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## The Sunday School Lesson

JUNE 1.

The Babylonian Exile of Judah, 2 Kings, chs. 21 to 25; 2 Chronicles, ch. 36. Golden Text—Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.—Prov. 14: 34.

When, after the death of Josiah in the battle with the Egyptians at Megiddo (2 Kings ch. 23:29, 30), the heavy hand of Egypt first, then that of Babylon, fell upon the little kingdom, there was neither strength to resist nor wisdom to guide. Jehoahaz, the first of Josiah's sons to succeed him, after a brief reign of three months, was deposed and carried captive to Egypt.

Jehoiakim, the second son, set on the throne of Judah by the Egyptian king, reigned eleven evil years. After the great battle at Carchemish, on the river Euphrates, in B.C. 604, when the victorious Chaldeans routed the Egyptian army and drove it back to Egypt (Jer. 46: 1-12), he transferred his allegiance to the Chaldeans, who now sought to rule the world. Three years later he rebelled and brought upon his country the horrors of a foreign invasion (2 Kings 24: 1-4) in the midst of which he died. His wickedness and injustice, in striking contrast to the goodness of his father, and his unhappy end, are described in Jer. ch. 22:13-19.

Jerusalem was taken in B.C. 597, by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the young king Jehoiachin (called also Jeconiah and Coniah), together with a great number of the best of the people, was carried away to Babylon into lifelong captivity, and "none remained save the poorest sort of the people of the land." (2 Kings 24: 10-16; Jer. 22: 24-30. A third son of Josiah, who assumed the royal name of Zedekiah, was left to rule over this wretched remnant for another eleven years.

2 Chron. 36: 11-21. The reign of Zedekiah and fall of Jerusalem—Compare Kings 24: 18 to 25: 11 and Jer. 52: 1-34. The eleven years of Zedekiah's reign were between years 597 and 586. Zedekiah appears to have been a man of some good impulses, but was easily subjected to the stronger will of his unscrupulous counsellors. Jeremiah spoke to him boldly and earnestly, advising submission to Babylon as the only rebellion and wise policy, but when rebellion was determined upon he was put under restraint, and at one time was thrown into a foul dungeon. Zedekiah more than once sought his counsel, and had he listened to it might have saved himself and his city. His pitiful weakness and cowardice was his undoing. See the graphic story told of the king and the prophet in Jer. 37: 1 to 38: 28. For the several occasions upon which Jeremiah addressed messages to the king, see chs. 21, 27, 32, 37, and 38 of his book.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, "had made him swear" submission by a most solemn oath. Jeremiah counselled him to keep his sworn obligation (compare Ezek. 17: 19) and this counsel of the prophet, which seemed at first treasonable to many of the princes and people, was proved in the end to have been the only possible way of safety. The writer of Chronicles, however, regards as the king's chief sin the fact that he "hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel."

In aggravation of his political crime, his breaking faith with the Babylonian king, was the crime against religion committed not only by Zedekiah, but also by "all the chiefs of the priests, and the people." They "transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen." They introduced these abominations and often used in practices into the very temple of Jehovah. Ezekiel, who had been a temple priest and knew the place well, and who was at that time a captive in Babylon, describes in the form of a vision what he saw in the temple—the "image of jealousy" (perhaps an image of the goddess Asherah) and, in a secret chamber, a mysterious image worship, then at the temple gate "the women weeping for Tammuz" (a Babylonian custom connected with the spring festivals, and often accompanied by licentious practices), then a group of sun-worshippers with their backs turned to the temple, and he adds: "Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence." Idolatry and lawlessness went hand in hand, and the desperate condition of the country did not restrain from evil deeds. (See Ezek. ch. 8.)

