

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Director of Evening Department, The Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 14 THE SIN OF ACHAN.

LESSON TEXT—Joshua 7:1-15. Read Joshua chapters 7-11. GOLDEN TEXT—"Be sure your sin will find you out."—Num. 32:23.

Before proceeding against Jericho, God, through his servant Joshua, had given strict injunctions as regards the taking of anything from the city for self-enrichment, ch. 6:17, 18. It was necessary at the outset of this campaign to safeguard Israel against any such motives. The fruits of their victories must in no way seem to be the rewards of, nor to be dependent upon, the efforts of their own hands. Spiritual victories are, as we learned last week, won by means and upon principles utterly foolish and inadequate in the view of human wisdom. Nor is the Christian dependent upon the principles of human thrift for his sustenance or enrichment. That does not mean the divorcement of the Christian from those principles.

The story of Achan is an illustration. While his sin was individualistic yet it was national in its results (v. 1). After the fall of Jericho, Joshua sent a detachment of 2,000 or 3,000 men to take possession of the small town of Ai (literally, "ruins"). The task was seemingly an unimportant and an easy one, but the result was that the expedition was turned into a miserable rout (vv. 1-5).

Achan's Sins Revealed. The stages of the sin of Achan are wonderfully revealed in the confession (v. 21) which was finally wrought from—"I saw . . . I coveted . . . I took . . . they are hid."

I. Joshua's error, vv. 6-9. It was right and proper for Joshua to bring his difficulty to God, but it was not right for him to lay upon him the blame for his defeat. Moses before him had made that same mistake (Ex. 5:22, 23), and it would seem that Joshua should have profited thereby. In this, however, he is supremely human. We of today with far greater light are constantly making this same mistake of accusing God, instead of finding out and judging our sin. There is, however, an underlying note of the master passion of Joshua's heart, that note which had so governed the heart of his predecessor, Moses. It is expressed in the last note of his complaint, "What wilt thou do for thy great name?" v. 9. This complaint and petition sounds very much like those of the preceding generation uttered in the wilderness. For us to wish ourselves to be "content to dwell beyond Jordan," when the testing times of our Christian life come, when the calls come for an advance, is to doubt his wisdom. No wonder Joshua was amazed when he saw Israel turn its back upon its enemies (v. 8). We must beware lest we, too, be dismayed when we see the church of today give way before the world and the devil.

II. The cause of defeat, vv. 10-12. Joshua's petition is answered by the voice of Jehovah in terms of rebuke, strong, yet tender. In verse two we are told that Joshua sent men to view Ai. Why? Because in the language of verse one "the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing." Joshua wanted the people to know that the sin of Achan and its results was the sin of the whole nation. God brings the essential oneness of the nation before us in verse eleven; for an illustration, see 1 Cor. 5:1-7 and 12:12-14, 16.

God's Instructions, vv. 13-15. It is a testimony as to the spiritual condition of this nation that the fraud was so soon located. The early Christian church had a parallel incident in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1-11. In each case the evil was quickly judged and reveals the closeness of God to his people. In the process of years Israel passed from that condition; has the church of today so passed? God had given explicit instructions as to the spoil (ch. 6:18 R. V.). God commands Joshua not to cry unto him, but to "sanctify the people." The church of Christ, as well as the individual, needs to judge its sin and to set itself apart unto God.

It was a stern judgment and the query arises what sort of bonfire would the church have today were all sinfully acquired property to suffer similar destruction. It is noticeable, however, that there is no suggestion of any confession on the part of Achan until the narrowing circle of judgment had closed upon him. He confessed only when there was no possible escape. This seems like a stern, hard process, but yet God was dealing in mercy with the whole people.

IV. The Golden Text. The words of this text were uttered by Moses to the two and a half tribes who settled on the east of Jordan, that in case they refused to come to the help of their brethren in the conflict necessary to the possession of Canaan, their sin would discover them. This lesson warrants the application of its principle to your neighbor. It is a sin not to help your neighbor and conversely to indulge in any act which results in the defeat, moral or otherwise, of those with whom we associate, is also a sin.

Foils A Fowl Plot. When a shameful plot exists between liver and bowels to cause distress by refusing to act, take Dr. King's New Life Pills, and end result is injury to your neighbor. It is a sin not to help your neighbor and conversely to indulge in any act which results in the defeat, moral or otherwise, of those with whom we associate, is also a sin.

