

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

LESSON XII, FOURTH QUARTER, INTERNATIONAL SERIES, DEC. 23.

Text of the Lesson, Luke xlv, 30-53. Memory Verses, 40-48—Golden Text, Luke xlv, 51—Commentary Prepared by Rev. D. M. Stearns.

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While the topic of the lesson is "The Ascension," the portion assigned covers the evening of the first resurrection day and suggestively all the events between that and the actual ascension of verse 51. The alternate lesson suggested by the committee is a Christmas lesson from John 1, 1-14, on "The Word made flesh," but both can be easily combined, and each contains facts and truths which need to be strongly emphasized. The Word by whom all things were created was made flesh and dwelt among men on earth, God manifest in the flesh, and the body in which He dwelt was prepared by the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary, so that Jesus was in a peculiar and unique sense "the seed of the woman" (1 Tim. iii, 16; Luke i, 34, 35) of Gen. iii, 15. He was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law (Gal. iv, 4, 5), and, having borne our sins in His own body on the tree and been made a curse for us, He rose from the dead in a literal, material body of flesh and bones, concerning which He said, "Handle Me and see," and He showed them in His hands and feet the marks of the nails by which He had been fastened to the cross. He also actually ate before them (verses 39-43). "That resurrection body is a sample of what ours will be when we shall be like Him" (1 John iii, 2; Phil. iii, 20, 21) in the first resurrection at His coming.

He would have us believe these things regardless of all sight or feeling (John xx, 29; Mark v, 36) and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaim repentance and submission of sins among all nations as His witnesses (Mt, 28). He would have us restful, peaceful, untroubled and fearless (39-38; John xiv, 1, 27), consciously united to Him, the risen, living Christ, and believing that He sends us as the Father sent Him and that He is with us all the days as the Father was with Him (John xvii, 18; xx, 21; vi, 57; Matt. xxvii, 20). To be His witnesses we must believe the books of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms as He did (Mt, 23-40) and from the Scriptures preach Jesus as Philip did (Acts vii, 35). As we see how literally prophecy has been fulfilled in reference to His humiliation and sufferings we must believe that all prophecy concerning His kingdom and glory shall be just as literally fulfilled, remembering His words in verse 44, "All things must be fulfilled," and again in John x, 35, "The Scripture cannot be broken." There is no power for life or testimony apart from the Word of God and the Spirit of God, but filled with these the weakest vessel will be used by God as a witness unto Jesus Christ. Every believer has become a temple of the Holy Ghost and is indwelt by Him (John xiv, 17; 1 Cor. vi, 19, 20), but every believer should be filled with the Spirit (Eph. v, 18), speaking the word of God with boldness (Acts iv, 31), for otherwise the preaching, however orthodox, may be only cold water instead of boiling water to make His name known (Isa. lxi, 2).

What He was and did those forty days between His resurrection and visible ascension gives us some idea of what we shall be and do in our resurrection bodies in His kingdom, of which He had so much to say those forty days (Acts i, 3). While this present evil age of "the mystery of the kingdom" (Matt. xiii, 11) continues and the witnesses go forth with the incorruptible seed of the word we must expect to find it just as He said it would be in the parables of the sower and of the wheat and tares and other parables; but, as He was sustained under all His trials by the joy set before Him (Heb. xii, 2), so we, like the disciples, may joyfully continue (52, 53) amid all discouragements to be His faithful witnesses.

A more full account of His ascension is found in Acts i, 9-11, where notice the words "taken up" in verses 9, 11, and also verses 2, 22. In that same material but glorified body which came out of the tomb, which could be handled and in which He could eat and walk or vanish at pleasure, He ascended to the right hand of God, where as our High Priest He ever liveth to make intercession for us, sympathizing with us, for He was in all points tempted like as we are.

We can scarcely understand the amazement of the disciples as they saw Him slowly and calmly, with lifted hands stretched out to bless them, leave their midst and majestically ascend skyward. They were lost to all but their ascending Lord till the cloud received Him out of their sight, and then they continued gazing up into heaven, as if perchance they might obtain another glimpse of Him, until they were recalled to earth by the voice of two beside them, who said, "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." This second coming of Christ to end this age and bring in a better one is the blessed hope of the church (Tit. ii, 13) for which we wait. He will come to the air to receive us to Himself (1 Thess. iv, 16-18; 1 Cor. xv, 23, 51, 52), and then a little later He will come in glory, bringing all His saints with Him to end this age and set up His kingdom with Israel as its center (Col. iii, 43; 1 Thess. iii, 13). Then shall His feet stand again on the very hill from which He ascended, and Israel shall receive Him as their Messiah (Zech. xiv, 1-5; Isa. xxv, 9); then shall be glory to God and peace on earth.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

LESSON XIII, FOURTH QUARTER, INTERNATIONAL SERIES, DEC. 30.

