

# ELAM'S NOTES

ON

# Bible School Lessons

1922

---

(Improved Uniform International Series)

---

EDITOR

**E. A. ELAM**

FREED - HARDEMAN COLLEGE LIBRARY

PRICE

Single Copy, postpaid 85 cents; 5 or more copies to same address 60c each, net  
Postage additional 5 cents per copy

**26113**

1921  
WILLIAMS PRINTING COMPANY  
NASHVILLE, TENN.

Copyright, 1921, by

E. A. ELAM

The Bible text and quotations used in this volume are taken from the American Standard edition of the Revised Bible, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson and Sons, and used by permission.

*Printed in United States of America*

FREED-HARDEMAN UNIV. LIB.  
HENDERSON, TN 38340-2399

NASHVILLE, TENN.  
156 Fourth Ave., N.



# 1922 LESSONS

## Later Leaders and Prophets of Israel (Northern Kingdom)

### FIRST QUARTER

I. January	1.—The Revolt of Jeroboam	1 Kings 12: 1-13: 6
II. "	8.—Elijah the Tishbite	1 Kings 17: 1-24
III. "	15.—Elijah's Challenge of Baal Worship	1 Kings 18: 1-46
IV. "	22.—Elijah's Flight and Return	1 Kings 19: 1-21
V. "	29.—Elijah in Naboth's Vineyard	1 Kings 21: 1-29
VI. February	5.—Elijah Taken Up into Heaven	2 Kings 2: 1-18
VII. "	12.—Elisha and the Shunnamite Woman	2 Kings 4: 8-37
VIII. "	19.—Elisha and Naaman the Syrian	2 Kings 5: 1-27
IX. "	26.—Elisha's Heavenly Defenders	2 Kings 6: 8-23
X. March	5.—Jehovah's Mercy to a Heathen City	Jonah 3: 1-4: 11
XI. "	12.—Amos Warns Israel—Temperance Lesson	Amos 6: 1-8
XII. "	19.—The Downfall of Israel	2 Kings 17: 1-18
XIII. "	26.—Israel's Reproach—Review	Prov. 14: 21-35

## Prophets and Kings in Judah (Southern Kingdom)

### SECOND QUARTER

I. April	2.—Asa Relies on God	2 Chron. 14: 1-12
II. "	9.—The Lord Preserves Joash	2 Kings 11: 1-17
III. "	16.—The Love of Joash for God's House	2 Kings 12: 7-15
IV. "	23.—Uzziah's Pride and Punishment	2 Chron. 26: 1-21
V. "	30.—Isaiah's Summons and Response	Isaiah 6: 1-13
VI. May	7.—Isaiah's Ideal for a World at Strife	Isa. 2: 2-4-11: 1-9
VII. "	14.—Hezekiah Leads His People Back to God	2 Chron. 30: 1-27
VIII. "	21.—Hilkiah's Great Discovery	2 Chron. 34: 14-33
IX. "	28.—Jeremiah Speaks Boldly for God	Jeremiah 26
X. June	4.—Jehoiakim Tries to Destroy God's Word	Jeremiah 36
XI. "	11.—Jeremiah Cast Into Prison	Jeremiah 37: 1-38: 13
XII. "	18.—The Downfall of Judah	2 Kings 25: 1-21
XIII. "	25.—Judah's Prosperity and Adversity—Review	Jeremiah 11: 1-8

## The Exile and the Restoration

### THIRD QUARTER

I. July	2.—Ezekiel, the Watchman of Israel	Ezekiel 2: 1-3: 27
II. "	9.—Daniel Interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's Dream	Daniel 2
III. "	16.—The Handwriting on the Wall—Temperance Lesson	Daniel 5: 1-31
IV. "	23.—Daniel and the Lions	Daniel 6: 1-28
V. "	30.—The First Return from Exile	Jeremiah 29: 10-14: Ezra 1: 1-11
VI. August	6.—The Temple Rebuilt and Dedicated	Ezra 3: 1-6: 22
VII. "	13.—Esther Saves Her People	Book of Esther
VIII. "	20.—The Second Return from Exile	Ezra 7: 1-8: 36
IX. "	27.—Nehemiah's Prayer	Nehemiah 3: 1-7: 4
X. September	3.—Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls of Jerusalem	Nehemiah 3: 1-7: 4
XI. "	10.—Teaching the Law of God	Nehemiah 8: 1-18
XII. "	17.—The Message of Malachi	Malachi 3: 1-4: 3
XIII. "	25.—The Exile and the Restoration—Review	Psalm 137: 1-6: 126

## Jesus the World's Savior

### FOURTH QUARTER

I. October	1.—The Birth of John the Baptist	Luke 1
II. "	8.—The Birth and Childhood of Jesus	Luke 2
III. "	15.—The Ministry of John the Baptist	Luke 3
IV. "	22.—Jesus Tempted	Luke 4: 1-30
V. "	29.—World-Wide Prohibition—World's Temperance Sunday	Isaiah 61: 1-9
VI. November	5.—Jesus the Great Physician	Luke 4: 31-5: 39
VII. "	12.—Jesus the Great Teacher	Luke 6: 1-49
VIII. "	19.—Jesus the Friend of Sinners	Luke 7
IX. "	26.—Jesus the Great Missionary	Luke 8
X. December	3.—Jesus Sending Out Missionaries	Luke 9: 1-10: 24
XI. "	10.—Story of the Good Samaritan	Luke 10: 25-37
XII. "	17.—Jesus Among Friends and Foes	Luke 10: 38-11: 54
XIII. "	24.—A Lesson in Trust and Preparedness	Luke 12: 16-31
XIV. "	31.—Jesus the World's Savior—Review	Luke 7: 11-23

The entire lesson to be studied is given in this list. When the text is long, only that portion is printed with the lesson treatment which has been selected by the Lesson Committee.

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

## From the Creation to the Birth of Christ

ACCORDING TO USSHER'S CHRONOLOGY

Period	Date B.C.	Event	Scripture Reference
I  From the Cre- ation to the Deluge	4004	The creation	Gen. 1, 2
	4002	Birth of Cain	Gen. 4: 1
	4001	Birth of Abel	Gen. 4: 2
	3875	Death of Abel	Gen. 4: 8
	3874	Birth of Seth	Gen. 5: 3
	3382	Birth of Enoch	Gen. 5: 18
	3317	Birth of Methuselah	Gen. 5: 21
	3074	Death of Adam	Gen. 5: 5
	3017	Enoch translated	Gen. 5: 24
	2948	Birth of Noah	Gen. 5: 28, 29
	2348	Death of Methuselah	Gen. 5: 27
II  From the Deluge to the Call of Abraham	2348	Noah enters the ark	Gen. 7: 6, 7
	2347	Noah goes forth from the ark	Gen. 8: 13
	2234	Building the tower of Babel	Gen. 11: 1-9
	1998	Death of Noah	Gen. 9: 29
	1996	Birth of Abraham	Gen. 11: 26
III  From the Call of Abraham to the Exodus	1936	Removal of Abraham from Ur to Haran	Gen. 11: 31
	1921	Abraham called to Canaan	Gen. 12: 1-5
	1913	Abraham's rescue of Lot	Gen. 14: 1-24
	1910	Birth of Ishmael	Gen. 16
	1897	Renewal of God's covenant with Abraham	Gen. 17, 18
	1897	Destruction of Sodom	Gen. 18, 19
	1896	Birth of Isaac	Gen. 21: 1-5
	1871	Abraham's faith tested	Gen. 22: 1-19
	1859	Death of Sarah	Gen. 23: 1, 2
	1856	Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah	Gen. 24
	1836	Birth of Jacob and Esau	Gen. 25: 24-26
	1821	Death of Abraham	Gen. 25: 7, 8
	1760	Jacob's flight to Padan-aram	Gen. 28-30
	1746	Birth of Joseph	Gen. 30: 22-24
	1729	Joseph sold into Egypt	Gen. 37
	1716	Joseph honored in Egypt	Gen. 41
	1706	Jacob's removal to Egypt	Gen. 43-47
	1689	Jacob's death	Gen. 49
	1636	Joseph's death	Gen. 50: 26
	1574	Birth of Aaron	Exod. 6: 20
	1571	Birth of Moses	Exod. 2: 1-10
	1531	Moses' flight to Midian	Exod. 2: 11-22
	1491	Moses commissioned to deliver Israel	Exod. 3, 4
IV  From the Exodus to the Division of the Kingdom	1491	Crossing the Red Sea	Exod. 14, 15
	1491	Giving the law at Sinai	Exod. 19-40
	1452	Death of Aaron	Num. 20: 27-29
	1451	Death of Moses	Deut. 34
	1451	Joshua, Moses' successor	Deut. 34: 9
	1451	Crossing the Jordan	Josh. 1-4
	1443	Death of Joshua	Josh. 24
	1153	Birth of Samuel	1 Sam. 1: 20
	1095	Saul anointed king of Israel	1 Sam. 10, 11
	1055	Death of Saul	1 Sam. 31
	1055	David made king of Judah	2 Sam. 2: 4
	1048	David made king of all Israel	2 Sam. 5: 1-5
	1033	Solomon's birth	2 Sam. 12: 24
	1015	Solomon made king	1 Kings 1
	975	Revolt of the ten tribes	1 Kings 12



Period	B.C.	Kings of Judah	Kings of Israel
V From the Division of the Kingdom to the Captivity of Judah	975	Rehoboam	Jeroboam
	958	Abijah, or Abijam	
	955	Asa	
	954		Nadab
	953		Baasha
	930		Elah
	929		Zimri
	929		Omri
	918		Ahab
	914	Jehoshaphat	
	897		Ahaziah
	896		Joram, or Jehoram
	892	Joram, or Jehoram	
	885	Ahaziah	
	884	Athaliah	Jehu
	878	Joash, or Jehoash	
	856		Jehoahaz
	839		Jehoash
	839	Amaziah	
	825		Jeroboam II
	810	Uzziah, or Azariah	
	784		Interregnum
	773		Zachariah
	772		Shallum
	772		Menahem
	761		Pekahiah
	759		Pekah
	758	Jotham	
	742	Ahaz	
	730		Hoshea
	726	Hezekiah	
	721		Captivity of Israel
	697	Manasseh	
	642	Amon	
	640	Josiah	
	609	Jehoahaz	
	609	Jehoiakim	
	598	Jehoiachin	
	598	Zedekiah	
	587	Captivity of Judah	
VI From the Captivity of Judah to End of Old Testament History	587	Destruction of Jerusalem	2 Kings 25:8,9
	538	Capture of Babylon by Cyrus	Dan. 5: 31
	536	Cyrus permits Jews to return	Ezra 1: 1-4
	536	Return under Zerubbabel	Ezra 2: 1, 2
	534	Foundation of second temple laid	Ezra 3: 8-13
	521	Building of temple stopped	Ezra 4: 24
	520	Building of temple resumed	Ezra 6: 14
	520	Appeals of Haggai and Zechariah	Ezra 6: 14
	515	Second temple dedicated	Ezra 6: 16-22
	478	Esther made queen by Xerxes	Esther 2: 17
VII From the Close of Old Testa- ment History to the Birth of Christ	473	Haman's plot fails	Esther 7: 10
	458	Ezra given a commission	Ezra 7: 11-26
	445	Nehemiah governor of Jerusalem	Neh. 2
	432	Second visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem	Neh. 13: 4-7
	335	Alexander the Great becomes monarch of the East	
	320	Ptolemy Lagus surprises Jerusalem	
	277	Septuagint Version of the scriptures ordered	
	170	Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian, captures Jeru- salem	
	166	Jews revolt and Judas Maccabaeus becomes governor of Jerusalem	
	63	Jerusalem becomes a Roman province	
	40	Herod made king	
	28	Augustus Caesar becomes emperor of Rome	
	18	Herod's temple begun	
	4	Birth of Christ	

NOTE: Old Testament dates cannot be given with exactness. Some of the dates are uncertain.

# ELAM'S NOTES

ON

## INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS

IMPROVED UNIFORM COURSE FOR 1922

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. The Duty of All to Study the Bible as a Whole

With these lessons we begin a nine months' study in the Old Testament, extending from the division of the Kingdom to the close of the Old Testament and including prophets and kings of both kingdoms.

One great advantage of the International system of lessons is, it includes the study of the whole Bible, provided one will study the chapters intervening between lessons. Good men provide good and true lessons from certain books and parts of the Bible, but it is best to study the whole Bible in its proper connection and proper divisions and applications.

This system for the nine months mentioned includes lessons in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the minor prophets, closing with Malachi.

In this way all the prophets are studied. Also in these lessons, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, with other historical books, are studied.

Since Jesus is the fulfilment of both the law and the prophets (Matt. 5: 17, 18) and since "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19: 10), all things "which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms," concerning him must be studied. (Luke 24.) Beginning "from Moses and from all the prophets" all things concerning him must be learned. (Luke 24: 27.) "In the law and the prophets and the Psalms," "it is written that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Luke 24: 46, 47.)

All these testify of Christ. (John 5: 39, 40.) God commands all, furthermore, to "remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior" through the apostles. (2 Pet. 3: 2.)

All the calamities—famines, pestilences and wars—and final destruction which came upon the Jews on account of sin and rebellion "happened unto them by way of ensample" and have been "written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come," that he who thinks he stands should "take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10: 11, 12.) "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience [steadfastness] and through comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Rom. 15: 4.)

With all these and many more such scriptures before us we are forced to the conclusion that any system of Bible study which does not embrace the whole Bible is incomplete.



## II. The Duty of Sinners to Study the Bible

It is the privilege and the duty of all to study the Bible for themselves. The Bible is the revelation of God's will to man, and it is passing strange that people have to be urged to study it; it is also strange and a wonderful deception of Satan that people should have ever thought the "unconverted," or sinners, could not understand it should they desire to study it. God demands that they hear and obey it. If one is not sufficiently interested in the salvation of one's own soul to study the Bible for one's self, that one may learn and do God's will, one is not sufficiently interested to be saved.

The parable of the sower (Matt. 13: 18-23; Mark 4: 10-20; Luke 8: 9-15) shows that the word of God is addressed to the unconverted and that all sinners can hear and understand it, if they will. In Matt. 13: 14-16 it is stated why many did not then and do not now receive the truth:

"For this people's heart is waxed gross,  
And their ears are dull of hearing,  
And their eyes they have closed;  
Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes  
And hear with their ears,  
And should understand with their hearts,  
And should turn again  
And I should heal them."

They did not see that the many miracles and wonderful things which Jesus did proved that he was the Messiah and the Son of God; that he was the fulfilment of the law and the prophets as the Christ; they did not hear the truth from him; hence they did not turn to God and were not saved.

The order of conversion is this: seeing, hearing, understanding, turning to God, and being healed or pardoned. It is not first being converted and then being enabled to hear and understand the truth. "Turn again" is active, not passive; it is something sinners must do, not something they must wait for God to do for them.

No one understood the parable of the sower—not even his apostles and other disciples—when Jesus spoke it; but his disciples asked for an explanation and application and Jesus gave both.

The difference, he says, was between the eyes and ears of his disciples and all not his disciples, and not between their ability and inability to hear and understand the word of God. He put it thus: "But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear."

