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BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1874.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

SUNDAY, February 15th, 1874.

Jehovah's Passover.—Exodus xii 21-30. 51.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." 1 Corinthians v. 7.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 21-23.

SUMMARY.—Deliverance from death was by the blood of the Lamb.

ANALYSIS.—I. The instructions to Moses. 1. As to the Deliverance. vs 21-23. 2. As to its Celebration. vs 24-27. II. The judgment of God. vs 28-31. III. The escape from bondage. vs. 51.

EXPOSITION.—The interval.—Last Sabbath the first "plague," to day the last. Between are eight plagues; those of the frogs, of the lice, of the flies, of the murrain, of the boils, of the hail, of the locusts, and of the darkness. The magicians got up a petty, contemptible imitation of the miracle of the frogs, failed on that of the lice, and, smitten in their own person with the boils, did not venture even to stand afterward in the presence of God's messenger. They surrendered, but not the monarch. Not he, for sin had made him not only hard, but also blind. So ever, it both blinds and hardens—blinds in hardening. How often he was "almost persuaded"! And yet, in the face of all this, despite all this, he pushed on in his own way; would not hear, would not turn; would go to his ruin, did go to his ruin! So many others have done just the same! So many all around us are doing just the same! The evil day they put off. They think that somehow they shall escape; they will have it as they wish it; it will come out right, no matter what God and his servants may say to the contrary.

The tenth plague.—It came—the last. Pharaoh, grown more hard and wrathful with each new visitation, had driven Moses from his face, and bidden him come not to him again on peril of his death. Then the cup was full. No other word was spoken to Pharaoh. The last stroke was unheralded to either monarch or people of Egypt. Only to Moses and Israel was it foretold, that they might make ready for it, and for the escape that was to follow. The Scripture of our present lesson follows a more full account of the plague and of the passover, as given in chaps. xi and xii. 1-20, and can be better understood by a comparison with that account.

Verse 21.—Called for all the elders of Israel. In order to communicate the Lord's appointments, according to the command in verse 3, as through them the whole congregation would be informed of the matter. This repetition is not uncommon to the early Hebrew. Draw out. Or, perhaps, "go," "proceed," as it often has this meaning. Take you a lamb, a member of the flock, whether lamb or kid. See verse 5. It was to be "without blemish, a male of the first year." vs. 5. It was to be taken on the tenth day of the first month (our April), to be kept till the fourteenth before it was offered. According to your families. See verses 3, 4. Josephus writes: "They slay the paschal lamb . . . so that a company of not less than ten belong to every sacrifice . . . and many of us are twenty in a company." Nothing is said in Scripture as to the number to make up a company, except that there were to be so many as could make a meal on the lamb. Kill the passover; that is, the lamb. Passover usually means the feast. The name is explained in verse 13. This lamb was typical of Christ, who is called our Passover, and the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Verse 22.—Bunch of hyssop. This was a plant, one species of which is said to have been well adapted for this purpose. "It is thornless, of a slender stem, free from spreading branches, ending in a cluster of heads, having a highly aromatic odor, just fitted to make into a bunch for sprinkling. Many stalks grow up from one root, so that the hand in a single grasp could gather the requisite bundle all ready for use." The blood; that is, of the paschal lamb, whose body was to be eaten. The lintel; that is, "the head piece of a door-frame," the part of the frame over the door. None of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. Mark how very exact this command. Safety depended upon the observance of

every point. It may have seemed foolish but foolish or wise, it was their salvation. Verse 23.—The reason of the command is here given. The Lord, or Jehovah, was to pass through to smite the Egyptians; that is, he was to cause the pestilence to fall upon the Egyptians throughout the land. God passed through the land, just as he passes through one of our cities when the pestilence visits it. When he seeth the blood. He made no mistake. So now, no heart which is sprinkled with Christ's blood is overlooked by the eye of the Lord. Pass over the door. No Hebrew would escape simply because he was a Hebrew if there were not the blood. The destroyer. Literally, the destruction; that is, the destroying pestilence.

