

Sunday School Lesson

LESSON FOR JUNE 8TH.

THE MINISTRY OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL AMONG THE EXILES

Golden Text.—I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away. Ezekiel 30: 16.

Notes by REV. RISEBOROUGH

Ezekiel—The Strength of God

"Son of Man" is the title given to him. This marks him out as a real brother among men. No other prophet is addressed in this manner, and it is very striking. It speaks to us of the prophet's oneness with humanity. He prophesies to his fellow captives in a strange land. If they cannot sing the songs of Jehovah, he can speak the words of Jehovah. He even rebelled against the call of God. His ministry had to be carried on in the power of the Mighty Spirit of Jehovah. And the Spirit entered into me. (Ezek. 2: 2). And the Spirit took me up. (Ezek. 3: 12).

So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was heavy upon me. (Ezek. 3: 14).

Ezekiel was a priest, the son of Buzi. He was among the second group of captives that were carried away in the reign of Jehoiachin. The word of Jehovah came expressly to him in the land of the Chaldeans when he was by the banks of the River Chebar. Three of the books of the bible were written by captives in exile—Ezekiel and Daniel in Babylon; the Revelation by John in Patmos. They are all books of marvellous visions. They all foretell the coming triumph of God's Great Messiah and Son. Sorrow and loneliness in captivity cannot shut out God. Ezekiel's ministry began with visions of God. The heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. (Chap. 1: 1). God prepares His servants for any special work that they are called upon by Him to do.

The Vision of God Described by Ezekiel

As the prophet looked a whirlwind came out of the north and a cloud and fire enfolding itself and a brightness was about it, and the brightness from the midst of the fire was the color of amber. From the midst of this brightness came him with their wonderful faces and wings. One face was the face of a man, another the face of a lion, the third was the face of an ox, the fourth was the face of an eagle. Thus there was displayed their intelligence, boldness, patience, and swiftness. Then under the wings were the hands of a man. They intelligently moved along in their service to God. Where the Spirit led them, whither the Spirit was to lead they went. It was a wonderful vision. See chapter 1. When the prophet saw these manifestations of Divine power he fell upon his face, and there came to him the voice of God giving him instructions as to his ministry. His ministry was to be a disappointing one. The exiles were expecting to go back soon to their own land, and to the holy city Jerusalem, and the Temple. Ezekiel had to tell them that they would not return thither. His first act was to portray Jerusalem besieged by its enemies. (Chap. 1).

TO CLEAN BUCK OR CANVAS SHOES ALWAYS USE—"PURE WHITE"

this is a guaranteed product of the highest quality—specially good for buck shoes. Preserves the leather and makes them vivid white.



Just apply and allow to dry—then rub lightly, to give an even finish.

FROM ALL GOOD DEALERS

Made in Canada by Boston Blacking Company MONTREAL



Ezekiel in the Midst of the Exiles

The prophet was taken away by the Spirit and brought to Tel-abib, by the river Chebar, where the captives had been placed by the King of Babylon. There the prophet sat down among them seven days. He was astonished by what he saw. Their wretched condition, their sorrowful lamentations, their rebellious spirit forced the prophet to be silent. He could not utter a word. "By the rivers of Babylon there they sat down, yea, they wept when they remembered Zion." God saw and knew his agony of soul, so He commanded him to go into his house and shut himself up and bind himself and not go out among them. The Lord also to silence upon his lips, until he was ready to speak, made him dumb by causing his tongue to cleave to the roof of his mouth. When the prophet did begin to teach them it was by symbols. The title upon which he portrayed Jerusalem, the miniature fort he built, and the camp he pitched, also the battering rams, and the iron pan were all symbols of the disaster which was coming upon Jerusalem. He was not able at that time to speak of this judgment in words. He set before them in symbols the iniquity of Israel. He was commanded to lie on his left side and eat and drink by weight and measure to show the famine that was coming. The burning of Jerusalem and the destruction and slaughter of Judah's people, and the captivity of those who were left, were set forth in symbol by cutting off his own beard with a sharp knife, even a barber's razor. One-third part of his beard he burnt with fire, one-third he smote about with his knife, the other part he scattered to the winds. Thus he preached of fire, sword and exile (Ezek. chap. 3 and 4). The picture was too dreadful to describe to these exiles in words. When the prophet did begin to prophesy in words, he spoke to the mountains. Then when he had used symbol and indirect speech, he was prepared and the people were prepared for the direct message. Face to face, and heart to heart. Even then, the prophet was greatly distressed when Pelatiah, one of the princes, fell down dead whilst he was prophesying. "Then fell I down upon my face and cried with a loud voice and said, Ah Lord God! Wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel. (Chap. 11: 13). It was a hard thing to prophesy death and judgment to his people sorrowing in exile.