The four classes of hearers given in the explanation of the parable embrace all people in the world; so every class can hear the word of God.

Jesus says, "The sower soweth the word" (Mark 4: 13); "the word of the kingdom" (Matt. 13: 19); "the seed is the word of God." (Luke 8: 12.)

Those "by the wayside" heard "the word of the Kingdom," but before they considered and understood its teaching and before it produced faith Satan "snatched" it "from their heart" lest they might "believe and be saved." Satan knows the word of God produces faith. Those "upon the rocky places" received the word "with joy;" those "among the thorns" heard it and received it; and those "upon the good ground" heard it and understood it. The difference between these was not that some could hear and receive the word of God, and some could not, but that some held it fast and steadfastly obeyed it and others would not.



Jesus sent the gospel to all men and commanded his apostles to teach all nations. He says, as written in the prophets: "And they shall all be taught of God." This is the way God draws men to Christ. No man can come to Christ except God who sent Christ draw him; but God draws men by teaching them the Gospel. (John 6: 44, 45.)

On the day of pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and spoke to the great multitude present, he first exhorted all to hear what he had to say, to "hear these words," to know them, and to obey them. He continually called upon them to "give ear" to his teaching. When thousands of sinners heard what the Holy Spirit said and believed it, or knew "assuredly" that God had made Jesus of Nazareth whom they had crucified, "both Lord and Christ," "they were pricked in their heart" and asked what to do to be saved.

Already believing this, the answer was: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ [trusting in Christ and relying upon him for forgiveness and salvation] unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children [to the Jews and their descendants forever], and to all that are afar off [all the Gentile world], even as many as the Lord your God shall call unto him" [Jews and Gentiles].

All who "received his word [the teaching of the Holy Spirit] were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." These held fast the word of God and "brought forth fruit with patience." For "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching [the Holy Spirit spoke and taught through the apostles and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Read Acts 2: 1-42.)

The whole Bible—the Old Testament and the New Testament—shows that sinners can hear, understand, and obey the word of God, if they will. Following is another example of those who did:

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed." (Acts 17: 11, 12.) They were not converted or Christians, before they believed, and they did not believe before they examined the Scriptures to ascertain "whether these things were so." Studying the word of God daily led them to believe in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, the Son of God. "So faith cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Rom. 10: 17.) There can be no faith in any heart before the word of God has been heard and received.

## III. The Duty and Delight of Christians to Study the Bible

Christians delight to study the word of God, because they are his children and have "the Spirit of God" (Rom. 8: 9) and are "partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1: 4). They "long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye [they] may grow thereby unto salvation" (1 Pet. 2: 2), and "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matt. 5: 6). They lay up the word of God in their hearts, that they may not sin against him. (Ps. 119: 11.) It dwells "richly" in their hearts (Col. 3: 16), and is a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their path. (Ps. 119: 105.)

Christians are exhorted to be "sound in faith" (Tit. 2: 2), to "try" themselves, whether they "are in the faith"; to "prove" themselves (2 Cor. 13: 5); and to "be strong in the Lord" (Eph. 6: 10). These things they cannot do without studying the Bible regularly. Some



so-called "church members" are unsound in faith and fail in the service of God because they do not study his word.

One who does not love the word of God and who does not delight in the practice of its principles has great reason to be alarmed at one's own condition. The last recorded words of the great apostle Peter were to Christians to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

#### IV. The Duty of Christians to Teach the Bible to Others

It is also the privilege and the duty of all Christians to teach the word of God to others; in fact, he who does not work for the salvation of others is himself not a Christian. The Hebrew Christians failed here. They were reproved for their slow progress and for their inability to teach others. (Heb. 5: 11-14.) Many today deserve the same reproof.

Christians should be ready to teach the word of God at all times, and, therefore, wherever opportunity affords. In the first place, they should teach it diligently and daily to their own children. (Deut. 6: 6-10; Eph. 6: 4.) Nothing can take the place of this home teaching and training; nothing can repair the injury which children suffer who do not receive such instruction and training.

Parents who fail to teach the word of God diligently to their children and to train them in the fear of God do not properly and sufficiently love them.

Home is God's ordained institution for the training and development of children. It is both his kindergarten and great training school for usefulness and good; parents are the teachers, and the Bible is the text-book. Mothers must "rule the household" (1 Tim. 5: 14), and fathers must "nurture" their children "in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6: 4), having them "in subjection with all gravity" (1 Tim. 3: 4), and must lead them into the faith of the gospel (Tit. 1: 6). This book can help parents in the discharge of this sacred duty, but it cannot relieve them of it.

In the second place, Christians must also teach the word of God to others. Christ taught one man and he taught multitudes.

Jesus taught at night and during the day; he taught in the synagogues and in the temple; he taught on the mountain and in the plain; he taught on the land and on the sea; he taught in the homes of the people and along the dusty highway; he taught the poor and the rich; he taught saints and sinners; he taught by asking and answering questions; he taught one at a time, in classes and multitudes; he contended mightily and publicly against the scribes and the Pharisees, denouncing them as hypocrites and children of Satan; and in gentleness and mercy he taught a fallen woman at Jacob's well. He sent out his apostles to teach all nations. They taught wherever they could find an audience.

Paul at Ephesus "entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months," and when he left, he reasoned "daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." (Acts 19: 8-10.)

Paul taught "from house to house," as well as "publicly," and admonished "every one night and day with tears." (Acts 20: 20-31.) His teaching during this time was not confined to Ephesus, because "all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord." He "sat down" and taught the women at the place of prayer by the riverside at Philippi, and at midnight he taught the jailer and "all that were in his house." (Acts 16: 13, 32.)



At Athens as his custom was, "he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews" on the Sabbath (Saturday) and "in the market place every day with them that met him"; and "in the midst of the Areopagus" he taught the learned Athenians. (Acts 17: 2, 17, 22.) Before the unrighteous Felix and profligate Drusilla "he reasoned of righteousness and self-control, and the judgment to come" (Acts 24: 24, 25); he made a mighty effort to teach Festus, Festus' military tribunes, and King Agrippa and Burnice, as they sat in great pomp before him. (Acts 25: 23 to 26: 32.) As the Lord had said, Paul stood before kings, bearing the gospel of salvation to them. (Acts 9: 15.)

While at Rome, "he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him." (Acts 28: 30, 31.)

Philip informally preached Jesus to one man as he journeyed in his chariot; Priscilla and Aquila took the eloquent Apollos "unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18: 26); and the Christians who "were scattered abroad" from Jerusalem "went about preaching the word" (Acts 8: 4).

## V. When and Where Should Christians Teach the Bible?

With these examples of Jesus, the apostles, and the early disciples before us, and in the light of all these scriptures, we cannot resist the conclusion that it is now the privilege and the duty of all Christians according to their abilities and opportunities, to teach the Bible to everybody in every place and at all times—whenever and wherever one or many may be found ready to learn. They should teach it on Sunday morning, Sunday afternoon, Sunday night, and on any day of the week.

## VI. An Exhortation

These lessons should be studied from the Bible. With these lessons the Bible should be read also "through and through." The lesson connections and all references, therefore, should be read. All this must be done through the week. If teachers would instruct their classes and build them up in the faith of the gospel, they must be familiar with the truths and principles of the lessons and must receive these first into their own hearts. They must use the Bible regularly and go before their classes with the open Bible and the love of God in their hearts. They should encourage their classes to study the Bible daily, to use it in the preparation of the lessons, and to bring it to the class.

It will accomplish but little for teachers to mechanically read the questions from this book, and for the classes to turn and read the answers.

The one great purpose to be served is to get the word of God, as the good seed, into the hearts of all; and the one grand consummation to be attained is eternal salvation by the grace of God. Let all parents and teachers remember, therefore, that they are preparing souls for better service to God on earth and higher service in heaven.

With this important work must be connected earnest, daily prayer—prayer to God for wisdom and guidance. Without this, parents are not prepared to teach their children; teachers are not prepared to go before their classes; elders are not prepared to teach and tend the flock; and preachers are not prepared to preach the gospel. Those who are intensely in earnest and feel the burden of their responsibility will pray.

## VII. Questions

Teachers, with all others who will attend, should have a meeting for mutual study and helpfulness before the day of recitation, and on this Introduction ask the following questions, giving Bible answers:

What do the lessons for the first nine months of the year embrace?

State one great advantage of the International System of Lessons.

Give reasons why the "Law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms" should be studied.

Show that it is both the privilege and duty of sinners to study the Bible.

Give reasons why Christians must study the Bible.

Give reasons why Christians must teach the Bible to others.

Show when and where the Bible must be taught.

How must these lessons be prepared?

Who is prepared to teach?



## FIRST QUARTER

LATER LEADERS AND PROPHETS OF ISRAEL  
(NORTHERN KINGDOM)

LESSON I—JANUARY 1

## THE REVOLT OF JEROBOAM—1 Kings 12: 1-13: 6

Print 12: 12-17; 26-30

1 KINGS 12. 12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come to me again the third day.

13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him,

14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15 So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was a thing brought about of Jehovah, that he might establish his word, which Jehovah spake by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 And when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

17 But as for the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now will the kingdom return to the house of David:

27 If this people will go up to offer sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, then will the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me, and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.

28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold; and he said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.

30 And this thing became a sin; for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them. (Exodus 20: 4, 5.)

*Time*—B. C. 975.

*Places*—Shechem, Penuel, Bethel, and Dan.

*Persons*—Jeroboam and the people.

*Memory Verses*—Psalm 1, entire.

*Devotional Reading*—2 Samuel 23: 1-7.

*Reference Material*—1 Kings 11: 26-43; 13: 7 to 14: 20; 2 Chronicles 12 and 13; Isaiah 44: 9-20.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Dec. 26.—Samuel's warning.—1 Sam. 8: 10-18. Tu.—Foolish counsel followed.—1 Kings 12: 6-15. Wed.—The revolt foretold.—1 Kings 11: 29-39. Th.—The revolt accomplished.—1 Kings 12: 16-20. Fr.—A king humbled.—Dan. 4: 30-37. Sat.—Rulers are God's ministers.—Rom. 13: 1-7. Su.—The model for all rulers.—2 Sam. 23: 1-7.

## INTRODUCTION

## I. The Books of Kings

The books of Kings were originally one, the present division having been made in the Septuagint translation. It is nowhere stated in the Bible who wrote these books; Jewish tradition attributes them



to Jeremiah. For a lengthy discussion of this, see Smith's Bible Dictionary.

The history given in these books extends through about four hundred years. They give the history of the undivided kingdom through Solomon's reign (1 Kings 1-11); the history of the two kingdoms, Judah and Israel (1 Kings 12 to 2 Kings 17), to the downfall of Israel; the history of the kingdom of Judah to the Babylonian captivity (2 Kings 18-24).

The author of these books cites other books of history and prophecy—"the book of the acts of Solomon" (1 Kings 11: 41), "the chronicles of the kings of Judah" (1 Kings 14: 29), "the chronicles of the kings of Israel" (verse 19). These histories and prophecies were written by "Nathan the prophet," "Gad the seer" (1 Chron. 29: 29), "Ahijah the Shilonite," "Iddo the seer" (2 Chron. 9: 29), and "She-maiah the prophet" (2 Chron. 12: 15).

In 2 Chron. 13: 22 "the commentary of the prophet Iddo" is mentioned; 2 Chron. 24: 27 mentions "the commentary of the book of the kings"; 2 Chron 20: 34 refers to "the history of Jehu the son of Hanani, which is inserted in the book of the kings of Israel." Isaiah wrote of Uzziah (2 Chron. 26: 22), Hezekiah (2 Chron. 32: 32; Isa. 36-38), and Ahaz (Isa. 1: 1; 7). Read all these references.

## II. The Division of the Kingdom

This lesson marks the beginning of the kingdom of Israel, which continued two hundred and fifty-four years. The division of the kingdom was produced by Solomon's sins and the selfishness, vanity, and un wisdom of Rehoboam. The two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, from this time on constitute the kingdom of Judah.

By consulting the map it will be seen that Judah was the southern kingdom and Israel was the northern kingdom. The books of Kings and Chronicles give parallel histories of these kingdoms until the captivity of Israel. These lessons, with their connections, furnish a good opportunity for studying the history of these kingdoms.

## III. A Brief History of Rehoboam and Jeroboam

The preceding verses of this chapter [1 Kings 12] present to us two prominent persons, Rehoboam and Jeroboam—the former, prominent for his weakness; the latter for his wickedness and rebellion. Rehoboam was Solomon's son. His mother was "Naamah the Ammonitess" (1 Kings 14: 21), for whom Solomon built a temple for "Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites," or "Molech the abomination of the children of Ammon" (1 Kings 11: 5-7). His mother doubtless had an evil influence over him. He is the only recorded son of Solomon; and Adam Clarke says he "was a poor, unprincipled fool."

The wisest man had a fool for a son! Solomon must have realized this when he wrote: "A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him." (Prov. 17: 25; see also Prov. 10: 1; 13: 1; 15: 20; etc.) A thousand wives (1 Kings 11: 3), and only one recorded son!

It is stated that "Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign" (1 Kings 14: 21; 2 Chron. 12: 13); but this is supposed to be a mistake in the record, and it must be twenty-one years. Solomon reigned only forty years; and if Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he succeeded his father, he was born a year before Solomon began to reign, which was not the case. Besides, it



is said that he was "young and tender-hearted" and not able to withstand the "worthless men" and "base fellows" gathered by Jeroboam against him. (2 Chron. 13: 7.)

Solomon left his son a magnificent kingdom and great opportunities. Solomon "ruled over all the kings from the River [Euphrates] even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt." (2 Chron. 9: 26.) For a description of Solomon's wealth and resources, see 1 Kings 10: 11-29; 2 Chron. 9. There was no other nation so wealthy and whose commerce extended so far.

Many young men, like Rehoboam, with splendid opportunities, have come to naught. "Evil companionship corrupts good morals" still, and boys and young men may follow the advice of foolish and wicked associates or act upon the counsel of wise and older men.

Jeroboam was the son of Nebat of the tribe of Ephraim; his mother was Zeruah, a widow at the time of our lesson. He was also a young man, Solomon's servant, and worked on the fortifications about Jerusalem. He was a man of valor and industry, for which Solomon gave him "charge over all the labor of the house of Joseph."

One day as "Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem" he was met by the prophet Ahijah, who informed him that, because of Solomon's sins, God would take ten of the tribes of Israel out of Solomon's hands and give them to him, and that he should reign over them, promising that if he would obey God, God would establish his kingdom. When Solomon heard of this, he became jealous, and tried to kill Jeroboam, who fled to Egypt for protection, remaining there until the death of Solomon. (See 1 Kings 11: 26-40.)

The people were oppressed by "the grievous service," and were restless under "the heavy yoke" placed upon them by Solomon. They were greatly taxed and forced to labor, just as God had foretold they would be. (1 Sam. 8: 10-20.)

When Solomon died and his son came to the throne, the people sent into Egypt and called Jeroboam to be their representative and leader. He, with the people, met Rehoboam at Shechem "to make him king," but not without first making the following request: "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." (1 Kings 12: 1-4.)

