion from a sufficient number of *particulars*.

While this Principle is of general application in all teaching, in Sabbath School teaching it especially applies to teaching the Shorter Catechism. The usual method is to commit the question, then give the Scripture proofs. The reverse of this is the correct method. The proofs on which the question is founded should be first studied, and then the pupil should be helped to formulate the statements contained in the question from the proofs. The beauty and appropriateness of the language of the Catechism should then be pointed out, and not till then should the question be committed.

To the forgoing Principles all good teaching must conform. I have added several to those contained in the Hand-book. Other statements contained in chap. V are not principles of teaching, but belong to the subject of memory of which I will treat in the next leaflet.