Verse 24.—Now begins the direction with reference to the yearly feast which was to keep these things in memory. But it was not simply as a memorial that the feast was to be instituted, but both the feast and the original events were typical of Christ's death. This gave to all the chief importance. The particulars mentioned in verses 8-11 have not been here mentioned, because the writer aims here to give only the most prominent features of the subject. Ye. Not simply those addressed, but the nation viewed as a perpetual body, with its own distinctive perpetual life, and hence, as a whole, to receive and obey the command now given. This thing; that is, what has just been described—to repeat the act—thus keep it vividly before the mind. So did Christ in a like way ordain that in the Lord's Supper the true atonement, the real passover, should be kept fresh in the minds and hearts of his disciples as a thing accomplished once for all. Thus the Supper supersedes the Passover. Neither the yearly passover, nor the perpetual ordinance of the Supper is a real atonement or sacrifice, but each exhibits that which was such atonement, which laid the foundation, the one of national, the other of eternal salvation. Ordinance. Something ordered—established by authority, and not left to one's own choice. Forever; that is, perpetual, though at last to be merged into something higher, and to live on in that—in the work of Christ and its appointed memorial ordinance.

Verse 25.—When ye be come to the land, etc. Then, and especially then, they were to cherish the memory of this deliverance. We read of one celebration in the desert by special command. Num. ix. 1-7. So Christ speaks of partaking of the Supper with his disciples in the kingdom of heaven, and the song to be sung then, is that "of Moses and the Lamb." This will sweeten, strengthen, deepen, and heighten the eternal felicity of heaven.

Verse 26.—When your children, etc. Those born long after this eventful night, born into the privileges of the accomplished redemption. So now, such an ordinance as the Communion makes our children ask: What means this? Whence comes this? Why is this observed? What reason that only the Christian should partake? In heaven, the angels, even then, will not fully comprehend the meaning of the song, or the nature of the experience. They will still desire to look into those things.

Verse 27.—Ye shall say. Yes, ye; but not the men now addressed, for they are not to see that land of promise, but the future fathers who are to take their places, and who are represented in these. Bowed the head and worshipped. Now they believed. Now they knew that Moses and Aaron were messengers of deliverance, and not of worse bondage.

Verse 28.—The passover is appointed then they went away and did as the Lord had commanded. All of them probably with one heart, one spirit. So they did what every one should do—promptly and cheerfully obeyed God.

Verse 29.—We have seen what they did, now we are to see what God did. It was nothing else than what he said he would do—just that. The first-born. Probably not those parents, or heads of families, who were first-born children, but rather the first-born children in the families, though this is not quite certain. Chap. xi. 5. The first-born represented the whole family of children. This miracle, like all the preceding, has what is called "a natural basis;" that is, the devastating pestilence is common in Egypt. "It appears usually at the end of March or beginning of April.

Verse 30.—The dreadful effects of the stroke. God at last has conquered the monarch, but death is in every house; that is, where there is a "first-born."

Verse 51.—Israel leaves Egypt. All

Israel leaves, leaves in triumph, with QUESTIONS.—How many were "the plagues of Egypt"? Name them. Of what besides the miracle does this lesson treat? Why was there a memorial ordinance instituted for this and for no other of the miracles?

Vs. 21. Why is the account of the miracle and of the festival here repeated? Chaps. xi. 2; xii. 3. Is this or the preceding account the more full? Vs. 1-20. What is said of the lamb in verse 6? Explain the phrase, "according to families." Vs. 3-4. What is here meant by the word "passover"? Explain its origin and uses. Vs. 13, 23. What was hyssop? Whence the blood in the basin? What is a "lintel"? What command as to leaving the house?

Vs. 22. The reason for this command? How did the Lord pass through the land?

Vs. 23. What is there in these things typical of Christ, and his salvation? To what ordinance in the New Testament does the passover correspond? The difference?

Vs. 25. When and where was the passover to be kept? What does this suggest as to our experience in heaven? Was the passover celebrated in the desert? Num. ix. 1-14.

Vs. 26-27. What reason is here given for observing the passover in Palestine? Does a like ransomed hold of baptism and the Lord's Supper?

Vs. 28-30. What did the people do on hearing the words of Moses? Vs. 27. What did the Lord do after they had sprinkled the door-posts? What did the Egyptians do? What did Israel do the next day? What lessons for us?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 163.

SUNDAY, February 22nd, 1874.—The Exodus.—Exodus xiii. 17-22.