God had, indeed, sent his messengers, the prophets: men like Jeremiah and Zephaniah, Habakkuk and Ezekiel, who had faithfully warned the people, had preached repentance and God's forgiving grace, but they had been mocked and despised "until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." The taking of Jerusalem in B.C. 586, after a long siege, by the Chaldeans, must have been a great and terrible calamity. When here should be compared the Lamentations of Jeremiah, some part of which was probably written shortly after the event. See especially chapters 2 and 4. "How hath the Lord covered the

daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel." APPLICATION. There is something tragic about the destruction of a great and historic city like Jerusalem, for such a city is the heart of the nation. How did this world-shaking disaster come about? Did Jerusalem fall simply because the Chaldean was a covetous, merciless, overpowering invader, or had the Jew something to do with the unspeakable fate of his beloved city?

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The Chaldean was hard and vindictive, boastful and arrogant, but the Jew brought ruin about his own ears by his treachery and violation of treaties. Zedekiah swore to be loyal to the king of Babylon, but he broke his oath, and the doom fell on his nation and capital. There is another incident worth noting because it gives us a clue to the disregard for the plighted word that marked the rulers of Jerusalem. While the siege was in progress, and the children were crying for food, and men's hearts were desperate, the ruler resolved to proclaim the emancipation of the slaves. That decision was the result of a panic and fear. Suddenly an Egyptian army had appeared on the scene. The Babylonians gave up their task of subduing the city until the Egyptian should be attended to. At once the rulers, in a delirium of joy, revoked their slavery of treachery. It was a base act of covantery. "How could there be anything but ruin for a state ruled by such men?"

It is well to note the completeness of the destruction of Jerusalem. The people had gloried in the temple as the centre of their worship. Sacrificial ritual on an enormous scale had been carried out. It had become an orthodoxy that the temple could not be overturned. And now everything was gone—temple, priesthood, palace and monarch; even the walls of the city were laid low. "The city was put to fire and sword. Neither age nor dignity of sacred office saved the leading men from the Babylonian vengeance. At last, when the blood of fury had subsided, all of the population possessing any worth in the eyes of a slaveholding empire, were deported. Jerusalem, according to Micah's prophecy, became a heap.

But was everything lost? Men avoided the site of the city as the place where the curse of God had fallen. Did Jerusalem lie behind only smoke and bloodshed, disappointment and blighted hopes? Such would be a very mistaken estimate of the legacy bequeathed to the world by the doomed city. At least one man threw about the dying city an imperishable glory—Jeremiah. (See Jer. chs. 37, 38.) What a loyal soul! How brave and tenacious of his high purpose! What a sufferer! How he loved his people and his country, and how it broke his heart to be compelled to testify against them because of their sins! But Jeremiah's contribution may be set forth more specifically. He had faith that though all destroyed, religion itself would flourish in men's hearts as a spiritual experience, far more genuinely than in the old days when men leaned hard on the outward institutions. So "Jeremiah announced that religion is eternal because it is the possession of the heart of man. The Chaldeans had struck down a state and a city, and an organization of religion, but the indestructible thing was beyond their power, even that secret of true religion hidden in the breast of man whose bitter fate it was to sit lonely in his prison while Judah went to her doom."

**Feeding Lambs.** Lambs should be taught to eat as soon as possible after birth. Even when a few days old they will commence nibbling, and when they are two weeks of age should be eating fairly regularly. A separate compartment, says an authority of the Dominion Live Stock Branch, should be provided wherein they can be fed without molestation by the ewes. To effect this, a lamb creep can be readily constructed by means of two wooden rollers revolving around iron pins in a hurdle a sufficient distance apart to allow only the lambs to go through. The rollers are better than stationary slabs, since rubbing and consequent wearing of the wool from the lambs' sides are minimized. A good quality of hay, preferably alfalfa or clover, should be provided in small racks within reach of the lambs. Grain and some succulent feed, as cabbage or turnips, should be fed twice a day in amounts consistent with their appetites. The lambs should be fed all they will eat of a palatable and nutritious ration, so as to keep them in thriving condition and to avoid serious checks in growth.

# EFFICIENT FARMING

\$2,000 CASH FOR A SPRING.

"I'll give you \$2,000 cash for your spring if you'll move it over on my place," said John Bernhard to John Sess, a neighbor, the other day.