Rehoboam should have readily granted this, but he begged three days for consideration, saying: "Depart yet for three days, then come again to me." Then "the people departed." (Verse 5.) He first "took counsel with the old men, that had stood before Solomon his father, saying, what counsel give ye me to return answer to this people?" (Verse 6.) This was a wise course, if he had only acted upon the counsel given.

Had he followed his father's example—sought counsel of God and prayed for wisdom—it would have been still better and safer for him; but he turned from him from whom alone he could receive perfect wisdom and guidance.

The old men gave him safe and wise counsel. It is said: "Old men for counsel." They advised him to lift the burdens of the people and to be lenient and generous, saying to him: "If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants forever." The king should "serve" the people and seek their peace and greatest good.

This course did not suit the young king: so he turned away from the safe advice of the old men and sought the counsel of "the young men that were grown up with him and stood before him." (Verse 8.)



These "young men" were his associates. "It was the custom of different countries to educate with the heir to the throne young noble-men of nearly the same age." (Clarke.) This stimulated him to greater efforts in every way and gave him a knowledge of men.

These "young men" gave Rehoboam the following dangerous advice: "Thus shalt thou say unto this people, . . . My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." (Verses 10-11.)

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. The Message and the Result

12. The people kindly, patiently, and prudently waited the three days for Rehoboam to take counsel and consider what reply to make; then, as this verse of our lesson says, they came to him to hear upon what principles he proposed to serve them as king. Shechem, the place where the king and the people met (verse 1), was "in the hill country of Ephraim" (verse 25).

13, 14. "And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him." By a prudent and wise course he could have preserved the unity and peace of his kingdom and won the respect and affection of all his subjects. We should learn from this that rough language and harsh means are signs of weakness, not strength; of cowardice, not courage; and of unwisdom, not wisdom. He accepted the counsel of "the young men," which seemed to him, in his weakness and vanity, the only way to put down the threatening rebellion. So he "spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." The burdens of taxation and labor which he would place upon them would be as much greater than those of his father as the loins are thicker than the little finger. (1 Kings 12: 10.) It is said "that the scorpion was a severe whip, the lashes of which were armed with iron points that sunk into and tore the flesh." (Clarke.) The rebellious were thus chastised like slaves. Rehoboam's chastisement would be as the sting of scorpions compared to his father's whips.

15. "So the king harkened not unto the people"—that is, to make the yoke easier and the burdens lighter. (1 Kings 12: 4.) "For it was a thing brought about of Jehovah, that he might establish his word, which Jehovah spake by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat." Is this way was fulfilled that which God said he would do. Solomon, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, and the people were responsible for their conduct; and this division was a result of Solomon's sins and oppression of the people and the imprudence, rashness, and vanity of Rehoboam. God at first warned the people against having a king, and clearly pointed out the oppression and suffering to which it would lead. Under Solomon the people experienced this, and under Rehoboam they revolted. Solomon's great sins led to this result. He "loved many foreign women, . . . of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which Jehovah said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go among them, neither shall they come among you [see Ex. 23: 18-33; 34: 10-17; Deut. 7: 1-5; Josh. 23: 12, 13]; for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.



And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart." He turned "after other gods"—the gods of his wives; built altars and erected temples for their worship; and spread idolatry through his kingdom. (1 Kings 11: 1-8.) For this reason "Jehovah was angry with Solomon," and said he would take the kingdom from him and give it to his servant. "Notwithstanding," said Jehovah, "in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake; but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but I will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen." (Verses 9-13.) Through "Ahijah the Shilonite" God foretold this to Jeroboam, and gave the reason. (Verses 26-40.) While, then, this "was a thing brought about of Jehovah," it came as a severe consequence of sin, cruelty, and oppression. God did not thus bring about this division for division's sake. He teaches unity and peace; yet he overrules factions, divisions, and the wicked for the good of his people and to his own glory. He makes the wrath of men praise him. (Ps. 76: 10.) Religious divisions and strife are today carnal (1 Cor. 1: 10-13; 3: 1-9); denominationalism and factions in the church are mightily opposed to "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4: 3-6); and woe is unto him who causes factions and divisions "contrary to the doctrine" of Christ (Rom. 16: 17, 18). Yet God overrules all this to the good of his people. By all this their faith is tested, and they are approved as loyal to him. This is the crucible in which the dross is consumed and the gold is refined. "For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you." (1 Cor. 11: 19.) The religious divisions and denominations of the world today are the consequences of disobedience to God and rebellion against his will; yet he overrules them to his own glory and for the good of his children.

16, 17. The people were determined on the course they would pursue; and as soon as they saw that Rehoboam would not grant their most reasonable request, they gave the signal for the revolt. "What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse." Rehoboam was David's grandson and a descendant of Jesse. David was first made king over Judah (2 Sam. 2: 1-4); and Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was made king over "all Israel" (verses 8-11). After seven years and six months, David was made king "over all Israel and Judah" (2 Sam. 5: 1-5); and he then made Jerusalem the seat of government. There existed all along in the ten tribes this feeling against Judah, which was frequently manifested. (2 Sam. 19: 43; 20: 1, 2.) Benjamin was embraced in the kingdom of Judah. "To your tents, O Israel." This meant for them to leave Rehoboam as their king, go home, and prepare for the consequences; in our language it means: "To arms!" (See 2 Sam. 20: 1, 2.) "Now see to thine own house, David." This means that Judah was all that was left to Rehoboam, and he must prepare to take care of that. "So Israel departed unto their tents." They went home and began to prepare to care for themselves. The intervening verses show what followed.

## II. Jeroboam's Distrust and Transgression

Jeroboam had great opportunities. In giving him this kingdom, God said to him: "And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that which is right in mine eyes, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and will build thee



a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee." (1 Kings 11: 38.) By building him "a sure house" God meant that he would continue his posterity upon the throne, as was David's posterity upon the throne of Judah. Jeroboam threw away this great blessing and opportunity by turning at once from the commandments of God.

26. He distrusted God's promise at once, and began to establish and solidify his kingdom in his own wisdom and way and in transgression of God's law (see verse 25). He recognized in his own heart the true reason for his establishment of idolatry, but did not give this reason to the people, as 1 Kings 12: 28 shows. This verse and the next verse give his reason.

27. He knew as well as any man that Jerusalem was the place of worship. When God led the Israelites out of Egypt, he said: "In every place where I record my name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee." (Ex. 20: 24.) When they should reach Canaan, God promised to choose a place out of all their tribes to put his name there. They were to break down all the altars and destroy all the places used by the nations of that land for the worship of idols and bring their own offerings, sacrifices, tithes, etc., to the place which God should choose for his name, and there they must eat their annual feasts. They were forbidden, too, to erect an altar in every place to which they should come. (Read Deut. 12: 16, 17.) God chose Jerusalem to put his name there: there the temple of Solomon, or "house of Jehovah," was built. (See 1 Kings 8: 17, 29, 43, 46, 48; 9: 3; 2 Chron. 6: 5, 6, 10, 20; 7: 1, 2, 12, 16). God promised to establish Jeroboam and his posterity upon the throne of the kingdom of Israel, and he should have believed God. God could, and would, have done this in his own way, had Jeroboam and all his kingdom gone on faithfully with the worship at Jerusalem. Like many today, Jeroboam did not see how God could accomplish this end by the means he ordained. To Jeroboam, God's way would result in complete failure. He thought that if the people continued to go to Jerusalem to worship (although this was God's command, and God had promised to establish his kingdom if he would do this), they would soon return as subjects to Rehoboam and kill him to get him out of the way. He had no more confidence in the people than he had in God. He who has no faith in God nor confidence in men is himself a bad man.

28. "Whereupon the king took counsel." He consulted, doubtless, with some of the leading men of his kingdom, who, like himself, placed temporal and personal success above the true worship of God. To worship God truly, obeying him in all things, was the only way Jeroboam and his house could be established upon the throne; but to him this seemed the way of his overthrow and ruin. So he deliberately set aside God's worship and law for his own personal advantage and glory. His counselors agreed with him that this course was the only safe one to pursue. "And made two calves of gold." In making an idol, why should they make a calf or calves? Aaron made a golden calf. It has been supposed by some that this was in imitation of the religion of Egypt. The Egyptians worshiped their god, Apis, under the form of an ox or bull. While it was no form of idolatry, "the molten sea" made by Solomon rested upon the backs of twelve oxen. (1 Kings 7: 23-26.) It is probable that these images were made of wood and overlaid with gold. The cherubim of the temple were made of olive-wood and overlaid with gold. (1 Kings 6: 23, 28.) "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem." This was the first pretext which Jeroboam offered to the people; he did not reveal to them the real motive of his heart. The margin in the version used



in these lessons says: "Ye have gone up long enough" to Jerusalem. Jeroboam could not see how the two kingdoms could exist with only one place and system of worship. With a rival kingdom, he must establish a rival religion and rival places of worship. The woman at Jacob's well said to Jesus: "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus replied: "Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews." (John 4: 20-22.) This woman and her fathers, like Jeroboam, were wrong. This contention over the place of worship in Christ's day shows how long a false theory and system will continue, and this woman is an illustration of how tenaciously people cling to the erroneous traditions of "our fathers." Jeroboam persuaded the people that it was not necessary to go to Jerusalem in order to worship. Had he lived in our day, he probably would have said: "What difference does it make where we worship, so we worship? The worship is the principal thing; and so that is done, it matters not when or where it is done." It is a pleasing argument with people today that it matters not what is done in religion or how it is done, so something is done, whether that be just what God has commanded or not. Jeroboam persuaded the people that going to Jerusalem was a "non-essential." So people today are persuaded that some of God's commandments in the New Testament sealed by the blood of Jesus, are "non-essential." Jesus says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16: 16.) He himself was baptized "to fulfill all righteousness." (Matt. 3: 15.) The Holy Spirit says to all who believe in Jesus as the Savior and desire to obey him and be forgiven: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2: 38.) Jesus sent out the apostles to teach all nations and to baptize all who would receive the teaching (Acts 2: 41) "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28: 19; see also Luke 7: 29, 30; Acts 8: 5, 12, 14, 38; 9: 18; 10: 48; 16: 33; 18: 8; 19: 1-7; Rom. 6: 3, 4, 17, 18; 1 Cor. 1: 14-16; Col. 2: 12; 1 Pet. 3: 21.) With all this before him, how can anyone say that baptism to the proper subject is a "non-essential?" Since Jesus says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7: 21), how can any one think that any commandment of God is "non-essential?" Let no modern Jeroboam persuade you that God's commandments now or implicit obedience to Jesus (Heb. 5: 7-9) are "non-essential." It is absolutely right and safe to obey God in faith. It was the want of faith which led Jeroboam to doubt God and to establish idolatry. It is not faith, but the want of it, which leads many now to set aside God's appointed way and substitute ways and means of their own. "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." These calves were to represent God to them. This is the language used by Aaron when he made the golden calf; he said: "These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." (Ex. 32: 4.) Jeroboam and his people should have remembered the disastrous consequences of Aaron's effort. Like Aaron, Jeroboam did not intend to give up the worship of Jehovah altogether, but to worship him through these images. He persuaded the people that it was the same worship carried on in the way and places which "seemed best to them." (See 1 Kings 12: 32.)

29. "And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan." The original name of Bethel was "Luz." There Jacob saw the ladder



and the angels ascending and descending upon it and called it "Bethel" —"house of God" (Gen. 28:11-22); there Abraham built an altar (Gen. 12: 8); near there Deborah lived (Judg. 4: 5); there the people at one time inquired of Jehovah (Judg. 20: 18); and there Samuel judged Israel (1 Sam. 7: 16). How easy, then, for Jeroboam to persuade the people that this was a sacred place, called by the very name of "God!" It was convenient, too, to all on the southern side of his kingdom. Dan was a town on the extreme north of his kingdom and of Palestine; hence the expression: "From Dan to Beersheba." An altar at Dan would be convenient to all in that portion of the kingdom. Dan was named for Dan, the son of Jacob. Its original name was "Laish." Idolatry, through the images of Micah, had long before this been established at Dan. (Judg. 18: 11-31.)

30. "And this thing became a sin." No worship is acceptable to God except that which he has ordained; no "aid" to the worship of God which violates any principle of the gospel of Jesus is now acceptable to God. Idolatry broke the first two commandments of the decalogue. It embraced, too, obscene rites—such as adultery—and sometimes human sacrifice. "For the people went to worship before the one [the margin says, "each of them"] even unto Dan." It was a sin because the people thus worshiped.

## QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place and persons.

Repeat the first Psalm.

When was the book of Kings divided into two books?

Who wrote these books?

What period of time do they cover?

What history do they give?

Name the other books to which reference is made.

Who wrote these books? (See that all these books and their authors are correctly given.)

Of what does this lesson mark the beginning?

How long did the kingdom of Israel continue?

Which two tribes constituted the kingdom of Judah?

What was the relative situation of these kingdoms?

In what books do we have a history of these kingdoms?

What two prominent men does this verse present?

Whose son was Rehoboam?

Who was his mother?

What kind of influence would you suppose she exerted over him?

What did Solomon erect for her?

How many sons did Solomon have?

What was his character?

How old was he when he began to reign?

What opportunities did Solomon leave his son?

(State the extent, wealth and condition of his kingdom.)

What have many young men, like Rehoboam, done?

Whose son was Jeroboam?

Of what tribe was he?

What was he to Solomon?

What was his work?

What was his character?

What prophecy did Ahijah make to him?

What effect did this have upon Solomon?

Where did Jeroboam go?

Under what were the people suffering?

When was Jeroboam called out of Egypt?

Where did he and the people meet Rehoboam, and for what purpose?

What did they request of Rehoboam?

What did he request them to do?

Of whom did he seek counsel?

What advice did they give him?

Why did he not take their advice?

Of whom did he next seek counsel?

Who were these "young men?"

What advice did they give him?

12 After three days, what did the people do?

Where was Shechem?

13, 14 How did the king answer them?

Was the people's demand a fair and just one?

What should we learn from the king's course?

What did he mean by saying his little finger would be thicker upon them than his father's loins?

What did he mean by saying he would chastise them with scorpions?

15 Why did the king not hearken to the people?

Were the parties responsible for their conduct?



- What had Solomon done to cause this?  
 What did Rehoboam do?  
 How, then, was this of God?  
 What does God teach now concerning division in his church?  
 How does he overrule the divisions of to-day for God?
- 16, 17 When Rehoboam delivered his message, what did the people say?  
 Why did they say they had no portion in David?  
 What did they tell Rehoboam to look after?
- 26 What did he say and recognize in his heart?
- 27 What facts concerning the worship of God did he know?  
 Like many to-day, what did Jeroboam fail to see?  
 What did he think the people would do if allowed to worship God at Jerusalem?
- 28 With whom did he take counsel?  
 What was determined upon as the best course to pursue?  
 Why did he make calves, and not some other idol?  
 Of what were the cherubim of the temple made?  
 What did Jeroboam say to the people?
- What did he do with his heart's real motive?  
 What did he fail to see?  
 What question did the woman at Jacob's well request Jesus to settle?  
 What fact does this impress as regards the errors and traditions of our fathers?  
 What did Jeroboam mean by saying: "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem"?  
 What do some people say of some of God's commandments now?  
 What leads people now to disobey God and to change his way?  
 What did Jeroboam say when he had set up his calves?  
 What did Aaron say when he made the golden calf?  
 Did Jeroboam intend to turn away entirely from the worship of God?
- 29 Where did he put his calves?  
 Relate the facts concerning Beth-el.  
 Relate the facts concerning Dan.
- 30 What did this become?  
 What "aids" to God's service are condemned?  
 In what different ways was idolatry sinful?