HINTS AND HELPS.—Our lessons here overlook the remaining judgments that came upon Egypt, but it may be well to remember them; hence—

1. Name the ten plagues that God sent, in the order of their occurrence.

We have here an account of the institution of the Passover—

2. Why was the Passover so called?

As there could be no virtue in the blood of a lamb, and as the Angel of the Lord ought to have been able to know where the Lord's people lived, without stopping to look, in the night, for the marks of blood—

3. Why did God direct that the blood should be sprinkled on the door-posts and lintel?

4. Would an Israelite be protected by that blood, regardless of his previous character?

5. Where, in the New Testament, is Christ called our Passover, and why?

6. What feast, similar to the Passover, do Christians observe, and what are the lessons it teaches?

Youths' Department.

"HOW LONG WILL IT DO TO WAIT."

Dr. Nettleton had come from the evening service in some country town, to his home for the night. The good lady of the house, rather an elderly person; after bustling about to provide her guest with refreshment, said, directly before her daughter, who was in the room:

"Dr. Nettleton, I do wish you would talk to Caroline; she don't care nothing about going to meeting, nor about the salvation of her soul. I've talked and talked, and got our minister to talk, but it don't seem to do good. I wish you would talk to her, Dr. Nettleton."

Saying which, she soon went out of the room.

Dr. Nettleton continued quietly taking his repast, when he turned around to the young girl, and said:

"Now, just tell me, Miss Caroline, don't they bother you amazingly about this thing?"

"She, taken by surprise at an address so unexpected, answered at once:

"Yes, sir, they do; they keep talking to me all the time, till I'm sick of it."

"So I thought," said Dr. N. "Let's see; how old are you?"

"Eighteen, Sir."

"Good health?"

"Yes, sir."

"The fact is," said Dr. N. "religion is a good thing in itself; but the idea of all the time troubling a young creature like you with it, and you're in good health, you say. Religion is a good thing. It will hardly do to die without it. I wonder how long it would do for you to wait?"

"That's just what I've been thinking myself," said Caroline.

"Well," said Dr. N., "suppose you attended the funeral of a lady fifteen years younger than that. Thirty? How will that do?"

"I'm not sure it would do to wait quite so long," said Caroline.

"No, I do not think so either—something might happen. Say, now, twenty-five—or even twenty, if we could be sure that you would live so long.—A year from now—how would that do?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Neither do I. The fact is, my dear young lady, the more I think of it, and of how many young people as well, apparently, as you are, do die suddenly, I am afraid to have you put it off a moment longer. Besides, the Bible says, now is the accepted time. We must take the time. What shall we do? Had we not better kneel down here, and ask God for mercy, through his Son, Jesus Christ?"

The young lady, perfectly overcome by her feelings, knelt on the spot. In a day or two she, by grace, came out rejoicing in hope, finding she had far from lost all enjoyment in this life.

JAPANESE HOUSEKEEPING.

It must be difficult for most Europeans and Americans to realize that a nation like the Japanese have lived for centuries, fulfilling all the functions of life honorably, without ever having known the use of a bed, a chair, or a table, as we understand these articles; and yet, these people have all the virtues of civilization, and perhaps not quite all its vices. They are polite, generous, hospitable, perform their religious duties with exemplary piety, and, if cleanliness be next to godliness, they are much more godly than we are, for they are the cleanest people on the earth, according to the general testimony of travellers. We have certainly much to learn before our houses can be as immaculately neat as theirs are. It is our universal custom to walk upon our richest carpets with the same feet-covering that has served us in the filthiest streets. Nothing could well be more repugnant to the sense of propriety of a Japanese housekeeper than this; and, despite the fact that it prevails all over Western civilization, it is truly a barbarous custom. Shoes or boots that have served us in the street are at least dusty in dry weather, and unfit for contact with carpets which are as clean as they should always be; and in muddy weather they cannot be sufficiently cleaned by any amount of scraping and rubbing upon rugs. Still, it is difficult to see how we can adopt the nice habit of donning slippers when we enter the house, unless we discard our custom of wearing boots with elaborate fastenings.

Japanese housekeeping is reduced to the minimum of care and labor. There is not in the whole country an upholsterer, or, at least, there was not a few years ago, and a young couple who wish to marry and set up housekeeping need not delay on account of the expenses of the outfit. A Philadelphia gentleman, living in Japan, sums it up in this way: "A few mats, a chest of drawers for clothing, two or three quilts for a bed on the floor, some simple kitchen-utensils, and the house is furnished." Of course we must make due allowance for the fact that this is a man's inventory; a woman would probably discover many things that would escape masculine eyes.