But, as it happens, springs can not be bought. They are here or there, or they aren't, and no amount of money or any power of man can make any difference. Man can say, however, whether springs live or die. An instance of what spring conservation means to modern farming is found on the farm of John and Fred Sess. In the first place, the farm was located where it is just because of the spring. Much timber has been cut on the Sess land in the years since it was taken up as a homestead, but the trees in the ravine in which the spring breaks from the rock never have been touched, nor have those in the immediate vicinity of the spring. To-day the fine stream of pure cold water flows in undiminished volume. In the box that has been built around it, the cream can is kept. When the farmers' creamery, patronized by the Sess brothers, this year offered prizes for the best and sweetest cream received during a period of six successive months, the Sess brothers were awarded the first prize of \$25.

"How do you care for your cream?" they were asked. "Oh, our spring does the work," John answered. "The water is very good. We take the cream down to the spring, right from the separator, and put the can in the box. The cold water drives out the animal heat quickly and keeps it cold. The deep shade helps, too. You couldn't hire us to cut down the trees about the spring or up the ravine. One of our neighbors had a good spring, but he cut off all the trees and the spring has dried up."

But the spring is more than a cream cooler to the Sesses. It flows away from the cream-can box in two brooklets. One brooklet runs through the hog pasture, past the hog barn. The other ripples down through the chicken yard by the poultry house. Both hog stable and chicken coop have been purposely located beside the brooks.

The Sesses have their feed cooker close to the spring, making it easy for water. In fact, they have made their spring an almost priceless utility and a time and labor-saver besides. "And all just because we saved the trees," says John.

## HARROWING YOUNG CORN.

One of our neighbors, who made a neat farm fortune, always made a practice of harrowing young corn as the first cultivation. He says: "When you harrow young corn

either shut your eyes or never look back."

The reason some farmers never harrow young corn as the first cultivation is that they are afraid the harrow will either cover it all up or root it all out of the ground.

Such fear, however, is unfounded. Harrowing young corn will often cover much of it, but it will not root it out, providing the harrow teeth are set the least bit slanting backwards.

In some good corn sections harrowing corn for the first cultivation is practiced generally. These farmers believe, and for good reasons, that the harrow is a better implement for the first going over of young corn than the shovel cultivator. Also, with one team and a two-section harrow you can cultivate twice as much corn as with a standard two-horse shovel cultivator, and do the work twice as easily.

The harrow works very close to the young stalks without injury, and it makes the surface soil fine and smoother for conserving moisture.

The only time not to harrow young corn is when the spring season is wet and the corn ground soil wet and packed.

Last season we harrowed and cross harrowed a good-sized field of young corn. After the second harrowing it looked like a bare field. Almost all of the young stalks were covered—with fine dirt. In two days that field of young corn was the brightest and best on the big farm.

Often a farmer is rushed with late spring planting and is not able to work his corn ground as well as he would wish before planting. In such cases it is well to go ahead and do the planting. Then follow at leisure with a harrowing, just as the young corn is beginning to come up, or a little later. This later harrowing will make a dust mulch for dry times, and will serve as a right good first cultivation.

One rather dry year we gave one cornfield two harrowings for first cultivations, and after those used a one-horse fourteen-toothed harrow cultivator when the corn was older and taller. That field that year was cultivated wholly with harrows, and the yield was large.

Old corn after tassel and shooting, when it can no longer be cultivated with the standard two-horse cultivator, may be cultivated to advantage with a one-horse harrow or harrow cultivator. Of a dry year such late light surface cultivation keeps down late weeds and conserves soil moisture at a critical time of ear development, when abundance of soil moisture is the making of a banner crop.

## POULTRY.

A lot of colds that cause losses next fall can be prevented by teaching the chicks to roost at an early age. Then they do not crowd and become overheated at night and catch cold in the morning on the cool ground. The slight running at the nostrils which may trouble a growing chick all summer may be the cause of the swollen head which suddenly develops during the cool fall weather.