The Comforting Part of the Prophet's Ministry

Great glimpses of light were given even in what we must call the judgment preaching of Ezekiel. The crown would be taken off the wicked, but it would be placed upon the True Prince. "Thus saith the Lord God. Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; this shall not be the same, exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more until he come, whose right it is; and I will give it to him. The prophet saw the overthrow of the wicked one and the crowning of the True King. (Ezek. 21: 25-27).

Ezekiel gives a full description of Jehovah as the Good Shepherd who will seek out all His scattered sheep and bring them home to His own eternal fold. In after years when the fulness of time had come the Good Shepherd would stand in Galilee and say, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. His vision would be beyond that of Ezekiel. He said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. (John 10: 16).

The False Shepherds Reproved

They did not seek the welfare of the sheep. Their own interests were put first. Selfishness was their curse. They fed and clothed themselves. The sick, the diseased, the broken and those frightened by savage beasts were allowed to perish. They incurred Jehovah's "Woe unto you." The Lord was against these false shepherds. He would neither let them feed the sheep, nor themselves. The Lord would require at the judgment what they had done with His sheep. Every man shall give an

account of himself to God. (Romans 14: 12). The man who occupies the position of pastor, will have to give an account of himself and his charge. When the prophet was commissioned by the Lord, he was told of its solemn responsibility in these words: "When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. Paul says, Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men. (2 Corin. 5: 11). Mr. Spurgeon used to say to those who applied to him for entrance to his college for the ministry. If you can keep out of the ministry do so. He had a little knowledge of its solemn responsibility. "And who is sufficient for these things." God must call and empower.

A Picture of the Chief Shepherd

To the faithful pastor God speaks. (1) The true shepherd seeks for his sheep in every place where they are scattered. "He goeth after that which is lost UNTIL HE FIND IT." He bringeth them to His own beautiful land. On mountain pastures, He feedeth them. By the beautiful rivers He leadeth them. He causeth them to lie down and rest. Especially does He care for the ones who are sick or have broken bones. All good things doth He provide for them; but He executes judgment to their enemies.

The Prophecy of the Coming Shepherd (v. 23)

Moses prophesied of Christ as the coming prophet. Isaiah spoke of Him as the suffering lamb of God. The sin-bearer. Malachi speaks of Him as the Sun of Righteousness. God, speaking through Ezekiel, said, And I will set up one Shepherd over them and He shall feed them, even my servant David.

Bible Thoughts For Today

JUNE 6 I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT, I have finished my course.

X-RAY INDICATED CANCER, RELIEVED BY "FRUIT-A-TIVES"

Splendid Fruit Medicine Performs Another Miracle.

The incalculable value of "Fruit-a-tives" can best be appreciated when it completely relieves some dangerous, deadly malady that is sapping the health and strength of the sufferer. After reading this letter, it is easy to understand why Mrs. Glover was glad to write about "Fruit-a-tives" in the hope that her experience would guide others to try this wonderful fruit medicine.

"For years, I was a sufferer with chronic Dyspepsia, Indigestion and Constipation; the stomach pains were dreadful and finally my health broke down completely. After five X-rays had been taken, I was advised that my condition strongly resembled Cancer of the Stomach and an immediate operation was necessary. Dreading an operation, I consulted other physicians but grew steadily worse. I had almost given up hope when I decided to try "Fruit-a-tives" recommended by many friends.

Immediately my condition began to improve. Pains disappeared; soon Dyspepsia and constipation were things of the past. After a few months I was perfectly well again and have been in the best of health for over a year now." Mrs. ANNIE GLOVER, 16 Henry Street, Ottawa.

Just try "Fruit-a-tives"—let them prove their real worth. 25c. and 50c. box, at all dealers or sent postpaid by Fruit-a-tives Limited, Ottawa, Ont.



MRS ANNIE GLOVER

I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.—2 Timothy 4: 7.

JUNE 9

BE NOT DECEIVED; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh, reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.—Galatians 6: 7-9.

JUNE 10

WITHHOLD NOT THOU THY TENDER MERCIES FROM ME, O LORD: LET THY LOVING KINDNESS AND THY TRUTH CONTINUALLY PRESERVE ME.—Psalm 40: 11.

JUNE 11

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.—Gal. 5: 22, 23.

JUNE 12

TRUST IN THE LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.—Proverbs 3: 5.

JUNE 13

THE RIGHTEOUS shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.—Psalm 37: 29, 31.

JUNE 14

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.—John 14: 6.

Are You Getting Genuine MAPLE BUDS?

WHEN you ask for Maple Buds notice what the man behind the counter gives you. There are a number of cheap imitations that look like Maple Buds, but lack their quality and flavor.

See that you get the genuine—look for the name "COWAN". It is on each real Maple Bud.

If They're not COWAN'S They're Not MAPLE BUDS

Hand the dealer back his substitutes

