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BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1874.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, August 9th, 1874.

Power over Nature—Mark iv. 35-41.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." Ps. cvii. 29.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 37-39.

SUMMARY.—The winds and the sea obeyed him.

ANALYSIS.—I. The storm encountered. vs. 35-38. II. The storm allayed. vs. 39-41.

EXPOSITION.—Preliminary.—It is impossible to determine the exact order of time in which the events of Christ's life are to be arranged. It seems clear that between the time of the events of our last lesson, and those of this, Christ had among other things withdrawn to a mountain near Capernaum, there formally appointed and ordained his twelve apostles, delivered the well known "sermon on the mount," returned to Capernaum and healed the Centurion's servant, afterwards raised from the dead the son of the Widow of Nain, received a deputation from John's disciples asking concerning his Messiahship, made another short circuit in Galilee for preaching and working miracles, and taught the multitude by the sea-side, on his return. Luke vi. 7-viii. 21. Mark iii. 7-iv. 34.

In the study of the miracle of this lesson, compare the narrative of Matthew and Luke, Matthew viii. 23-27. Luke viii. 22-25. While the three accounts agree and Mark's is the fullest, each one has some features which belong to neither of the others.

Verse 35.—And the same day as that during which he had given the instructions recorded in this chapter. See vs. 1. When the even was come. The same fact is noted by Matthew viii. 16. He saith unto them, the twelve already ordained as apostles. See vs. 34. Let us pass over unto the other side. They were now on the shore of the Sea of Galilee near Capernaum. This city was on the western shore of the sea near its north end. The proposal, therefore, was to cross the sea or lake from the western or Galilee side to the southeastern side.

Verse 36.—And when they [the disciples] had sent away the multitude, they took him. More literally and graphically, "they took him along." He was pleased to regard himself as the guest of the disciples. Of course "the ships" of the Sea of Galilee were mere fishing boats. Josephus says, "that he collected all the boats on the lake, amounting to 230 in number, with four men in each." Even as he was, without any preparation for the journey. Just as he had been, as he spoke in and from the boat. Other little ships. Correctly, "other ships." The same word in the original is used of these as of that in which Christ was.

Verse 37.—And there arose a great storm of wind. "A hurricane with clouds and thick darkness." Matthew uses a word which in our version is translated "tempest." "There arose a great tempest in the sea." viii. 24. The waves beat [kept pitching] into the ship so that it was now full. More exactly, "so that it was now filling," i. e., with water. Matthew says, "it was covered," dashing in and flowing over the deck.

Verse 38.—He was in the hinder part of the ship. The stern was of course the natural place for Jesus to occupy, as he was only a passenger. Asleep on a pillow. Jesus, though "the Lord from heaven," was yet a man, compassed with all human infirmities, and hence as susceptible to fatigue as any one. On a pillow. More exactly "on the pillow." The article indicates that there was but one, and that there was always one in such a vessel. How soon says it was "the boatman's cushion," though the Greek term means "for the head," i. e., a pillow. And they awake him. In trouble their minds turn to him, and to him they go. Most natural and fit then as now and ever. Master. More exactly "Teacher," the word correlative to disciples or learner, but usually translated Master, which has, as one meaning, teacher, because the teacher usually governs his scholars, is their master. Luke viii. 24. Carest thou not that we perish? Matthew represents them as saying, "Save us, we perish," and Luke, "we perish."

Mark brings out the peculiar feeling which Christ's seeming indifference to the danger awake in them. Very often have Christians a like feeling; God brings them into great dangers, or trials, and seems quite indifferent whether they survive or perish. Verse 39.—And he arose. Or, as it may be literally translated, "being awakened." He slept until but not through the danger. Rebuked the wind. He was Lord of the winds which were his messengers, his servants, doing always and everywhere his bidding—and not less when as in madness they seem intent on the destruction of him and them, than when they cease their strife and breathe gently. Of course, the winds could not hear his word, but the spoken word was the natural expression of controlling authority, and hence most fit in the circumstances. And said unto the sea: Peace be still. Mark the order of his commands, speaking first to the wind as the cause of the sea's tumult, and then because the hush of the winds would still leave the sea for a time in its raging, he bids it also be at peace, or more exactly, to be silent. The word is employed much like our colloquial, hush, and the angry sound of the sea made it an apt word. The Greek word translated "be still," is very different. It means "to muzzle." It was customary to put a small woven basket made for the purpose over the mouths of oxen or other animals when needful, to prevent them from eating while at work, and over the mouths of savage beasts to prevent them from biting. So now he would have the sea, which was like a hungry and also a savage beast, muzzled that it might not in wrathful hunger and hungry wrath, swallow up the little company now seemingly at its mercy. And there was a great calm. There is a singular felicity in the use of the word "great" just here. Not unfitly has this event been in all the centuries of the Christian era used as symbolic of Christ's word of divine authority in speaking to the convicted soul forgiveness and peace. When, as is so often the case, the inward conflict is severe and the sense of divine wrath clear and keen, the consciousness of peace with God which follows is profound. It is "a great calm."