Keep the brooder houses as free as possible from dust and it may help to prevent colds. This is done by occasionally changing the litter and brushing the stove and brooder canopy which is soon thickly covered with dust. Keep down the accumulation of cobwebs and keep the windows clean to permit the sunshine to enter and help disinfect the house.

Mites often sap the blood from young stock and make them more susceptible to colds. The roosts in colony houses need just as much spray dope as the laying house roosts. Often the colony house roosts are nailed to the uprights furnishing crevices where millions of mites can hide during the day. Soak those crevices with the engine oil drained from a crank case and you will help protect the young stock from mites.

## Raising Motherless Lambs.

Relative to the raising of pet, or motherless lambs, if great care and discretion are observed in feeding, stunting will be avoided. An ordinary bottle and rubber should be used. In commenting the lambs upon cow's milk, avoid feeding too heavily upon a milk that is very rich, as it may cause indigestion, is the advice of the Sheep and Swine Division of the Dominion Live Stock Branch. The milk is more palatable when slightly sweetened with sugar, and it may be necessary to feed with it, at intervals, some castor oil to prevent constipation. The first feed of the lamb should be, if possible, colostrum or the milk of the first five days after commencement of the lactation. If this cannot be obtained use castor oil freely until the fleeces show yellow. If many lambs are to be reared by hand a bucket with several rubber tubes with nipples attached can be used advantageously, or the more convenient practice of teaching the lambs, like calves, to drink out of a bowl or pail may be followed.



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## For Home and Country

### Of What Use Are the Branch Directors?

This is a question frequently asked by the Directors themselves. The Board of Directors for the Branch consists of the President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary-treasurer and three Directors with an additional Director for each twenty-five members above fifty. The members may elect additional Directors if they so desire, at the time of the annual meeting. The whole forms the Management Committee, a sort of trustee board, for the Institute for the year. It is elected annually in May by the paid-up members for the current year and those who have paid their fee for the coming year.

The Directors are expected to assist the Executive officers in carrying on the work of the Institute. It is advisable to have one or more of the Directors on each special committee.

THESE BALEES STILL A GOSEND. The Secretary of a Northern Institute that distributed donations of clothing writes: "People are just the same as of old. When you help them materially there is a prospect of helping them materially. The President and I have got along pretty well handing out goods. We were so fortunate as to be able to help a family where the man had a broken leg; there was a wife and eight children, the eldest fourteen.

"In another home there were a brother and sister, both elderly. The brother told my husband that he had no underclothes and that his sister had her feet wrapped in burlap bags. They needed everything in the way of clothing. The Institute sent one parcel and have bought yarn and are sending socks and stockings. We have not everything, but we are getting quite a lot out of what we had left from the sales from the Institutes of Southern Ontario. We are putting some of our own with it, and sending a little food too."

Another says: "The boxes from Southern Ontario Institutes proved a veritable Godsend to us. A family of six were burned out at noon on Sunday and by night our officers and a few members had them fixed up comfortable in a shack of their own."

This is the time to kill weeds. Every weed that gets an inch high in a growing crop decreases the yield of that crop. The fellow who waits till all the weeds germinate before cultivating his corn, so that he can kill them all at one lick, has to buy feed for his horses.

My hired man got sick last spring in the midst of the corn-planting rush when I was crowding the work. I had been driving a three-horse disk while he followed with two horses on the driving and with one hand while I led the harrow team. Using a broomstick instead of a strap I could hold them back from stepping into the disk blades. It worked. Since then I don't use two men to do one man's work, if I can figure out a one-man way of doing it. I was sorry Jete got sick, but I use my head a little more.

The Executive Committee, consisting of the President, Vice-Presidents and Secretary-treasurer, should carry into effect the business of the Institute, as specified by the Board of Directors. Anything of an unusual character, whether it be regarding meetings, entertainments or the expenditure of funds, should be referred to the Directors or a regular or special meeting.

An example of the work of Directors in a special case was recently given at Fonthill Institute.

This Branch is working for a much-needed community hall; and ways and means of raising money, which should also leave the community better educationally and socially were being discussed.

Finally it was proposed to leave it to the Executive to investigate and report.