"Why," the gentleman continues, "should we litter these neatly-matted rooms? Why cover with paint and gilding virgin wood of faultless grain; or mar the sweet simplicity and airy roominess of Japanese chambers by loading them with unnecessary luxuries?" Why, indeed, now that housekeeping has become such a burden to women, and good servants are a thing of the past? We certainly might dispense with much that but gives us care and trouble for a compensation that is totally inadequate. The Japanese, when they get ready to go to bed, being from side-closets their bedding, which is simply what we would designate a "covering." This they place upon one of their soft mats, three or four inches thick, and, removing every vestige of clothing, put on a long loose gown. Sheets they have no use for, and for pillows they have a bar of wood six inches long and one wide. On the top is a narrow cushion, covered with paper, which is removed very day in all well-regulated households. Travellers wonder much at the origin of this anomalous pillow. It seems that it arose as a consequence of the lofty and elaborate coiffure of the ladies, which is too arduous a work of art to be renewed every day.

The dinner of ceremony in Japan is a simpler than the ordinary repast in the hotels, for example. A little toy-table four inches high, is placed before the guest on which are four covered bowls containing the articles of food. One of these is always rice in some form, another soup, another fish cooked with soy. This you eat sitting on the clean and soft mats, a subdued light falling on you through elegant paper screens on one side, and on the other, the latticed sliding partitions being withdrawn you look into a large open court, spanned by an arched bridge. In this court is a garden, an aviary, a pond filled with gold-fish and marine plants, and the bridge is frequently decorated with splendid lilies and other flowers in pots. The whole atmosphere of the Japanese house suggests airiness, utter cleanliness, and comfort also, when you once have learned to do without chairs; but how long the ancient customs and the simple ease with which the middle classes live, will resist the incoming wave of Western civilization, it is difficult to say. Already the common question that greets the traveller on arriving at an hotel is, if he will be served in the Western or in the Japanese style. The young men have mostly adopted our method of cutting the hair, and are gravitating toward standing collars and Congress boots while the ermine that our ladies have just discarded may possibly find favor in the eyes of theirs. Appletons Journal.

NEW YEAR WATCHNIGHT AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE.

Nearly six thousand persons must have been assembled there? At eleven o'clock, when Mr. Spurgeon took his well known place, there was not a foot of space in the vast area, for even the aisles were thronged. The capacious galleries that rise tier over tier to the roof were crowded in like manner and the preacher stood, faced and surrounded by a congregation, the sight of which might well move to the utterance of words that burn, a man who had within him a fount of thoughts that breathe. There was no other prelude to the service than the simply spoken invitation "Let us pray," and the six thousand, declaring themselves "creatures of time," bent the knee with one accord to ask the "Lord of Eternity" to bless them in the coming year. After this a hymn was sung, Mr. Spurgeon reading out verse by verse, with occasional commentary, and not unfrequent directions to the congregation as to the manner of their singing. "Dear friends, the devil sometimes makes you lag half a note behind the leader. Just try if you can't prevail over him to-night and keep up in proper time." The hymn brought to a conclusion, Mr. Spurgeon read and commented upon a passage of Scripture from the 25th of Matt. Then another hymn. "Sing this verse very softly and solemnly," says the pastor; and the congregation, in hushed tones, that seem to thrill all through the aisles and up through the crowded galleries, sing:

Who of us death's awful road  
In the coming year shall tread,  
With Thy rod and staff, O God,  
Comfort Thou his dying bed.

After another prayer from the pastor, and one from one of the deacons who accompanied him on the platform, a third hymn was sung, and Mr. Spurgeon began his short address. He took for his text the 42d verse of the 12th chapter of Exodus: "It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt; this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations." The night referred to in the text was that of the Passover—"a night of salvation, decision, emigration, and exultation," said the preacher, "and I pray God that this night the last of a memorable year, may be the same for you, my friends. Oh for a grand emigration among you like that of the departure of the people of Israel—an emptying out of old Egypt, a robbing of Pharaoh of his slaves, and the devil of his dupes!" It was understood that Mr. Spurgeon was labouring under a severe indisposition, and probably this fact gave the tone to his brief address, which was comparatively quiet and unimpassioned. Only once did he rise to the fervent height of oratory to which his congregation are accustomed, and that was at the close, when, with uplifted hands and louder voice he apostrophised the parting year: "Eighteen hundred and seventy three! thou art almost gone, and if thou goest now thy tidings to the throne of God will be that such and such a soul is yet unsaved. Oh stay yet awhile, Year, that thou mayest