## AFTER LESSONS

### I. One Sin Leads to Another

One departure from God's order leads to another; one sin, to another. "And he made houses of high places." The "high places" were elevated places, or mounds, upon which idols were placed and worship was offered. Jeroboam built temples for the worship of these idols. There was the temple at Jerusalem erected by God's directions, but Jeroboam must erect others for his use. He must also imitate the worship at Jerusalem in order to satisfy the people. He "made priests from among all the people, that were not of the sons of Levi." After God's severe reproof in 1 Kings 13, Jeroboam still pursued his rebellious way—"returned not from his evil way, but made again from among all the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, that there might be priests of the high places." (1 Kings 13: 33.) The tribe of Levi was the priestly tribe, and Aaron and his sons were to keep the priesthood; "and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death." (Num. 3: 5-10.) For an attempt to violate this law King Uzziah was smitten with leprosy. (2 Chron. 26: 16-21.) Jeroboam and his sons cast off the Levites, "that they should not execute the priest's office unto Jehovah." They refused to serve in this idolatrous worship and still went to Jerusalem. "And after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek Jehovah, the God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice unto Jehovah the God of their fathers." (2 Chron. 11: 13-16.) We must now cling to the true worship of God.

### II. Still Another Change

Concerning the three annual feasts which God ordained for the Israelites, read Lev. 23. The feast of tabernacles came in the seventh month. (Verse 34.) These feasts were kept at Jerusalem. All



the males were required to appear before Jehovah. (Deut. 16: 16.) The feast of tabernacles was approaching, when, as usual, the people in great numbers would go to Jerusalem; and Jeroboam felt it necessary to fall upon a plan to hold them away. So he ordained the feast of this verse, "like unto the feast that is in Judah," to be held, not at God's appointed time and place, but at a time "he had devised of his own heart." Many religious people of today would have said: "We are keeping the same feast; and what difference does it make where or when we keep it, so we keep it?" Although like it, this was not God's feast. In all memorial institutions which God has ordained he himself has determined four things: (1) What must be done, (2) by whom it must be done, (3) when it must be done, and (4) why it must be done. In regard to the feasts of the passover, Pentecost, and tabernacles, God also named the place where they should be observed—namely, Jerusalem. Jeroboam changed God's order of things as suited his schemes and purposes best.

### III. God's Condemnation of Jeroboam's Course

God said to Jeroboam: "Thou has not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes, but hast done evil above all that were before thee." (1 Kings 14: 8, 9.) God's condemnation of Jeroboam's course and solemn warnings are expressed in the denunciation and destruction of the altar at Bethel by the prophet from Judah and in the fearful consequences which he pronounced. Yet, after all this, "Jeroboam returned not from his evil way." "And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth." (Read 1 Kings 13.) See, in 1 Kings 14: 1-18, the account of the death of Jeroboam's son, Abijah, and the most fearful consequences which God said would follow because of his great sins.

### IV. The Extent of Jeroboam's Sin

The evil, idolatrous influence of Jeroboam continued through the entire existence of the kingdom of Israel, and was felt, as we have seen, in the days of Jesus. Numerous times the expression concerning Jeroboam "who made Israel to sin," is repeated in the history of Israel. One hundred years before the captivity of Judah the kingdom of Israel was carried away into captivity, never to return. Jeroboam reigned twenty-two years. "And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually." (1 Kings 14: 19, 20, 30.)

### Application

A strong application of this lesson is given in the comments on verse 28, which see. While Christians keep none of these feasts, Jesus has ordained and left them the Lord's Supper, a great memorial spiritual feast. He has ordained: (1) What must be done—eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine (1 Cor. 11: 23-25), (2) by whom it must be observed: his disciples—not sinners, but Christians (Matt. 26: 26-29); (3) when it must be observed—on "the first day of the week" (Matt. 28: 20; Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 11: 20, 23; 16: 1, 2; Heb. 10: 25); (4) why it must be observed—in memory of him, to proclaim his death until he comes (Matt. 26: 26-28; 1 Cor. 11: 25-26); and, therefore, (5) the manner, or condition of heart, in which it must be observed—in self-examination, discerning the Lord's body, in decency and order, and not as a carnal feast (1 Cor. 11: 28-34). To change any of these

things which God has ordained is, like Jeroboam, to change God's way, or order. In the worship of God we can pursue only one of two courses—do in all things just what God has directed or devise in our own hearts what we will do. Some devise that they will observe the Lord's Supper on some other day than "the first day of the week"; others devise that they will observe it once a year, or four times a year, or even twelve times a year. There is but one way to do in order not to be guilty of devising a time, and that is to meet on "the first day of the week" to break bread (Acts 20: 7)—the time God has devised, and then to do all and only all he has commanded.

## INTRODUCTION

While the Bible has been well entitled "the grandest and the most romantic character that faced our planet," the Bible is not only the most romantic character that faced our planet, but it is also the most romantic character that faced our planet. It is the most romantic character that faced our planet, and it is the most romantic character that faced our planet.



## LESSON II—JANUARY 8

## ELIJAH THE TISHBITE—1 Kings 17: 1-24

## Print 17: 1-16

1 KINGS 17. 1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the sojourners of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

2 And the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying,

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan.

4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

5 So he went and did according to the word of Jehovah; for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan.

6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

8 And the word of Jehovah came to him, saying,

9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Sidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee.

10 So he arose and went to Zarephath; and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand.

12 And she said, As Jehovah thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in the jar, and a little oil in the cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it forth unto me, and afterward make for thee and thy son.

14 For thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, The jar of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that Jehovah sendeth rain upon the earth.

15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.

16 The jar of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of Jehovah, which he spake by Elijah.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Matt. 6: 33.)

*Time*—About B. C. 910. Ahab began to reign B. C. 918 and reigned twenty-two years. It is thought that Elijah appeared after Ahab had reigned eight years.

*Places*—Samaria, the brook Cherith, and Zarephath.

*Persons*—Elijah, Ahab and the widow of Zarephath.

*Memory Verse*—1 Peter 5: 7.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 62: 1-8.

*Reference Material*—Exodus 16; 1 Kings 16: 29-33; Matthew 6: 19-34.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Jan. 2.—Elijah's opponent.—1 Kings 16: 29-33. Tu.—Elijah's challenge.—1 Kings 17: 1-7. Wed.—Elijah in the widow's home.—1 Kings 17: 8-16. Th.—Elijah raising the widow's son.—1 Kings 17: 17-24. Fr.—Elijah's faith to be our faith.—Matt. 6: 25-34. Sat.—Elijah's God a bountiful provider.—Exod. 16: 11-18. Su.—Elijah's God our God.—Psa. 62: 1-8.

## INTRODUCTION

"Elijah the Tishbite" has been well entitled 'the grandest and the most romantic character that Israel ever produced.' Certainly there is no personage in the Old Testament whose career is more vividly portrayed or who exercises on us a more remarkable fascination. His rare, sudden, and brief appearances; his undaunted courage and



fiery zeal; the brilliancy of his triumphs; the pathos of his despondency; the glory of his departure; and the calm beauty of his reappearance on the mount of transfiguration—these throw such a halo of brightness around him as is equaled by none of his compeers in the sacred story. The ignorance in which we are left of the circumstances and incidents of the man who did and suffered so much doubtless contributes to enhance our interest in the story and the character." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.) When we have studied Elijah's character and work, we can well see that John the Baptist came "in the spirit and power of Elijah." (Luke 1: 17.) There is no parallel history in Chronicles.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Elijah's Character

1. "Elijah the Tishbite" is "the well-known designation of Elijah. (1 Kings 17: 1; 21: 17, 28; 2 Kings 1: 3, 8; 9: 36.) Assuming that a town is alluded to as Elijah's native place, it is not necessary to infer that it was itself in Gilead, as many have imagined. The commentators and lexicographers, with few exceptions, adopt the name 'Tishbite' as referring to the place Tishbe, in Naphtali." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.) This shows that we can learn nothing concerning the parentage and birthplace of Elijah. We know nothing of his early life. He "was of the sojourners of Gilead," which implies that he removed to Gilead from some other place. No reason is given why he did this. Gilead was a mountainous region east of the Jordan, with Bashan on the north and Moab and Ammon on the south. "Gilead" means "a hard, rocky region." Gilead is spoken of many times in the Bible. Elijah has been called a "typical mountaineer." He manifested great physical endurance, and was strong and fleet. He wore a garment of hair and "a girdle of leather about his loins." (2 Kings 1: 8.) This was the dress of prophets. (Isa. 20: 2; Zech. 13: 4.) Thus John the Baptist dressed. (Matt. 3: 4.) Elijah also wore a "mantle" or cape. In this he hid his face in reverence for Jehovah (1 Kings 19: 13); this he cast upon Elisha (verse 19); with this he divided the Jordan; this he dropped as he ascended to heaven; and with this Elisha also divided the Jordan (2 Kings 2: 8, 13, 14).

### II. The Condition of Israel

Ahab was king of Israel and the wicked Jezebel was his wife. Israel had forsaken the faith and worship of Jehovah. While Jeroboam had introduced the calves, he and other kings acknowledged Jehovah and endeavored to worship him through these calves; but Ahab had introduced the worship of Baal, the idolatry of the heathen Sidonians. "Said unto Ahab." As "lightning in a clear sky," as we sometimes say, Elijah appeared before Ahab. "Jehovah" is the name of "the God of Israel." (See Ex. 3: 14, 15; 20: 2; Ps. 30: 4; 97: 12; 102: 12; 135: 13; Hos. 12: 5.) "Jehovah" is his memorial name" forever. The version we use puts "Jehovah" for "the Lord" in the Authorized Version. "Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth," and is no dumb, blind, and lifeless idol. "Before whom I stand"—whom he served and by whose authority he spoke. "There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." God had foretold that if his people would not obey him, with other curses should come drought "And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron." (See Deut. 28: 15-24.)



This was a direct challenge to Baal, because Baal was the god of production and agriculture. Since Ahab had turned away from Jehovah to serve Baal, let Baal supply the dew and rain. If he could not, then he was nothing. God spoke through Elijah, and it did not rain except as Elijah said. God did this through Elijah to show that he was with his true and loyal prophet. He sent Elijah to Ahab to let Ahab know that it was "the God of Israel" against whom he was sinning and that God was thus chastising him and Israel.

### III. Elijah at the Brook

2, 3. To escape the vengeance of Ahab and to give the famine time to have its chastening effect upon Israel, God sent Elijah away. "Turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan." We cannot locate this brook. Some suppose that because Elijah turned "eastward" it was east of the Jordan and flowed into the Jordan; some suppose it was west of the Jordan, not far from Samaria.

4. Of the water of this constantly-flowing stream Elijah was to drink until the drought dried it up. "And I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there." Some try to explain away this miracle. God could perform one miracle as well as another. The ravens which God chose as illustrations of his watch care, hearing their young when they cry (Job 38: 41; Ps. 147: 9; Luke 12: 24), were selected to feed Elijah.

5, 6. It is not stated how long Elijah remained in this retreat. "The ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening." Thus regularly they carried him his daily meals. This is no more wonderful than that the ravenous lions should not hurt Daniel when cast into their den.

7-9. When "the brook dried up," Jehovah commanded Elijah to go to "Zarephath, which belongeth to Sidon, and dwell there." Zarephath was a town on the Mediterranean Sea, in Phenicia, between Tyre and Sidon, nearer to Sidon—"in the land of Sidon." (Luke 4: 26.) Ahab was searching everywhere for Elijah (1 Kings 18: 10); and since he must remove from his hiding place by Cherith, there was no place where Ahab would be less liable to look for him than in Baal's own country and among his worshipers. "I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee." God commanded this widow to sustain Elijah, as he had commanded the ravens to feed him. In his overruling providence he brought it about. He wrought another miracle by preserving the meal and oil. To this woman Jesus referred in the synagogue at Nazareth when the very people among whom he was brought up rejected him. "There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah . . . and unto none of them was Elijah sent but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow." So in the days of Elisha there were many lepers in Israel; but only Naaman, the Syrian, was healed. (Luke 4: 25, 26.) This was a Gentile woman, but she had more faith than the women of Israel; hence to her Elijah was sent. Two purposes were here served—(1) Elijah's life, and (2) the lives of the widow and her house were preserved. The reception of God's blessings depends upon one's own condition of heart. Other widows would have been likewise blessed had they exercised the same faith. In helping others we help ourselves, and in helping others we place ourselves where God will help us. In this very country Jesus healed the daughter of the Syrophenician woman.



#### IV. The Widow of Zarephath

10. Elijah always promptly obeyed God. He went at once to Zarephath. The city had walls and gates; but small places then were fortified. Near the gate of the city he saw "a widow" gathering sticks, and requested her to fetch him a drink of water. He was both thirsty and hungry. To give the thirsty stranger drink has always been considered a sacred duty in the East. Notwithstanding the continued drought, there was water at Zarephath yet.

11. As the woman went for the water, Elijah requested her also to bring him "a morsel of bread."

12. To this she replied: "As Jehovah thy God liveth, I have not a cake." She called Jehovah "the God that liveth"; "thy God, Elijah's God." But Jesus' reference to her and her action on this occasion show she was a woman of faith. She recognized Elijah, doubtless by his dress and speech, as a prophet of Israel. She showed her faith by acting upon Elijah's directions. (1 Kings 17: 13, 14.) She had no bread baked, and only "a handful of meal in the jar, and a little oil in the cruse." The "barrel" of the Authorized Version is properly called "jar." It was not, says Clarke, "a wooden vessel or barrel of any kind." Clarke further says: "In the East they preserve their corn and meal in such vessels, without which precaution the insects would destroy them." The "oil in the cruse" was doubtless olive oil eaten with bread as we eat butter. These "sticks" the woman gathered that she "may go in and dress it"—bake it for eating—for herself and son. "That we may eat it, and die." This was all she had, and she knew not where more was to come from. The famine was over that country, too; and starvation was looking her in the face, and thus calmly she met it.

13. First, Elijah encouraged her by saying, "Fear not"—starvation. This was a hopeful declaration, for she recognized Elijah as a prophet of "the living God." "Make me thereof a little cake first." This was asking much of her, and was a strong test of her faith. This was a proof of her worthiness of greater blessings from God. Could she give a stranger to eat of the last she had—and that, too, before she and her son had eaten, and when she knew not where she could obtain more? If we use what we have to feed God's poor and to advance his cause, he will intrust us with greater blessings and opportunities.

14. Elijah accompanied this request with the promise from God that "the jar of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that Jehovah sendeth rain upon the earth."