Cheap Filter. The most impure water may be purified by filtering through charcoal. Take a large flower pot, put a piece of sponge or clean moss over the hole in the bottom, and fill three-quarters full of equal parts of clean sand and charcoal. Over this lay a linen cloth large enough to hang over the sides of the pot. Pour the water into the cloth and it will come out pure.

Pigeon Stopped Clock. A pigeon flew against the face of the Ipswich (England) town hall clock and was caught between the minute hand and the dial. The clock was stopped for an hour until the bird was liberated.

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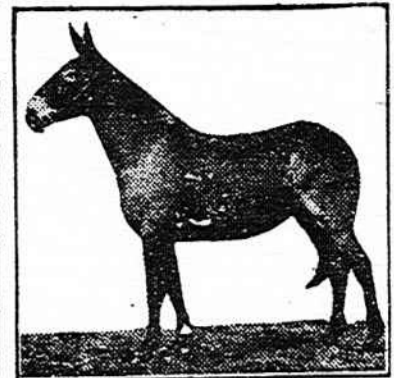
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MULE FOR HEAVY FARM WORK

Animal No More Vicious Than Horse If Properly Trained When Young—Lives Longer.

The mule is an animal that is looked upon with disfavor by a great many, but as a matter of fact a span of mules is about the most valuable thing that can be found on a farm. They have greater endurance than horses, are easily kept and can be worked under conditions that are sometimes impossible with horses.

During the summer, when the flies are swarming and the heat of the sun is oppressive, the farmer is frequently delayed with his work by the inability of the horses to stand heat, while a



Excellent Type of Mule.

span of mules may be kept patiently plodding away without the flies or the heat worrying them in the least. It is during such a time as this that the mules will show their real worth, says a writer in the Farm Progress.

A mule will grow sleek and fat upon less feed than a horse. Of course a little better ration should be fed, for it is hardly right to underfeed any animal.

I believe that poor training by his master has given the mule his reputation for viciousness. A mule's temperament is such that he resents any mistreatment more readily than a horse. If the trainer uses good judgment and proper treatment with the mule while it is young, there is no cause for its developing any bad habits. Many mules are as gentle and safe as any horse.

The mule is noted for its long life. It is a rarity to see a mule that has died from a natural cause. His constitution is so strong and vigorous as to be almost proof against many diseases. The average length of life of the mule is almost double that of the horse.

The mule is especially desirable for the farmer who has rough or hilly land to till, as he is more sure-footed than a horse and can be worked up ground where it would be difficult to take a horse.

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INJURIES BY THE BAGWORM

In Last Few Years Pest Has Abandoned Evergreens and Attacked Many Deciduous Trees.

(By L. HASEMAN.) The tough silken bags hanging from limbs and twigs of evergreen, shade and fruit trees in the winter are familiar to many farmers throughout the country. The caterpillar which makes these is commonly called a bagworm, basketworm or dropworm. In the past it has been more or less troublesome on evergreens, but in the last few years it has become destructive to many deciduous trees and shrubs. The rapid increase and spread of the pest



How Birds Destroy the Bagworm: Woodpeckers and Blackbirds Break Through the Tough Silk Bags. The Birds Are Very Helpful in the Warfare Against This Pest.

to orchards and to shade trees and ornamental shrubs in cities, parks and cemeteries have occasioned a great deal of loss in the past three or four years.

The bagworm is easy to control, at least upon trees of moderate size. There are two methods of destroying the pest, by collecting all of the bags and by spraying with poison. If the bagworm is restricted to only a few trees, one can easily collect all of the bags in the winter when the leaves are off. This method is in common use and is entirely effective, if carefully done. It does not work so well on evergreens and, of course, is out of the question in very large orchards or groves. In such cases it is necessary to spray when the young caterpillars begin to feed upon the foliage in the spring. Early spraying should be practiced as the pest is destroyed before the foliage is consumed. The first regular application of poison for the codling moth, just after the blossoms fall in the spring, will also control the bagworm in orchards. One careful application of poison before the first of June will usually control the pest either upon fruit, evergreen or shade trees.

Dividing Rhubarb Roots. Late fall is a good time to divide the rhubarb roots. Now is a good time to make preparations for the work.

During the early part of September dig the ground up around the roots and scatter or mix in with this layer a little well-rotted horse manure. In a month or so the roots can be divided and the new hills started.



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