

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

BY E. C. SELLERS, Director of Evening Dept. ment. The Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.

LESSON FOR NOVEMBER 16

THE DEATH OF MOSES.

LESSON TEXT—Deut. 34:1-12. GOLDEN TEXT—"Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints." Ps. 116:15.

I. The Old Leader, vv. 1-5. We have now come to the last of our lessons which have to do with Moses. Following his lamented failure at the time of the second arrival at Kadesh-Barnea. Miriam dies; at Mt. Hor, Aaron departed and his office is bestowed upon his son, Eleazar. Then quickly followed the plague of serpents, the defeat of the king of the Amorites, Balaam's folly, the apostasy of Israel which was cleansed by blood through the zeal of Phinehas, and finally the arrival upon the plains of Moab.

Law Confirmed. Here Moses repeats and confirms the law to this new generation of Israel, delivers his last charge, sings his last song, ascends Mt. Nebo to view Canaan, and is "forever with the Lord." In the passage marked out for this lesson we have the account of the passing of this wonderful servant of God. Returning to ch. 31:1-8 and 32:44-52 we see this journey in prospect, after that we read Moses' parting blessing and in this section we read of the fulfillment of that prospect. Moses anticipated his departure by a quiet night, absolutely divorced from haste or fret, that was characteristic of his life of submission and was the essence of his life of faith.

Before departure Moses solemnly charged this newer generation to observe the law, declaring that it is not a vain nor an empty thing, but in deed and in truth to them the way of life. Then comes the simple dignified account of this last act of obedience, simple, yet sublime. Yonder we see him viewed by the hosts of Israel, as he ascends the mountain alone—at not alone—prepared to spend his last hours upon earth with Jehovah, who doubtless appeared as the angel—Jehovah—and pointed out to him the land he so much longed to enter, but could not because he failed to sanctify God in the sight of the people at a critical moment. Taking the glory to himself on that occasion demanded an act of punishment as a warning to the people, hence, "it went ill with Moses for their sakes," Ps. 106:32. There upon the mount God's covenant with Abraham is confirmed and with undimmed eye and undiminished vigor (v. 7), Moses was shown the fulfillment of that promise, his body was laid to rest by God himself, in an unknown and unmarked sepulchre, "over against Beth-Peor," v. 6.

II. The New Leader, v. 9. God never leaves his people without a leader and hence Joshua is exalted to compensate Israel for the loss of Moses. "The king is dead—long live the king." The worker dies, the work goes on and many times the victories of the new leader are fully as great and far reaching as any won by the former leader. Joshua was not Moses, he was Joshua and as such called to face new problems.

III. A Great Character, vv. 10-12. The description of Moses is of one who saw Jehovah face to face, a peculiar dignity, and the secret of his greatness. When Aaron and Miriam murmured God declared that Moses was different from all other prophets in that, "with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches, and the form of Jehovah shall be beheld," Num. 12:6-8. Moses himself declared to Israel that when God spoke to them out of the midst of the fire, "I stood between the Lord and you," Deut. 5:4, 5. The supreme teaching of this lesson is the fact that great as Moses was, he was nevertheless excluded from the promised land as a warning to Israel.

On the other hand this story is a wonderful illustration of the tender compassion and watchful care of Jehovah even to the end. Even the discipline of Jehovah is accompanied by gentleness. If he must needs be excluded yet he is not excluded from communion with Jehovah.

Thus this saint who was separated to the will of God passes out of life. In the hour of the consummation of his life work his spirit passes into yet closer fellowship with God. The Psalmist in the words of the golden text most beautifully suggests that such an hour is a delight to God, and suggests the welcome which must be awaiting his saints. Do not forget the last glorious appearing of Moses after the lapse of the centuries when: "On the hills he never trod Spoke of the strife that won our life With the Incarnate Son of God."

"Death and judgment were a constant source of fear to me until I realized that neither shall have any hold on the child of God." D. L. Moody: Do not put death out of consideration, but welcome it as Moses welcomed it. When we stand on Pisgah, can we say we did our full duty? In that hour the plaudits of men will be still.

Moses was a great hero, prophet, priest, law-giver, poet and general, yet Israel could erect no monument over his grave to do him honor. It was a greater honor to follow his admonitions and obey the law.

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Strawberry Not European. A great many people are under the impression that the strawberry is of European origin. As a matter of fact, it is derived from the Chilean berry, which is native to the Pacific coast.

Natural Choice. "This is a curious old world. If you have no money you are snubbed—if you have too much you are investigated." "Very true—but I had rather be investigated than snubbed; at that."

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Sofia's Lost Opportunity. Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, might have been Constantinople, if the Roman emperor, Constantine, had adhered to the preference he felt at one time for it. Several places were thought of as the site for the new Rome before the unrivaled natural advantages of Byzantium secured the honor—among them Troy and Gordica in Moesia, now known as Sofia.

Stomach Overworked. Eating between meals is a habit usually left over from childhood. Growing things need nourishing in small and frequent doses. Grown-ups merely require to repair the waste of the body—and the stomach is a comparatively small organ. Undoubtedly in many bodies it is kept stretched and in the same condition of an abused piece of rubber. How can it do its work?

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