15. She believed the statement, and did as Elijah had requested. Elijah, the woman, and her house "did eat many days"—until the famine had passed. In faith she did as God directed, and was blessed. In helping Elijah she helped herself; in contributing to Elijah she increased her own resources. How true: "There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to want. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." (Prov. 11: 24, 25.)

16. The meal and the oil "wasted not." The woman was faithful, and God kept his promise—"according to the word of Jehovah, which he spake by Elijah." God was not only faithful to keep his promise, but thus Elijah proved to be a true prophet of Jehovah. This miraculous preservation of the meal and oil ceased so soon as food could be obtained in the ordinary way. While God works no miracles now on our behalf, yet through these circumstances he teaches



us that we should help the needy and help to extend his kingdom among men, and that as we do this he will help and bless us. Jesus says, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward." (Matt. 10: 41, 42.) Not only were the life of this woman and that of her son thus preserved; but when her son died, Elijah restored him to life. In her grief she charged Elijah with bringing her "sin to remembrance" and slaying her son; but he carried her son to the upper chamber and stretching himself three times upon the child, he prayed God that life might return, and the child's soul "came into him again, and he revived." With her son alive again, she said to Elijah: "Now I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of Jehovah in thy mouth is truth." (1 Kings 17: 17-24.)

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Memory Verses.  
What does the Introduction say of Elijah?
- 1 Who came in his spirit and power?
- 1 What was Elijah's designation? Why is he called "the Tishbite?" Where was Tishbe? What do we know of Elijah's birthplace, parentage, and early life? Where was he living at the time of our lesson? Where was Gilead? What does "Gilead" mean? Describe the country. What mighty man of valor was a Gileadite? What is said about Jephthah's character? What were some of Elijah's physical powers? Describe Elijah's dress. What was his mantle? What did he do with it? What became of it? What was Israel's moral and spiritual condition at this time? How did Elijah appear before Ahab? By what name is 'the God of Israel' called? What did God say should befall his people when they turned away from him into sin? What did Elijah say should not be? What is meant by "before whom I stand?" Why was this drought a challenge to Baal? How does Jesus indorse these miracles in Elijah's history?
- 2, 3 Where did Jehovah tell Elijah then to go? Why did God tell him to hide himself? Where was the brook Cherith?
- 4 Why was Elijah directed to go to a brook? What had God commanded to feed Elijah? How could God command the ravens?
- What does God use to illustrate his tender watch care?
- 5-7 How long did Elijah remain by this brook. How did the ravens feed him?
- 8, 9 Where next did God command Elijah to go? Where was that place? Why was Elijah sent into Baal's country? Whom had God commanded to feed Elijah there? Why was Elijah sent to this Gentile widow, and not widows in Israel? What two purposes were here served? What woman came to Jesus in this country?
- 10 What did Elijah always promptly do? Who did he see near the gate of the city? What was she doing? What request did he first make of her?
- 11 What next did he request her to do?
- 12 What reply did she make? What did she say of Jehovah? How did she recognize Elijah as a prophet? How did she show her faith? What was this "jar"? Why keep the meal in it? What use was made of the oil?
- 13 How did Elijah encourage her? What then did he request her to do? How was this a test of her faith?
- 14 What promise did God make her?
- 15 What shows that she believed the statement?
- 16 How long did the meal and oil last? How did this woman bring a blessing upon herself and house? What blessings does Jesus pronounce upon those who receive a prophet and help his disciples? How was this woman further blessed? How did Elijah proceed to raise her son? What did she then say?



## LESSON III—JANUARY 15

**ELIJAH'S CHALLENGE OF BAAL WORSHIP—1 Kings****18: 1-46. Print 18: 20-24, 30, 36-39**

1 KINGS 18. 20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel.

21 And Elijah came near unto all the people, and said, How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, am left a prophet of Jehovah; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under.

24 And call ye on the name of thy god, and I will call on the name of Jehovah; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me; and all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of Jehovah that was thrown down.

36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening oblation, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and that thou has turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of Jehovah fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. (1 John 5: 4.)

*Time*—B. C. 906.

*Place*—Mount Carmel.

*Persons*—Elijah, Ahab, and the prophets of Baal.

*Memory Verse*—Psalms 118: 7.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 2: 1-3, 7-12.

*Reference Material*—Joshua 24: 14-28; Ephesians 6: 10-20.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Jan. 9.—Elijah's word tested.—1 Kings 18: 7-15. Tu.—The challenge.—1 Kings 18: 16-20. Wed.—The defeat.—1 Kings 18: 21-29. Th.—The victory.—1 Kings 18: 30-39. Fr.—Joshua's character test.—Josh. 24: 14-21. Sat.—Paul's character test.—Eph. 6: 10-20. Su.—The king enthroned.—Psa. 2: 1-3, 7-12

**INTRODUCTION****A Test of Elijah's Faith**

Ahab's kingdom was in the deepest darkness of idolatry and wickedness, for which it was suffering this drought and famine, as was learned in the last lesson. Jesus and James say the famine and drought continued "three years and six months." (Luke 4: 25; James 5: 17.) We know not just how long Elijah was at Cherith. He spent the remainder of the drought at Zarephath. "In the third year" of the drought God commanded Elijah, saying: "Go show thyself unto Ahab." (Read here 1 Kings 18: 1-12.) He promptly obeyed God, as usual, knowing that God, who had preserved him at Cherith and Zarephath, could still save him from the wrath of Ahab. Prompt obedience to God always gives courage and strength. "And I will send rain upon the earth"—that is, after Elijah had stood before Ahab and the contest which followed was over. God sent this



famine as a challenge to Baal or his worshipers and as chastisement to the people for Baal worship.

Baal was the god of production and fertility; and if he could not send rain and cause the earth to produce rich harvests, then he was nothing and the people were worshiping a vain thing. When they learned this, they would return to Jehovah. But Ahab did not repent. In the distress of this famine Ahab directed Obadiah to go through the land in search of water and grass. He and Obadiah divided the land between themselves and went through it, one going in one direction and the other in another. When the wicked Jezebel was trying to exterminate the prophets of Jehovah, Obadiah hid a hundred, fifty in a place, in caves and fed them with bread and water.

Passing through the country, Obadiah met Elijah. Elijah directed him to go and tell Ahab that Elijah was there. Obadiah declined, knowing that Ahab wanted to punish Elijah for the famine and thinking that God, as he had protected Elijah before, would again remove him out of Ahab's reach and Ahab would then kill him for allowing Elijah to escape. But Elijah assured Obadiah that he would not disappear. Obadiah believed Elijah, went to meet Ahab, and told him what Elijah had said. Ahab went to meet Elijah (Read now verses 13-24.) As soon as Ahab saw Elijah, "with impudent and shameless bravado, that only disclosed his inherent weakness and contemptibleness," he said: "Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?"

With shameless boldness he made this bare attempt "to turn the tables" on Elijah by accusing him of being the criminal. The enemies of Jesus and the apostles tried this very trick of Satan. They accused Jesus of having a demon and of raising insurrections, etc.; and they accused Paul of stirring up the mobs which they had raised. (Acts 17: 5-8.) The same tactics still are resorted to. Elijah met Ahab's charge with a direct denial, saying: "I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of Jehovah, and thou hast followed the Baalim." These sins brought on all these troubles. Elijah reproved the sinners and announced the coming famine. Many now turn from God's order and true worship.

His faithful servants, like Elijah, oppose all such departures, and trouble and divisions arise; then those who introduce the departures accuse the ones who oppose them of causing the trouble and producing division. God has preserved this charge of Ahab and Elijah's reply to forever settle the question of who troubles Israel. The true servant and friend of God today is the one who maintains God's order of things.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Elijah's Challenge

20. While this wicked Jezebel supported these false prophets at her table, she slew with the sword all of God's prophets. After denying the charge that he was the troubler of Israel and showing that Ahab had caused all the trouble by forsaking the commandments of God and maintaining the worship of Baal, Elijah then challenged Ahab to the contest of our lesson between Baal and Jehovah. By the majesty of right and the authority of Jehovah speaking through him Elijah issued the following order to Ahab: "Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the Asherah four hundred that eat at Jezebel's table." Ahab accepted the challenge



then put on it in order, and the bullock was cut in pieces and laid on the wood. This done, Elijah then directed that "four jars" of water be poured "on the burnt offering, and on the wood." These "jars" were such as maidens used to carry water upon their heads and held about three gallons.

Twelve "jars" of water were poured on; thirty-six gallons of water, in all, were poured on. The water thoroughly saturated the sacrifice and wood, running all through them and all over the altar, and it also filled the trench. This was done to show that there was no fire concealed about the altar and to preclude any possibility of any thought of deception.

36. Elijah not only built the altar according to God's directions, but the offering was made at the time the evening sacrifice was offered to God. Everything was done in strict compliance with God's law. So we must now implicitly obey God in observing his order. Then Elijah addressed God, as he is frequently called, as "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel."

God had promised to bless the descendants of these faithful men when these descendants were likewise faithful, and as the descendants of these men Elijah and the people then addressed God. Elijah wanted them near that as much as possible this might be their prayer as well as his. Elijah desired this done for God's honor. "Let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word."

This shows the faithfulness and loyalty of Elijah. In all this Elijah was proceeding only as God commanded. To hear him whom God sends is to hear God. (John 13: 20.)

37. Elijah prayed God to hear him and consume, therefore, the sacrifice for God's own glory and the salvation of the people. He prayed in a calm and trustful spirit. God wrought miracles to convince the people that he had sent his servants and was with them and to confirm the truth. (Ex. 4: 29-31; Heb. 2: 4.)

38. In answer to Elijah's prayer "the fire of Jehovah fell," consumed the burnt offering and wood, melted the stones and dust with intense heat, and "licked up the water" in the trench. God sent fire upon the altar which Moses built (Lev. 9: 24), the one David built (1 Chron. 21: 26), and the one Solomon built (2 Chron. 7: 1). See also the cases of Abraham (Gen. 15: 17) and of Gideon (Judg. 6: 21).

39. The agreement and test was: "And the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." The people saw this, and were convinced. They hesitated no longer, "limping between the two sides." Acknowledging Jehovah as the true God, in reverence and awe "they fell on their faces" and said: "Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God."

This was the answer to Elijah's question whether Baal or Jehovah is God. (1 Kings 18: 21.) To own Jehovah as the true God, or now to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, and at the same time to refuse to obey him, is to prove false and untrue to one's convictions.

These people proved their sincerity and convictions by acting at once upon Elijah's order to "take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." All these Elijah "brought . . . down to the brook Kishon and slew them there." (Verse 40.) It was God's law that such prophets should be slain. (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20.) In the goodness and mercy of God for the salvation of the nation these false prophets were slain.

It seems that Ahab consented to it. The execution of these prophets was just, because God had it done, and his judgment is righteous. (Rom. 2: 5.) All idolaters, false teachers, with all who



famine as a challenge to Baal or his worshipers and as chastisement to the people for Baal worship.

Baal was the god of production and fertility; and if he could not send rain and cause the earth to produce rich harvests, then he was nothing and the people were worshipping a vain thing. When they learned this, they would return to Jehovah. But Ahab did not repent. In the distress of this famine Ahab directed Obadiah to go through the land in search of water and grass. He and Obadiah divided the land between themselves and went through it, one going in one direction and the other in another. When the wicked Jezebel was trying to exterminate the prophets of Jehovah, Obadiah hid a hundred, fifty in a place, in caves and fed them with bread and water.

Passing through the country, Obadiah met Elijah. Elijah directed him to go and tell Ahab that Elijah was there. Obadiah declined, knowing that Ahab wanted to punish Elijah for the famine and thinking that God, as he had protected Elijah before, would again remove him out of Ahab's reach and Ahab would then kill him for allowing Elijah to escape. But Elijah assured Obadiah that he would not disappear. Obadiah believed Elijah, went to meet Ahab, and told him what Elijah had said. Ahab went to meet Elijah (Read now verses 13-24.) As soon as Ahab saw Elijah, "with impudent and shameless bravado, that only disclosed his inherent weakness and contemptibleness," he said: "Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?"

With shameless boldness he made this bare attempt "to turn the tables" on Elijah by accusing him of being the criminal. The enemies of Jesus and the apostles tried this very trick of Satan. They accused Jesus of having a demon and of raising insurrections, etc.; and they accused Paul of stirring up the mobs which they had raised. (Acts 17: 5-8.) The same tactics still are resorted to. Elijah met Ahab's charge with a direct denial, saying: "I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of Jehovah, and thou hast followed the Baalim." These sins brought on all these troubles. Elijah reproved the sinners and announced the coming famine. Many now turn from God's order and true worship.

His faithful servants, like Elijah, oppose all such departures, and trouble and divisions arise; then those who introduce the departures accuse the ones who oppose them of causing the trouble and producing division. God has preserved this charge of Ahab and Elijah's reply to forever settle the question of who troubles Israel. The true servant and friend of God today is the one who maintains God's order of things.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Elijah's Challenge

20. While this wicked Jezebel supported these false prophets at her table, she slew with the sword all of God's prophets. After denying the charge that he was the troubler of Israel and showing that Ahab had caused all the trouble by forsaking the commandments of God and maintaining the worship of Baal, Elijah then challenged Ahab to the contest of our lesson between Baal and Jehovah. By the majesty of right and the authority of Jehovah speaking through him Elijah issued the following order to Ahab: "Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the Asherah four hundred that eat at Jezebel's table." Ahab accepted the challenge



and obeyed the order, and "sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel." It seems "the prophets of the Asherah" did not attend this contest (verses 22, 40); neither did the wicked queen. It doubtless required several days to collect this assembly.

21. Then "Elijah came near unto all the people, and said, How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." The people hesitated, and were undecided between Jehovah and Baal. Clarke's "Commentary" makes the following pertinent remark: "They were halt; they could not walk uprightly; they dreaded Jehovah, and, therefore, could not totally abandon him; they feared the king and queen, and, therefore, thought they must embrace the religion of the State. Their conscience forbade them to do the former, their fear of man persuaded them to do the latter; but in neither were they heartily engaged. At this juncture their minds seem in equipoise, and they were waiting for a favorable opportunity to make their decision. Such an opportunity now, through the mercy of God, presented itself." Indecision between right and wrong is a decision in favor of the wrong. Too many now are "limping between the two sides." God's true and loyal servants, like Elijah, are decidedly and wholly for his way. Joshua put this test to the people. (Josh. 24: 14, 15.) To Elijah's exhortation the people then made no response.

22-24. "Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, am left a prophet of Jehovah; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under. . . . And call ye on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Jehovah: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken."

## II. The Challenge Accepted (Verses 25-29)

The above was a challenge for a fair test. This the people saw, and they accepted it. The prophets of Baal also accepted it. When the bullocks were brought, Elijah allowed them to choose one and to proceed first, for they were many. This was logically right, because Baal worship had been introduced where God's worship prevailed, and the prophets of Baal were logically bound to show the superiority of their god.

This was a contest between a false god and the true God, a false religion and the true religion, corruption and righteousness, licentiousness and virtue, four hundred and fifty false prophets on one side and one true prophet on the other side. This is one of the greatest victories of right over wrong and truth over error on record.