Verse 40.—Why are ye so fearful? So cowardly. So faint-hearted. How is it that ye have no faith? This is said to the disciples. It shows that their fear was excessive and due to a want of trust in him and in God as his Father. We should fear less for ourselves, our Master and our Master's cause in times of seeming peril to all if we trusted God and his Son more fully.

Verse 41.—They feared exceedingly. Literally, "they feared a great fear." A wholly different word is used in the Greek from that translated, "fearful" in the 40th verse. This was not the fear of cowardice, but of solemn awe and dread. What manner of man, etc. Matthew says, "the men feared" and asked this. This may possibly refer to others than the twelve, and even to the boatmen who may not have been disciples. We still look into the face and listen to the voice of this same Jesus, and say, What manner of man is this?

QUESTIONS.—What events are recorded in Mark between the Scripture of the last lesson and that of this? Vs. 35. What day is here meant? vs. 1. How had the day been spent? Where? What did the Saviour propose at the day's close? To which side of the lake would they cross? Vs. 36. What multitude is here meant? vs. 1. Who sent them away? What is meant by taking Christ "as he was"? Does he now ask like service? What do you know as to the "ships" on this lake? Vs. 37. What sort of weather after the start? What effect on the sea? What result to the boat? Of what in our lives is this a symbol? Vs. 38. Where was Christ? Why should he have fallen asleep so speedily? What does this show as to Christ's human nature? What did the disciples do to Christ? What did they say to him? Compare Matthew viii. 25. Luke viii. 24. Why should they say this? When do men most feel their need of divine help? Vs. 39. What did Christ do? What was it to "rebuke the wind"? What did he say to the sea? Could the sea hear his voice? Why should he first address the wind and then the sea? What followed? Of what in our lives is this miracle a symbol? Vs. 40. What did he next say to the disciples? What was wrong in their terror? Vs. 41. What effect followed on the minds of the spectators?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 203.

SUNDAY, August 16th, 1874.—Power over Demons.—Mark v. 1-16.

Youths' Department.

THE GIRLS OF ASSAM.

A Dialogue for the S. S. Concert.

BY MRS. E. W. WHITING.

HELEN. Minie, I am glad to meet you. Will you call with me on Eunice Eaton?

MINIE. Who is Eunice Eaton?

HELEN. She is a missionary's daughter, from Assam, who has recently come to this country. Her parents are still among the heathen. Mother said, Eunice must feel lonely, and we girls ought to visit her.

MINIE. I would like very much to go and see her. She must feel sad, separated so far from her parents. Has she any brothers or sisters?

HELEN. No; she is an only child. Her parents kept her with them as long as they could; but she could not be properly educated in Assam; so they sent her here.

MINIE. I suppose there are no schools for young ladies there. I wish I knew more about the heathen than I do. I know, of course, that they are dreadfully wicked, and worship idols. But I want to know more about their daily life—how they live—what they eat, and drink, and many other things, which I should never dare ask a missionary about, if I should happen to see one.

HELEN. I have wished the same thing a thousand times; we can ask Eunice today; I presume she would tell us.

MINIE. O, that will be so nice. I will ask her if the girls there are—

HELEN. Hush! Eunice is coming, and Elvira Grant is with her. Good evening, Eunice. This is my friend, Minie Lewis.

EUNICE. I am very happy to see you. Elvira was telling me you were to be my schoolmate. It will not seem so strange at school, if I become acquainted with some of the girls, before I enter.

ELVIRA. I found Eunice a little homesick—dreading school, and sighing for her far-off home.

MINIE. I am not surprised at Eunice longing for her parents; but there cannot be anything else in that heathen land you would care to see. Is there?

EUNICE. O yes! I love Assam very much. It is the land of my birth, you know; I love the native Christians, and the poor heathen there.

MINIE. You must pity the heathen, though I believe I should be so disgusted with them I should forget to pity.

EUNICE. You would pity them, if you saw how wretched and ignorant they are; and, in trying to do them good, you would soon love them.

MINIE. I was telling Helen, as we came, that I wished I knew more about the daily customs and life of the heathen.

EUNICE. I should be very happy to tell you any thing that would interest you in them.

HELEN. As we shall not have time today to hear all we want to know, let us hear first about the Assamese girls.

MINIE. O yes! tell us about the girls: what they wear; how they eat; what are their amusements; and are they handsome?

ELVIRA. I suppose Minie would like the last question answered first.

EUNICE (smiling). I am quite ready to answer it. They are not by any means noted for their beauty, but some of the girls from the age of ten to twenty are very pretty. They have a clear olive complexion, European features, bright black eyes, glossy black hair, and when they are not chewing the tamul nut, fine white teeth.

HELEN. Chewing what?

EUNICE. The tamul or betel nut. It is a nut about the size of a nutmeg. It is chewed with lime, and a green leaf called pan. They take a small piece of the leaf, put a little wet lime on it—then a slice of the tamul nut, roll all up in the leaf, and chew it. All Assamese men and women chew this. At first it makes the lips and teeth red; but after being used a few years, the teeth become black as coal. The first mark of respect paid to visitors on entering the house, is to offer them the tamul nut and pan, and all take a portion to chew, while they talk.