Text of the Lesson, Comprehensive Quarterly Review—Golden Text, Isa. ix, 6—Commentary Prepared by Rev. D. M. Stearns.

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LESSON I.—The two great commandments (Mark xii, 28-34, 38-44). Golden Text, Mark xii, 30. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." The scribes knew the truth and were very religious, but their religion was a mere pretense, an outward form without any heart, a cloak to cover up a lot of sin. They were outwardly righteous, but inwardly full of hypocrisy and iniquity (Matt. xxiii, 28; Isa. xxix, 13; xxx, 9-11). The poor widow was right with God.

LESSON II.—The ten virgins (Matt. xxv, 1-13). Golden Text, Matt. xxv, 13. "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." All these parables of the kingdom of God or of heaven are covered by the phrase in His first parable, "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," and refer to this present age while the King is rejected and the kingdom in abeyance waiting for the King's return.

LESSON III.—The parable of the talents (Matt. xxv, 14-30). Golden Text, Prov. xxviii, 20. "A faithful man shall abound with blessings." During the absence of the King His redeemed ones, His servants, being intrusted with talents or pounds, are expected to occupy, trade, do business with these till His return, when all will have to account of their stewardship and be rewarded according to their works. See 1 Cor. iii, 11-15; Rev. xxii, 12; 1 John, 8.

LESSON IV.—Jesus anointed in Bethany (Matt. xxvi, 6-16). Golden Text, Matt. xxvi, 10. "She hath wrought a good work upon me." There were so few who understood Him. No one did fully. Not even Peter and John believed what He told them concerning His death and resurrection, but there was one in this Bethany home who seemed to come nearer to Him than all others.

LESSON V.—The Lord's supper (Matt. xxvi, 17-30). Golden Text, 1 Cor. xi, 24. "This do in remembrance of me." For nearly 1,500 years Israel had been remembering from year to year their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, with its iron furnace, by the mighty hand of God and by the blood of the passover Lamb, but now a greater deliverance for Israel when the kingdom shall come is spoken of, and till then all believers are to commemorate often the death and resurrection of the King.

LESSON VI.—Jesus in Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi, 36-50). Golden Text, Luke xxii, 42. "Not my will, but thine, be done." We can only stand in awe and dumb amazement as we read of this agony in Gethsemane, the strong crying, and tears, the sweat, as it were, drops of blood, the sleeping disciples who could not watch one hour, and the thrice repeated prayer. We note that the prayer was heard, and He was strengthened to go on and die on the cross and finish His work.

LESSON VII.—Jesus before Calaphas (Matt. xxvi, 57-68). Golden Text, Isa. liii, 3. "He is despised and rejected of men." Their long determined purpose is now to be carried out, and the time has come to let them, for they could have no power against Him except it was given them from above (John xix, 11), and they could not take His life from Him unless He was willing to let them (John x, 18).

LESSON VIII.—The world's temperance Sunday (Isa. v, 11-23). Golden Text, 1 Cor. ix, 27. "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection." The only true temperance—that is, complete self control—will be ours just in proportion to our being occupied with the Lord Jesus suffering in our stead; then, instead of the self life of intemperance, there will be the desired fruit of the first part of our lesson chapter.

LESSON IX.—Jesus before Pilate (Luke xxiii, 13-25). Golden Text, Luke xxiii, 4. "Then said Pilate * * * I find no fault in this man." Three times Pilate testified to His innocence, yet he delivered Jesus to their will. There are many now who have no fault to find with Him, but are not willing to be identified with Him, yet if we are not for Him we are against Him (Matt. xii, 30).

LESSON X.—Jesus on the cross (Luke xxiii, 33-46). Golden Text, Luke xxiii, 34. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Study the seven sayings and note in the first three salvation and glory and all that is needed between. See the King of the Jews crucified and remember that as the risen Christ He waits for the throne of David. All the prophecies concerning His kingdom and glory must be as truly fulfilled as those concerning His humiliation.

LESSON XI.—Jesus risen from the dead (Matt. xxviii, 1-15). Golden Text, Matt. xxviii, 6. "He is risen, as He said." See 1 Cor. xv, for the necessity and importance of the resurrection. Believe fully and firmly all the Scripture says of this great event—that the body which came out of the tomb was the same body that was crucified and still bore the marks of nails and spear.