A thousand-fold would we rather be on Jehovah's side in this or any other struggle, although, like Elijah, alone, than to be on the popular side and wrong. He who follows the popular side to do wrong is strongly condemned. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak [bear witness] in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to wrest justice." (Ex. 23: 2.) So now we must choose the right and serve God truly, like Elijah, though we are alone. We must do this at all hazards.

The prophets of Baal prepared their bullock, "and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped about the altar which was made." From morning until noon they



called upon Baal, but received no answer. As the time passed and they received no answer, they became more frenzied, until they "leaped about the altar." "They danced round it with strange and hideous cries and gesticulations, tossing their heads to and fro, with a great variety of bodily contortions." (Clarke.) See a description of the dance of dervishes in "Lands of the Bible," pages 422, 423.

Then Elijah, in the keenest sarcasm and the bitterest irony and with the most withering ridicule known in all literature, began to mock them, saying: "Cry aloud; for he is a god [of course it requires loud calling in order to make a god hear]: either he is amusing, or he is gone aside, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awakened."

They did cry aloud, and not only so, but they "cut themselves after their manner with knives ["swords," margin] and lances, till the blood gushed out upon them." It was customary in idolatrous worship, as a kind of penance to satisfy their god, for the worshipers to punish themselves with such bodily afflictions as those just mentioned. They confess their sins, lash themselves with whips knotted with bones or iron, cut themselves with swords or lances, until, indeed, the blood gushes out.

Thus these prophets of Baal acted in wild frenzy, growing more frantic, "until the time of the offering of the evening oblation [or three o'clock in the afternoon]; but there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded."

### III. God Answers Elijah

30. After all the loud crying, wild gesticulations and frenzied bodily afflictions of the prophets of Baal for about nine hours had most signally failed, Elijah, full of faith in Jehovah and confidence which such faith inspires, called the people to him, that they might see the fairness of this whole matter. He wanted them, too, to witness the result of this test. "And he repaired the altar of Jehovah that was thrown down." This altar of Jehovah was probably built before the erection of the temple at Jerusalem. This altar had been thrown down by the enemies of Jehovah. (1 Kings 19: 10.) This Elijah first "repaired," that his offering might be made on an altar consecrated and acceptable to God. Our services today must be rendered in a manner acceptable to God. Elijah honored God in repairing his altar and obeying his commands (1 Kings 18: 36), and we can honor God now only as we conform to his way.

31. Elijah took not ten, but twelve, stones, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. God was called "the God of Israel" after the ten tribes revolted to show that he was still their God if they would serve him faithfully. Jacob was still the father of all twelve tribes. The name "Jacob" had been changed to "Israel"—"a prince with God." (Gen. 32: 22-32.) Jacob had been blessed by clinging to Jehovah in prayer, and Elijah was about to pray to him. This altar was to represent the whole nation, not some division of it.

32. "And with the stones he built an altar in the name of Jehovah." Elijah was there by God's command, and this altar was built by his authority to the honor of his name, and was intrusted to his care and protection. To avoid the barest possibility of any charge of deception, this trench was made about the altar to be filled with water. "As great as would contain two measures of seed," or, as the margin says, "a two-seah measure"—that is, deep and wide enough for such a measure to sit in. This measure contained two or three gallons.

33-35. The altar erected and the trench dug, the wood was



then put on it in order, and the bullock was cut in pieces and laid on the wood. This done, Elijah then directed that "four jars" of water be poured "on the burnt offering, and on the wood." These "jars" were such as maidens used to carry water upon their heads and held about three gallons.

Twelve "jars" of water were poured on; thirty-six gallons of water, in all, were poured on. The water thoroughly saturated the sacrifice and wood, running all through them and all over the altar, and it also filled the trench. This was done to show that there was no fire concealed about the altar and to preclude any possibility of any thought of deception.

36. Elijah not only built the altar according to God's directions, but the offering was made at the time the evening sacrifice was offered to God. Everything was done in strict compliance with God's law. So we must now implicitly obey God in observing his order. Then Elijah addressed God, as he is frequently called, as "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel."

God had promised to bless the descendants of these faithful men when these descendants were likewise faithful, and as the descendants of these men Elijah and the people then addressed God. Elijah wanted them near that as much as possible this might be their prayer as well as his. Elijah desired this done for God's honor. "Let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word."

This shows the faithfulness and loyalty of Elijah. In all this Elijah was proceeding only as God commanded. To hear him whom God sends is to hear God. (John 13: 20.)

37. Elijah prayed God to hear him and consume, therefore, the sacrifice for God's own glory and the salvation of the people. He prayed in a calm and trustful spirit. God wrought miracles to convince the people that he had sent his servants and was with them and to confirm the truth. (Ex. 4: 29-31; Heb. 2: 4.)

38. In answer to Elijah's prayer "the fire of Jehovah fell," consumed the burnt offering and wood, melted the stones and dust with intense heat, and "licked up the water" in the trench. God sent fire upon the altar which Moses built (Lev. 9: 24), the one David built (1 Chron. 21: 26), and the one Solomon built (2 Chron. 7: 1). See also the cases of Abraham (Gen. 15: 17) and of Gideon (Judg. 6: 21).

39. The agreement and test was: "And the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." The people saw this, and were convinced. They hesitated no longer, "limping between the two sides." Acknowledging Jehovah as the true God, in reverence and awe "they fell on their faces" and said: "Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God."

This was the answer to Elijah's question whether Baal or Jehovah is God. (1 Kings 18: 21.) To own Jehovah as the true God, or now to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, and at the same time to refuse to obey him, is to prove false and untrue to one's convictions.

These people proved their sincerity and convictions by acting at once upon Elijah's order to "take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." All these Elijah "brought . . . down to the brook Kishon and slew them there." (Verse 40.) It was God's law that such prophets should be slain. (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20.) In the goodness and mercy of God for the salvation of the nation these false prophets were slain.

It seems that Ahab consented to it. The execution of these prophets was just, because God had it done, and his judgment is righteous. (Rom. 2: 5.) All idolaters, false teachers, with all who

know not God and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, will be punished with "eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might." (2 Thess. 1: 7-10; see also Rom. 2: 4-11.) After the false prophets were slain there was an abundant rain. The idolatry of the king and people had occasioned the drought; and now that it had accomplished its chastening effect rain would come. (See an account on this in verses 41-46.)



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
 Did you read all the references?  
 Repeat the Golden Text.  
 Give the time, place and persons.  
 Repeat the Memory Verses.  
 Who was king at this time over Judah?  
 What was the condition of this kingdom?  
 What was the condition of the kingdom of Israel?  
 How long did the famine continue?  
 What did God command Elijah to do?  
 When did God tell him to do this?  
 Where was Elijah at this time?  
 How long had he been there?  
 How was this a test of Elijah's faith and courage?  
 What increases faith and courage?  
 What did God say he would send upon the earth?  
 In what manner did Elijah always obey God?  
 What then did he do?  
 What was the condition of Samaria?  
 Why did God send this famine?  
 What is said of the continuance of God's chastisement?  
 What effect did the famine have on Ahab?  
 Who was Obadiah?  
 What had Jezebel done to God's prophets?  
 What did Obadiah do to preserve God's prophets?  
 What did Ahab direct Obadiah to do?  
 Why must they find water and grass?  
 In what order did they go?  
 Who met Obadiah?  
 What did Elijah tell Obadiah to do?  
 What did Obadiah think would become of Elijah as soon as he himself should go to tell Ahab?  
 Why did he think Ahab would kill him?  
 What did Elijah reply?  
 What effect did this have on Obadiah?  
 What did Ahab say to Elijah?  
 What reply did Elijah make?  
 Who really troubles the church today?  
 Who are accused of doing it, and by whom?  
 To what did Elijah challenge Ahab and the prophets of Baal?
- 20 What did Ahab do?  
 Who did not attend this contest?  
 21 What question and proposition did Elijah put to the people?  
 What does "limping between two sides" mean?  
 What is indecision between right and wrong?
- What proposition did Joshua make to the people?  
 What test did Elijah then propose?  
 22-24 Why was this an appropriate and fair test?  
 Why should Baal's prophets proceed first?  
 Between what was this a contest?  
 How long did Baal's prophets call at first before any interruption?  
 What demonstrations did they make?  
 How then did Elijah mock them?  
 How much longer did they call upon Baal?  
 What bodily afflictions did they impose upon themselves?  
 Why did they do this?  
 What was the result?
- 30 Why did Elijah call the people to him?  
 What then was the first thing he did?  
 Why had this altar and others been thrown down?  
 What is necessary that our worship may be acceptable to God?  
 How many stones did Elijah use?  
 Why use this number?  
 Why refer to Jacob and the fact that God had changed his name to "Israel"?  
 What was it to build an altar in the name of Jehovah?  
 Why was this trench made about the altar?  
 How large was it?  
 State the facts in order as Elijah proceeded.  
 How much water was poured on?  
 Why pour it on?  
 Where could water be obtained after so long a drought?
- 36 When was the offering made?  
 What did this signify?  
 As what did Elijah address God?  
 Why address him thus?  
 Why did Elijah request God to do this?  
 What shows Elijah's faithfulness and loyalty?
- 37 For what did Elijah then pray?  
 What was the principal purpose of miracles?
- 38 How did God answer this prayer?  
 What other offerings did God thus consume?
- 39 What did the people do and say?  
 How did the people show the sincerity of their declaration?  
 Why did Elijah slay these prophets?  
 Why did God order such to be slain?  
 What will become of all false teachers and those who obey not the gospel?  
 Give an account of the rain and how it came?

## LESSON IV—JANUARY 22

**ELIJAH'S FLIGHT AND RETURN—1 Kings 19: 1-21****Print 19: 9-18**

1 KINGS 19. 9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of Jehovah came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

10 And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenants, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before Jehovah. And, behold, Jehovah passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before Jehovah; but Jehovah was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but Jehovah was not in the earthquake:

12 and after the earthquake a fire; but Jehovah was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

13 And it was so when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

14 And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

15 And Jehovah said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when thou comest, thou shalt anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.

16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.

18 Yet will I leave me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—I waited patiently for Jehovah;

And he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. (Ps. 40: 1.)

*Time*—906 B. C.

*Places*—Jezreel, Beersheba, the Wilderness South of Beersheba; and Mount Sinai.

*Persons*—Ahab, Elijah, his Servant, an Angel, and Jehovah.

*Memory Verse*—Matthew 6:11.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 42: 6-11.

*Reference Material*—Ezekiel 2: 1-7; Acts 16: 6-10; 18: 1-11.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Jan. 16.—The prophet triumphant.—1 Kings 18: 41-46. Tu.—The prophet despondent.—1 Kings 19: 1-8. Wed.—The prophet encouraged.—1 Kings 19: 9-18. Th.—Discouraged in service.—Num. 11: 10-15. Fr.—Unappreciated service.—Ezek. 2: 3-7. Sat.—Security in service.—Acts 18: 1-11. Su.—Our inspiration and our help.—Psa. 42: 6-11.

**INTRODUCTION**

Verses 1-8 of the chapter containing this lesson relate the effect upon Jezebel of Elijah's having the prophets of Baal slain; her rage and threat and oath to her gods to kill Elijah in less than twenty-four hours; Elijah's flight for his life from Jezreel to Beersheba, where he left his servant, went a day's journey into the wilderness, and requested Jehovah to take his life; the invitation of an angel to him to arise and eat of "a cake baken on the coals" and to drink of a cruse of water which lay at his head; the second visit of the angel, inviting him the second time to eat, because the journey was too great for him, without food and the strength it gave; and of his going in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights "unto Horeb—the Mount of God." Jezreel was about fifty miles north of



Jerusalem. Beersheba was about forty-five miles south of Jerusalem; hence, Elijah's first journey was ninety-five miles. Horeb was in the southern end of the peninsula of Arabia, between the arms of the Red Sea, and was about two hundred miles south of Beersheba. However interesting, instructive, and inviting to comment on these stirring facts, space forbids our dwelling at large upon them; although they are really a part of the lesson.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Elijah's Discouragement

9. "And he came thither." From his rest and meals under the juniper tree Elijah came "unto Horeb the mount of God" (1 Kings 19:8), "unto a cave." Moses stood "in a cleft of the rock" while Jehovah passed by (Ex. 33: 22), and it has been suggested that this may have been the cave in which Elijah "lodged." The "cleft of the rock" would hardly be called a "cave." Caves were common in that country, as we have seen. Sometimes people dwelt in them. Elijah "lodged" in this one. Whether he spent one night or more is not stated. "The word of Jehovah came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?"

Elijah had gone there from the juniper tree in the wilderness, it seems from verse 7, by the direction of the angel; but he had fled from the field of action in Israel. Elijah's reply to this question in the next verse shows what he understood Jehovah to mean by it. There is now, and will ever be, a mighty struggle between right and wrong, truth and error, Christ and Satan; and "all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3: 12), and none can retire from the fierce conflict with impunity. He who would retire from the struggle to the wilderness of idleness and ease would sacrifice God's cause and his own soul: on the other hand, the truest, bravest, boldest, and most courageous Elijah needs, at times, rest and encouragement.

The physical reaction of Elijah's mighty struggle on Carmel and the ferocity of Jezebel had depressed him, and he sought relief. God is a present help in every time of need, a stay and comfort in human weakness; therefore he came to Elijah's assistance. Though weak, weary, and persecuted, fight on, and God will give the victory. There can be no cessation of the warfare.

10. In reply to God's question, Elijah explained why he was there: "I have been very jealous for Jehovah the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." Indeed, Elijah was "jealous for Jehovah." He was unwilling that any other god should be served, and had done, it seemed to him, all that he could to put down idolatry. God himself is "a jealous God," forbidding idolatry and that any object or person shall be loved even above himself. (Ex. 20: 4-6; Matt. 10: 37-39; 22: 37.) Baal was the sun god, and Ashtoreth was the moon goddess.

They were the deities of reproduction, agriculture, etc. "The God of hosts" means the God of all the heavenly hosts and all intelligences in the universe, and is used in contrast with "Baal" and "Ashtoreth." Not only had the children of Israel turned away from God and broken his covenant in worshipping idols, but they had thrown down his altars and slain his prophets, that his worship might not be restored. It is true now that he who does not gather with Jesus scat-



ters, and he who would build up other religious institutions than the church of Christ does so to the detriment and destruction of that church. Elijah was discouraged.

He felt that he was the only one left to plead God's cause, and God's enemies were seeking his life. Elijah's faithfulness and jealousy for God caused him to feel more sensibly and keenly the sin of Israel in forsaking God. The faithfulness and loyalty of God's people today cause them to feel more sensibly any apostasy from the truth. Some have not "their senses exercised to discern good and evil." (Heb. 5: 13, 14.) On Mount Carmel Elijah made the statement that he was alone. (1 Kings 18: 22.) The faithful at different times have been forsaken, and they have always felt it; they would not be human if they did not feel it. Paul, in prison in Rome, said: "At my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me." (2 Tim. 4: 16.) The disciples of Jesus forsook him and fled, and on the cross he said: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

## II. The "Still Small Voice;" Elijah's Encouragement

11, 12. God then directs Elijah to "go forth, and stand upon the mount." On this mountain top God met Moses, and here he would meet Elijah. After Elijah had reached the mountain top, "Jehovah passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before Jehovah; but Jehovah was not in the wind." After the wind, there was an earthquake; "but Jehovah was not in the earthquake." After the earthquake, there was a fire; "but Jehovah was not in the fire." After the fire, there was "a still small voice," or "a sound of gentle stillness" (margin).