ELVIRA. Just imagine a company of us girls all seated chewing betel nut.

HELEN. You said some of the girls were handsome from the age of ten to twenty. Are they not handsome after that?

EUNICE. Their beauty fades very quickly. I don't know that I ever saw a handsome woman over twenty. The climate may have something to do with it; but their habits of chewing and smoking, I think, have as much. Almost every Assamese woman and girl smokes tobacco, as well as the men.

HELEN. Now Minie's question about their beauty is answered. Will you please tell us how they dress?

EUNICE. None for girls, except mission-schools. Schools for boys are in every village, where they are to read their sacred books.

HELEN. Are there many mission-schools for girls in Assam?

EUNICE. There were only three when I left Assam, and nearly all of the pupils except the native Christians' daughters, were orphans, who had no one but the missionaries to care for them—no home, no friends. The heathen will not send their girls to school.

ELVIRA. Do these girls learn quickly?

EUNICE. Yes, they are very bright and intelligent.

MINIE. What a life these poor heathen girls must lead. They can neither sew, read, write, nor visit. How do they spend their time?

EUNICE. Soon as they are old enough, they are taught to cook, spin, and weave their clothing, and keep the floor of the house (which is only the ground, beaten hard,) smoothly plastered with mud. Their principal food is boiled rice, with a curry, or stew, made of fish and mustard oil, seasoned with pepper and spices.

HELEN. It cannot take them long to cook.

EUNICE. No, but it takes them some time to prepare the rice for cooking. It is brought to the women with the husk on. This they have to pound off in a large wooden mortar—then winnow it—wash, and boil it.

HELEN. How many meals do they have a day?

EUNICE. Only two. One in the morning, and the other at 7 or 8 in the evening.

MINIE. Quite fashionable in their dinner hour. I should like to see them at dinner.

EUNICE. They will not allow any but those of their own, or a higher caste, to enter the room where they cook and eat.

MINIE. Why not? that is what I should call exclusive.

EUNICE. It would break their caste, to defile them. They consider our caste very inferior to theirs.

MINIE. Well, I will not trouble them at present. Do they use tables and chairs, knives and forks, at their select repasts?

EUNICE. No, nothing of the kind. A small straw mat is laid on the floor, and a brass plate, filled with boiled rice, is placed upon it. A very small dish holding the curry is placed beside it, while a lotah (brass goblet) contains the drinking water. The dishes of rice and curry are for one person only.

HELEN. How can they eat without a spoon or fork?

EUNICE. They dip their fingers into the curry, put a little of it on to a portion of rice—roll it up into a ball, and throw it into their mouths.

HELEN. Do the higher classes eat in this way?

EUNICE. Yes, the poorest classes can not always afford a brass dish to eat from, but often use a leaf from the plantain tree, as a rice and curry dish.

MINIE. So the poor Assamese girls spend their lives drudgingly, without even the satisfaction of being loved or respected. Are they patient and gentle?

EUNICE. Their tempers have never been controlled; and sometimes, when the husband comes in and scolds because his dinner is not ready, the wife will retort, and talk shrewdly to him. It generally ends in her having a whipping. It is terrible to see the women when they are angry. They often get angry with each other, especially when the husband has two or three wives, which is frequently the case, and then they will abuse each other till they are unable to speak loud.

HELEN. Well, I pity them; for what is there to cheer and encourage them? You said, Eunice, nothing but Christianity could relieve them. How is it with the native Christian women? Are they any happier in their homes?

EUNICE. O yes, you would be delighted to go into a Christian village, and see the women treated as equals by their husbands. Parents and children eat together. The women can read, write, and sew. Family worship is observed in almost every native Christian's house.

ELVIRA. The contrast with the heathen must be very great.

EUNICE. And it used to be so pleasant of an evening to enter a Christian village, and hear parents and children singing together their own sweet hymns, which have been translated into their language.

ELVIRA. It is delightful to know there are a few in that heathen land, who have begun to enjoy the blessings of the Gospel. The happy native Christians there, amid the darkness of heathenism, remind me of one of our favorite missionary hymns, "The morning light is breaking." Let us sing a verse or two of it, girls.

By Rev. The hist of Acts is prophecy, respect to and it is a ment of the fact from the p mately con sublime a the gospel and neces according recorded in and instr viously b called to and in the guided by Christ, ut But havin tion and ins accor the dead hand of Saviour, endowed with pow tized the runner h mised h now the ward the committed accented order in is the method disciples church therefore facts rec instruct matters Church degree w by the l coived fi and thei fled, hi predicte mately c upon the leasly th ing and of the p their be earnest ties wit what sh from the be bapti of Jesus Ghost. to your off—eve shall an heard t gally r r-pent pardon name o have the enquiry anoe re baptism convers the Apo is impor as penit the divi disciple appear And results worken carryin their a 20) ? proced the wor Christ to disci baptize ciples; all the mended arrang Teach Church