LESSON XII.—Jesus ascends into heaven (Luke xxiv, 36-53). Golden Text, Luke xxiv, 51. R. V. "While He blessed them He parted from them and was carried up into heaven." He is now a risen and ascended Living Saviour, having all power in heaven and on earth, our great High Priest ever making intercession for us and touched with a feeling of our infirmities, while we go forth with His gospel to complete His church and bring Him back.

MIKE WRITES ON NATIONAL, STATE AND COUNTY AFFAIRS.

Chimacks, N. C., R. F. D. No. 1, Dec. 12, 1906

My Dear Uncle Pat:

I have just got your letter. No, the floters would not take money from the Providence township Republican boss. They don't seem to like him, and they told him they would rather vote the Democratic ticket for nothin' than to vote his old ticket for dough. Floters vote for the cash, but sometimes they won't take cash from a man that is worse than they are, that is, they won't sell out to a man that puts \$2 dollars of the bottle in his own pocket to every dollar he pays the floters for votin'. You can bet on old Providence.

You've heard of black pills, haint you? Well, the Republicans over in Chicago swallowed one at the election, and, as the old doctor used to say, they have been trying to vomick it up every since. But a black pill is so well sated by nature to a Republican's politshen's stomach that he can't heave it up. The thing just sticks because its natural for it to do so. Yes, they nominated a nigger for judge just to get all the niggers to vote the republican ticket, and the old coon got elected. Now they are in an awful fix and they are trying to get him to resign but the old coon wants "to hold vote just a little bit 'fore he resigns."

Aint it amusin to see the Rads bate the niggers before the election, and then tell em to skiddo after it is over? And aint it funny to hear em cuss Teddy Roosevelt for dischargin those colored men who made up that black company of nigger soldiers. But Teddy'll have em all right by next election. If he cant get em in a good humor any other way he'll have em all over to Washington, and dine with him and his distinguished friend Booker Washington.

They say spencer blackburned is a goin to contest the election in De Ate because he didn't get enough votes, and the weakly tar heel keeps nownin because spencer bee addams wont tell how many votes the Rads got in this state at the last electoin. I guess mistr spencer bee addams has as much right to be ashamed as any body, for they didnt get nigh as many votes as they got when tomas rollins was a runnin the machine. I think t. t. hicks and mister toms is a kickin cause the Rads made em believe that they would carry the state, and they flopped over at the wrong time, and many ann butler, the two spensers and BIG BOSS jeemes is mortified because they didnt get as many votes in the state as they promised Teddy, while the little tiny boss in this county not only failed to tell his crowd how to get votes but mad a dismal failure showin em how to do it. A man who dont know when its a goin to rain is at a very greate disadvantage in bein able to tell his crown when to run to shelter.

The Rads have many different kinds of bosses. There's the state boss, the county boss, the township boss, and then all these bosses have intenet bosses. Its not hard to work up to the position of Republican township boss in this county. All a man has to do is to deny the Ten Commandments occasionally, resurrect old Annanis, obey the county boss, and distribute the dough without lettin to much of it stick to his fingers. Of course, you know a man couldn't make much bread it nearly all the dough was stick to his fingers. Some seem to wonder why they didnt have more Radical bread in Providence, but they ought to see what went with the dough before they wonder very much about it.

Well, its very amusin to see the old, battle-scarred Republican bosses since the election. They look just like they'd been a foolin with the hind legs on the back end of a kick-in mule. One of em said their leaders lost their heads, but I dont see what difference that makes, for they can go to the store and buy a cabbage head for five or ten cents.

Kongress has plade the dickens with Roosevelt's spellin klass by swopin off Andru Karnegys symphy-side spellin book for Websters disshnerv. Elihu Rute wood has got a dozen bed marks if he had bin aloud to spel like this: "M-u-l-e, mule; f-u-l-e, fool; s-k-u-l-e, school; h-o-p-e, hope; s-o-p-e, soap, and so 4th. If many ann butler dont kum to Teddy's relief in thys spellin business I dont C hou in the kingdom kum he can ever get his klass thro the book, and giv bis skolars a thure drill in the grate and symphy-side art of spellin, as was his purpose when he adopted Andru's nu spellin book.

O, its dredful, awful dredful, not 2 B aloud 2 use nu things. Well, its about time for BIG BOSS jeemes to come down and straighten out things, and he ought to bring spencer bee addams and many ann butler and t. t. hicks to dress the wounds of the fallen. Your newew, MIKE DOOGANSHIFLD, JR.

Run-down People



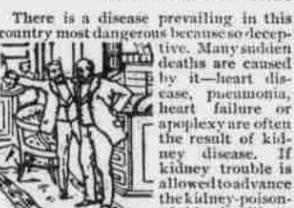
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