What lesson would God teach Elijah by all this? God was not in the rushing, roaring wind which rent the mountains and split the rocks; he was not in the cracking, quivering earthquake; he was not in the bright, blazing fire. Ahab and Jezebel were moving in pomp and pageantry, and seemingly all Israel had gone with them after Baal. Baal worship was the State religion. God was not in the outward show and noise and manifestations of worldly power. Ahab and Jezebel were in the majority, and made the display and noise of apparent great success; but God was not there.

The very kingdom itself in the beginning was a rejection of God as King (1 Sam. 8), and was rebellion against him, and its kings were leading the people farther from God. Those in error sometimes make the most noise and greatest display. God was in his word and with those who obeyed his voice. If this is not the lesson God would here teach Elijah, then what is it? God assured Elijah by this that he should not be discouraged by the power of these earthly kings and the fact that the great majority of the people had followed Baal. So today we should not become disheartened because the majorities go contrary to God's will in religion.

Unless God is in a work and upholds it, it is vain and will come to naught. "Except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except Jehovah keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." (Ps. 127: 1.) These rulers were mighty, like the wind, the earthquake, and the fire; but God was not with them. Elijah felt his weakness, but God was with him.

13. When Elijah heard this voice, he recognized the presence of Jehovah, and in reverence and awe "he wrapped his face in his mantle." His "mantle" was his cape of perhaps undressed skin. He then returned to the cave to receive further instruction from God. While standing "in the entrance of the cave," the voice of God came



again, saying: "What doest thou here, Elijah?" As the verses below show, this was a kind of reproof for desiring to remain in the cave in quiet when God had further work for him to do. Elijah, it seems, had not yet learned the lesson which God sought to teach him on the mountain.

14. He made the same reply as before.

### III. Elijah Back to the Field of Action

15. "And Jehovah said unto him, Go." This was a positive, direct command. There was yet more work for Elijah to do; there were greater victories for him to gain. The quiet of the wilderness and cave was peaceful and restful, and the "sound of gentle stillness" was refreshing; but Elijah must not remain there. The margin says: "Return on thy way by the wilderness to Damascus." Damascus was the capital of Syria, and was several hundred miles north of Sinai. "Thou shalt anoint Hazael to be king over Syria." Hazael was the servant, or officer, of Ben-hadad, king of Syria. He became a powerful ruler and greatly oppressed Israel. God used him as an instrument to punish Israel for its idolatry, persecuting Elijah, and slaying God's prophets. A record of the atrocities and horrible afflictions imposed upon Israel by Hazael is given in 2 Kings 8: 7-29; 10: 32, 33. Elijah did not with his own hands anoint Hazael, but Elisha made known to him the fact that he was to be king over Syria.

16-18. Also, Elijah was to anoint "Jehu the son of Nimshi" king over Israel. Jehu was the son of a man named "Jehoshaphat" and grandson of Nimshi. He was a general in the army of Israel under Joram, the son of Ahab and king of Israel. The ferocious and bloody deeds of Jehu are recorded in 2 Kings 9: 1 to 10: 31. Read all these references, and all the facts will be gathered. Elijah did not anoint Jehu, either, with his own hands; it was done by Elisha through "one of the sons of the prophets." Furthermore, Elijah was to anoint "Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah" to be prophet in his stead. Abel-meholah was west of the Jordan and not far to the northeast from Tirzah, the former capital of Israel. Elisha was to succeed Elijah as God's prophet to direct in all these matters. In returning to Abel-meholah, Elijah would go back to the field of action whence he had fled from Jezebel; but he would go back encouraged by the Lord and assured that all these transgressors would suffer just punishment for their idolatry and sin. Hazael and Jehu were anointed kings and Elisha prophet to execute judgment against evil doers. God assured Elijah that there were left "seven thousand in Israel" which had not bowed the knee to Baal and kissed him.

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Memory Verse.  
What did Ahab relate to Jezebel?  
What did she bind herself by oath to do?  
What did Elijah hasten to do?  
To what place did he go?  
What request did he make to the Lord?  
For what reason did he request to die?  
What did an angel invite him to do?  
Why must he eat?  
How long did he then go without any other food?  
To what place did he go?  
How far was Jezreel north of Jerusalem?  
How far was Beersheba south of Jerusalem?  
How far was Horeb south of Beersheba?  
Where did Elijah lodge in Horeb?  
What did God ask him?  
What was meant by this question?  
What lesson do we learn from this?
- 10 What reply did Elijah make?  
What is it to be jealous for Jehovah?  
How is Jehovah jealous?  
Why is he called "the God of hosts?"
- Why did Elijah feel so keenly the apostasy from God?  
Who else were forsaken?  
Who today feels deeply and sensibly any departure from the gospel of Christ and the church of God?
- 11, 12 What did God direct Elijah to do?  
What passed by?  
Where was God?  
What lesson does this teach?  
Who sometimes makes the greatest noise and display?
- 13 What did Elijah do?  
Why?  
To what did he return?  
What question did God ask?
- 14 What reply did Elijah make?
- 15 What in this verse did God command Elijah to do?  
Where and what was Damascus?  
Who was Hazael?  
What deed against Israel did he commit?
- 16-18 Who was to be anointed king over Israel?  
Who was Jehu?  
What deeds of atrocity did he commit?  
Did Elijah anoint Hazael and Jehu with his own hands, or how was it done?  
Who was to succeed Elijah as prophet?  
What would these men do?  
How many were left who had not bowed the knee to Baal?



## LESSON V—JANUARY 29

**ELIJAH IN NABOTH'S VINEYARD—1 Kings 21: 1-29****Print 21: 7-10, 16-20**

1 KINGS 21. 7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thy heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, and that dwelt with Naboth.

9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people:

10 And set two men, base fellows, before him, and let them bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst curse God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him to death.

16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

17 And the word of Jehovah came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who dwelleth in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to take possession of it.

19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

20 And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Be sure your sin will find you out. (Numbers 32:23.)

*Time*—About B. C. 900.

*Places*—Jezreel and Samaria.

*Persons*—Elijah, Ahab, Jezebel, Naboth, and his false accusers.

*Memory Verse*—Galatians 6:7.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 43: 1-5.

*Reference Material*—Leviticus 25: 23-28; Amos 8:4-10; Micah 3:1-4.

*Home Readings*—Mon., Jan. 23.—Covetousness brings murder.—1 Kings 21: 5-14. Tu.—Covetousness brings judgment.—1 Kings 21: 17-26. Wed.—Covetousness described.—Amos 8: 4-10. Th.—An example of covetousness.—Josh. 7: 16-22. Fr.—Covetousness punished.—2 Kings 5: 20-27. Sat.—Covetousness renounced.—1 Tim. 6: 1-11. Su.—The joy of deliverance.—Psa. 43: 1-5.

**INTRODUCTION****I. Elisha Anointed Prophet**

Elijah, always promptly obedient to God, returned from Sinai and began the work of anointing Elisha, prophet in his stead; Jehu, king over Israel; and Hazael, king over Syria. This work was not all done at once and with Elijah's own hands. He found Elisha plowing "with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth." There were twelve plows running in the same field. Elisha's father or Elisha himself must have been a wealthy farmer. Elisha lived with his father. It is worthy of note that he was at work and in the faithful discharge of the duty at hand when called to succeed Elijah, also that he made a financial sacrifice to become a prophet of God. It is the boy or young man who knows how to do well that at which he is at work and is cheerfully doing it who is called to a greater work. Elijah "passed over unto" Elisha in the field "and cast his mantle upon him."

From this and Elijah's mantle falling upon Elisha, when Elijah was taken up (2 Kings 2: 9-14), sprang the familiar expression of



the mantle of one falling upon another. Elisha understood that this was a call for him to follow Elijah; "and he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee"—that is, bid them farewell. Elisha said: "Go back again (go bid your parents farewell, as you desire); for what have I done to thee?" Elijah did not mean by this that what he had done to Elisha signified nothing; but, on the contrary, this was an important call which God, and not Elijah, had made; and while Elisha could return home for all necessary preparation, yet he must not forget his obligations in this matter "for (remember) what have I done to thee?" Elisha returned home and celebrated this call with a feast, slaying the oxen with which he plowed, and "roasted (margin) their flesh with the instruments of the oxen." He then left home and became a pupil of Elijah. (1 Kings 19: 19-21.)

## II. Ahab Coveted Naboth's Vineyard

This story is given to show Ahab's depraved character. Naboth's vineyard was "hard by" Ahab's palace in Jezreel, and Ahab wanted it to make of it an herb garden. Jezreel was a town at the north-western end of Mount Gilboa and several miles north of the city of Samaria. Ahab proposed to exchange for Naboth's vineyard a better one or to pay for it in money; but Naboth declined to part with it because God's law forbade his disposing thus of the family inheritance. (See Lev. 25: 23-28; Num. 36: 7-9; Ezek. 46: 18.) Ahab returned to his home, it seems, in Samaria (verses 14, 16, 18; 1 Kings 20: 43), and, petulant and sulky, rolled on his bed, pouted, and refused to eat. Jezebel, upon discovering the cause of his moroseness, bade him arise and be merry, for she would secure for him the coveted vineyard. She was one of the most, if not the most, ungodly, impious, and daringly wicked women who has ever lived. She spread whoredom and witchcraft throughout the kingdom (2 Kings 9: 22), and stirred up her husband to sell himself to do evil (1 Kings 21: 25). Her name is a synonym of wickedness and rebellion.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Jezebel's Wicked Plot to Take the Vineyard

7. "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?" The wicked Jezebel intimated by this question that Ahab was king and could take Naboth's vineyard from him; and if he could not, she could. Then she laid a most diabolical plot to have Naboth and his sons (1 Kings 9: 26) stoned to death upon a false accusation of blasphemy and his vineyard confiscated.

8-10 "She wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal," to "the elders and to the nobles" of Jezreel, ordering them to "proclaim a fast" and to "set Naboth on high among the people," and to have two "base fellows" to falsely accuse him of cursing, or renouncing, God and the king, and then to take him out and stone him to death.

The directions were imperative; there must be no parleying or hesitancy. This was a horrible conspiracy and murder most foul to gratify the whim of a depraved character. What does this wicked and idolatrous woman care for God? Had she not many times committed the sin of blasphemy? How many sins, like hissing serpents, coiled together in her heart as a nest! She knew only "base fellows"—worthless men—would perjure themselves; hence for those she



called. A hypocrite, she used religion to enforce a lie and commit murder. Suborner, hypocrite, robber, liar, and murderer was she in this case. The legal punishment of blasphemy was death by stoning (Lev. 24: 16), but Naboth was as innocent as was Jesus. Jesus was accused of blasphemy because he said he was the Son of God, and on this false charge was crucified. Naboth's sons were likewise stoned to death (2 Kings 9: 26), that there would be no heirs.

## II. Ahab's and Jezebel's Sins Found Them Out

16. "The elders and nobles" of Naboth's city, having received Jezebel's letters, acted as directed. They then sent the news to her. With much complacency and satisfaction she said to Ahab: "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money, for Naboth is not alive, but dead." She gloated over her success. (See verses 11-15.)

Ahab then "rose up to go down" to Jezreel to take possession of Naboth's vineyard. While Ahab did not possess the cunning and daring of Jezebel, she stirred him up (1 Kings 21: 25), and, in abject moral weakness, he was guilty of all the sins mentioned above—hypocrisy, suborning witnesses, robbery, lying, and murder—of which she was guilty. His sins sprang from more than covetousness; they sprang from a petulant, morose, and depraved nature.

17, 18. The sins of Jezebel and Ahab found them out. While the news was going to Jezebel that her orders had been carried out, the black crimes were going to Elijah, but in different ways; Elijah receiving his news from God. "The word of Jehovah came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who dwelleth in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to take possession of it." As Ahab stepped in to take possession, there was Elijah to meet him.

19. Others may not have known Jezebel's and Ahab's sins, except themselves and those who executed them; but God knew them. So Nathan made known to David the fact that God knew his sins. God told Elijah to say to Ahab: "Thus saith Jehovah, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?" God knew all. Elijah was to say, further: "Thus saith Jehovah, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine."

## III. Who Is One's Enemy?

20. "Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Ahab had seen enough of Elijah to dread his presence. Ahab was Elijah's enemy, but Elijah was not his enemy; Elijah sought Ahab's good and the good of the people. To reprove one of sin and to point out to him the right way is true friendship and love. Too many, like Ahab, call him who tells them the truth their enemy. So people treated Paul. He asks: "So then am I become your enemy by telling you the truth?" (Gal. 4: 16.) Jezebel was Elijah's enemy and an enemy of all truth and righteousness. Elijah answered: "I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah." All covetous persons sell themselves to do evil; all who do wrong in any way or in any way leave undone what they should do for money sell themselves—sell their souls.

Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage; Judas sold himself (not Jesus) for thirty pieces of silver; so all who, for the sake of fleshly pleasure or earthly gain, do wrong sell themselves, and sell themselves to do evil. "They that are minded to be rich fall

into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil; which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Tim. 6: 9, 10.) We should heed the Golden Text. Elijah then declared the doom of Ahab and Jezebel: (1) As stated in verse 19, the dogs should lick Ahab's blood in the place where they had licked the blood of Naboth; (2) as the house, or dynasty, of Jeroboam and the house, or dynasty, of Baasha had been destroyed, so would God destroy Ahab's house, cutting off "every man-child, and him that is shut up and him that is left at large in Israel;" (3) the dogs should not simply lick Jezebel's blood, but should eat her body "by the rampart of Jezreel;" and (4) "him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the birds of the heavens eat." (Verses 21-24.)

They should not be buried even. Upon hearing this Ahab humbled himself before God: "he rent his clothes," "put sackcloth upon his flesh," "fasted," "lay in sackcloth," and "went softly." God said because Ahab had done this he would not bring this evil in Ahab's day, but he would bring it in the days of Ahab's son. (Verses 27-29.) Ahab was accidentally killed in battle away from home, yet the dogs licked his blood from his chariot at the pool of Samaria. (1 Kings 22: 34-38.) But Jehu, when he slew Ahab's son, Joram, ordered his body cast into Naboth's vineyard because God had said this. (See 2 Kings 9: 21-26.)

Jezebel was thrown alive from a window and some of her blood was sprinkled upon the wall and some upon the horses; she was trodden "under foot," and the dogs ate her flesh, leaving nothing except her skull, feet, and the palms of her hands. Jehu said: "This is the word of Jehovah, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall the dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel; and the body of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel, so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel." (2 Kings 9: 30-37.) Jehu then had all the sons of Ahab, all his great men, all his familiar friends, and all his priests killed. (2 Kings 10: 1-11.) This was in fulfillment of that which God spoke by Elijah concerning Ahab's house.



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
 Did you read all the references?  
 Repeat the Golden Text.  
 Give the time, places and persons.  
 Repeat the Memory Verse.  
 Where did the last lesson leave Elijah?  
 What next in obedience to God did he do?  
 Where did he find Elisha?  
 What kind of people does God call to his work?  
 What did Elisha request to do first?  
 What gave rise to the mantle of one person falling on another?  
 How did Elisha celebrate this call?  
 Who was Naboth?  
 Where was Jezreel?  
 What did Ahab want of Naboth?  
 Why would Naboth not part with it?  
 How did this affect Ahab?  
 Give the character of Jezebel.
- 7 What did she say to Ahab when she discovered why he was displeased?
- 8-10 Give her wicked plan to obtain the vineyard.  
 Of how many sins was she guilty in this plot?  
 Why select "base fellows" as false witnesses?
- What was the legal punishment of blasphemy?
- 16 What did the elders and nobles do?  
 What news was sent to Jezebel?  
 What did she then say to Ahab?  
 What did Ahab do?  
 Of what sins in this case was he guilty?  
 Why was he guilty?
- 17, 18 How did the sins of Ahab and Jezebel find them out?
- 19 What did God tell Elijah to say to Ahab?
- 20 What reply did Ahab make?  
 Why did he call Elijah his enemy?  
 What is it to love any one?  
 For what had Ahab sold himself?  
 Who sell themselves now?  
 What do those who are minded to be rich do?  
 What springs from the love of money?  
 State in order the doom of Ahab and his house?  
 What effect did this have upon Ahab?  
 State in order what he did to show his repentance.  
 State in order how this punishment came upon Ahab, Jezebel, and Ahab's house.

## LESSON VI—FEBRUARY 5

# ELIJAH TAKEN UP INTO HEAVEN—2 Kings 2: 1-18

## Print 2: 5-11

2 KINGS 2. 5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came near to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that Jehovah will take away thy master from thy head today? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry here, I pray thee; for Jehovah hath sent me to the Jordan. And he said, As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood over against them afar off: and they two stood by the Jordan.

8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I am taken from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

10 And he said, Thou hast asked me a hard thing; nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

**Golden Text**—Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10.)

**Time**—About 896 B. C.

**Places**—Gilgal, Bethel, and the place east of the Jordan, whence Elijah was taken up.

**Persons**—Elijah and Elisha.

**Memory Verse**—Proverbs 4: 8.

**Devotional Reading**—1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18.

**Reference Material**—Mark 9:2-8; 2 Timothy 4:1-8.

**Home Readings**.—Mon., Jan. 30.—Elijah taken to heaven.—2 Kings 2: 1-11. Tu.—The fruitless search.—2 Kings 2: 12-18. Wed.—Elijah taken to heaven.—Gen. 5: 21-24. Th.—Moses taken to heaven.—Deut. 34: 1-8, Fr.—The transfiguration.—Mark 9: 2-8. Sat.—Paul's hope of heaven.—2 Tim. 4: 1-8. Su.—Our assurance of heaven.—1 Thess. 4: 13-18.

## INTRODUCTION

### I. The Time for Elijah to Go

This lesson properly begins with verse 1 of this chapter, which says:

"When Jehovah would take up Elijah by a whirlwind into heaven."

In his discouragement under the juniper tree in the wilderness a few years previous to this Elijah desired to go, but it was not God's will then to take him. There was much more for him to do. He promptly obeyed God and returned to the field of action. He always obeyed God promptly and braved all dangers in doing so. He was now old; he had been a faithful and dutiful, courageous and loyal prophet, and God was ready to take him. We are reminded here again of Paul's utterance of faith and resignation: "We are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord. Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well pleasing unto him." (2 Cor. 5: 8, 9.) Paul preferred to go home, but so long as God had work for him on earth and it was God's will for him to remain he was willing to do so, that in all things he might be well pleasing to God. After his trials and struggles, conflicts and victories, Elijah, without dying, was to go up into heaven in a grand and triumphant manner—"by a whirlwind."



## II. Elijah and Elisha

"Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal." Elisha had been with Elijah as his minister and disciple since Elisha's call to be a prophet. He "ministered unto" Elijah (1 Kings 19: 21) and "poured water" on his hands (2 Kings 3: 11). There were three Gilgals. At one was a school of the prophets. (2 Kings 4: 38.) From the expression "down to Bethel" (2 Kings 2: 2) and the course Elijah pursued from Gilgal to Bethel and from Bethel to Jericho it seems probable this Gilgal was the one in the hill country of Ephraim, about eight miles northwest of Bethel. (See 2 Kings 5: 22.) Also from his being at Gilgal and from his visits now to these schools of the prophets it is not improbable that Elijah had spent some time before this instructing these young prophets.

"And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for Jehovah hath sent me as far as Bethel." Elijah, Elisha, and "the sons of the prophets" knew that Elijah was soon to be taken away. (2 Kings 2: 3.) Why, then, did Elijah request Elisha to remain behind? Several conjectures have been offered. It seems that Elijah was testing Elisha's fidelity and devotion and his ability to succeed him as a prophet. Elisha was servant to Elijah as well as pupil, and in his faithfulness he realized it was his duty to go with Elijah and care for him in his old age. Knowing, too, his master's departure was at hand, Elisha wanted the parting blessing to fit him more fully for his work as a prophet. His steadfastness, faithfulness, and perseverance were tested, and showed he was fully qualified for the reception of the blessing. "As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." This shows that Elisha felt it was his solemn duty to remain with Elijah. "So they went down to Bethel." We are familiar with Bethel. It was about twelve miles northwest from Jerusalem.

## III. "The Sons of the Prophets"

While Bethel was one of the centers of the worship of the calves erected by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12: 28, 29), it was the seat of one of the schools of the prophets. It may be that this school of the prophets was started there to counteract the influence of idolatry.

"The sons of the prophets" were young men studying under older prophets in order to prepare themselves for the work of prophets. They were not fleshly descendants of the older prophets, but students. They dwelt in such places as were suited for devotion and study. While idolatry increased, it seems that the number attending these schools of the prophets increased. (2 Kings 6: 1, 2.) These young prophets worked with their hands (2 Kings 6: 3-7); they learned some handicraft for future usefulness. They were married; at least some of them were. (2 Kings 4: 1.) There were different schools at different places. The teacher was called "master" or "father." (2 Kings 2: 12; 13: 14.) We are forbidden to use "master" and "father" as religious titles, or to wear any other religious titles, and to seek preeminence in the church. (Matt. 23: 1-12.) These "sons of the prophets" at Bethel knew Elijah would be taken away, and they so informed Elisha; but Elisha also knew it. God doubtless revealed to them, as he had done to Elijah and Elisha, that Elijah was about to be translated. "Hold ye your peace." Elisha knew it; it was a solemn thing to him; his course was determined; and it was not necessary to discuss it.

Elijah urged Elisha to tarry at Bethel while he went to Jericho, "for Jehovah hath sent me to Jerico." Elijah made these move-



ments by God's directions. Again Elisha solemnly refused to leave Elijah. "So they came to Jericho." There also was a school of the prophets.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Elisha's Request

5. These prophets also knew of Elijah's approaching departure, and so informed Elisha. To them he replied as to the prophets at Bethel.

6. Here Elijah urged Elisha to remain while he went, in obedience to God, to the Jordan; but again Elisha refused to leave him. "And they two went on."

7. Knowing that Elijah would be taken away from the earth without dying, these young prophets were desirous of seeing him depart; so fifty of them followed him and Elisha "and stood over against them afar off." We can easily see why these prophets should be so intensely interested. They could see Elijah and Elisha as they stood together by the Jordan. "And they two stood by the Jordan."

8. "Elijah took his mantle." This was the cape of skin—doubtless sheepskin, dressed with the wool on it. This was the prophet's badge. Some false prophets wore "a hairy mantle to deceive." (Zech. 13: 4.) They were, indeed, wolves "in sheep's clothing." Elijah "wrapped it together" so he could handle it as a rod. It was a badge of his prophetic office; and through it, as through Moses' rod, the power of God was manifested. With his mantle thus rolled together, Elijah "smote the waters [of the Jordan], and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground." It is quite probable that at this very place Joshua, with the ark of God, divided the Jordan. (Josh. 3: 13.) With his rod Moses divided the Red Sea. (Ex. 14: 21.) With that same rod Moses performed other wonders. This must have been an exciting scene to the fifty prophets in the distance.

9. "What I shall do for thee, before I am taken from thee." This was Elijah's question to Elisha after they had crossed the Jordan and after Elisha had proven his fidelity and devotion to Elijah, his faithfulness and steadfastness in the service of God, and his perseverance in seeking greater qualification for his work. He had proven himself worthy. Elijah was ready to bestow upon Elisha whatever favor was in his power. He would do this for Elisha's sake and for the good of the people. Like Solomon's renowned prayer for wisdom (1 Kings 3: 4-14) this request of Elisha was pleasing to God. "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." "A double portion" of the inheritance was the right of the firstborn (Deut. 21: 17)—that is, of the inheritance the firstborn received twice as much as the other heirs. For this portion of Elijah's spirit Elisha prayed, and not for twice as much of the spirit as Elijah possessed. Other sons of the prophets might receive a portion of Elijah's spirit, but Elisha prayed for "a double portion." Elisha had a measure of the spirit, but he desired more and he received it. He had proven himself worthy, and with "a double portion" he would accomplish more for God and the nation. God gave the Spirit to Jesus "not . . . by measure." (John 3: 34); to others it is given "by measure." Elijah himself must have had "a double portion" or a very great measure of the Spirit of God. He was blessed with great spiritual power because of his faithfulness and loyalty to God.

10. "Thou hast asked a hard thing." It was hard because God alone could bestow it, and he would not do so unless Elisha was faith-



ful and worthy. God works through men as channels, and as much good and as many blessings flow through them to others as the capacity of the channels permits. Knowing Elisha's capacity and worthiness, Elijah promised, upon his faithful continuance to the end, that he should receive the blessing requested. "If thou see me when I am taken from thee [that is, if Elisha should prove his fitness for such a blessing by remaining with Elijah, faithful and dutiful, until he left the earth], it shall be so unto thee; but if not [if he did not remain faithful], it shall not be so." This goes to show that when in 2 Kings 2: 2, 4, 6, Elijah was urging Elisha to remain behind, it was to test Elisha's faithfulness and perseverance. There was spiritual and prophetic power connected with the mantle of Elijah. (See 1 Kings 19: 19.)

In remaining with Elijah until he was taken up, Elisha would obtain this mantle. He did obtain it, and with it parted the waters of the Jordan. (2 Kings 2: 13, 14.) Elisha was not a greater prophet than Elijah. Elijah has been called the "law restorer," in whose spirit and power John the Baptist came. "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Mal. 4: 5, 6.) This, Jesus says, refers to the coming of John the Baptist. (Matt 17: 9-13.) Elijah and Elisha were different in disposition. The one was rugged and bold, like the rocks of the mountain; the other was milder and gentler. Elijah was a pioneer, and laid the foundation upon which Elisha built.

## II. Elijah Taken Up

11. "As they still went on, and talked." It is not stated what was the subject of their conversation. We can well imagine they talked about Elijah's ascension and Elisha's future work. On the mount of transfiguration Moses and Elijah talked with Jesus about the death he was about to die. While Elijah and Elisha thus walked and talked, "a chariot ["chariots," margin] of fire, and horses of fire," passed between them and separated them, "and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." It is said: "We are not to think of Elijah's ascending in a chariot." Why not? He ascended and the chariot ascended. "Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariots ["chariot," margin] of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" (2 Kings 2: 12.) "Elijah went up by a whirlwind," and so did the chariot. Then as the chariot parted Elijah and Elisha, Elijah stepped in and "by a whirlwind" was carried "into heaven," and Elisha "saw him no more." In humiliation and sorrow, it seems, Elisha "took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces." (Verse 12; see also Gen. 37: 29, 34, 44, 13; Matt. 26: 65.) Jesus refers to Elijah's stay at Zarephath and the blessing he bestowed upon the widow there, (Luke 4: 25, 26), and James (5: 17) says he "was a man of like passions with us." Other references are made to him in the New Testament.

## QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place and persons.

Repeat the Memory Verse.

When did Elijah wish to die?

Why did God not take him then?

Repeat what Paul says about departing and being at home.

How would God now take Elijah to heaven?

At what place were Elijah and Elisha?

How long had Elisha been with Elijah?

What had he been to Elijah?

How many Gilgals were there, and where were they?

Why do we suppose the one mentioned here was in the hill country of Ephraim?

Why do we suppose Elijah spent some time instructing the young prophets?

What did Elijah say to Elisha?

Why did Elijah urge Elisha to remain behind?

Why did Elisha insist on going?

What solemn words did he use declaring his intention to accompany Elijah?

Then to what place did they go? Where was Bethel?

Tell all you can of all that ever occurred at Bethel (look it all up).

Who were the "sons of the prophets?"

How many schools of the prophets are referred to in our lesson?

Who were called "father?"

What are we forbidden to wear, or to be called, on earth?

How did Elijah, Elisha, and these prophets know Elijah would be translated?

What did these prophets say to Elisha?

What reply did he make?

To what place did Elijah go from Bethel?

Where was Jericho?

Tell all you can of that which occurred at Jericho.

5 State the facts of this verse.

6 Where did Elijah and Elisha go from Jericho?

7 What did fifty of the young prophets do?

Why did they do this?

8 How did Elijah and Elisha cross the Jordan?

What was this "mantle?"

Of what was it a badge?

What did some prophets wear to deceive?

At what point did Elijah and Elisha cross the Jordan?

How did Joshua part the waters?

What did Moses do with his rod?

9 What question did Elijah ask Elisha?

Why would Elijah now bestow a blessing upon Elisha?

For what did Elisha ask?

What did Elisha mean by "a double portion" of the spirit?

Why was this a hard thing which Elisha had asked?

Upon what conditions would it be bestowed?

Upon what conditions does God bless us and bless others through us?

What are some of the differences between Elijah and Elisha?

11 What occurred as they still went on?

How was Elijah carried up?

What did Elisha say?

What did Elisha do?

What did Elijah drop?

What power was in this mantle?

What references are made to Elijah in the New Testament?



## LESSON VII—FEBRUARY 12

**ELISHA AND THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN—2 Kings 4: 8-37. Print 4: 18-22, 27, 30, 32-35**

2 KINGS 4. 18 And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers.

19 And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to his servant, Carry him to his mother.

20 And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.

21 And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out.

22 And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the servants, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again.

27 And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came near to thrust her away; but the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her; and Jehovah hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.

30 And the mother of the child said, As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose; and followed her.

32 And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.

33 He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto Jehovah.

34 And he went up and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon him; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

35 Then he returned and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him; and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. (John 5:25.)

*Time*—About B. C. 895.

*Place*—Shunem.

*Persons*—Elisha and his servant, Gehazi; the Shunammite and her husband and child.

*Memory Verse*—John 11: 25, 26.

*Devotional Reading*—1 Corinthians 15: 50-58.

*Reference Material*—John 11: 1-46.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Feb. 6.—The woman's hospitality.—2 Kings 4: 8-13. Tu.—The woman's sorrow.—2 Kings 4: 14-22. Wed.—The woman's faith.—2 Kings 4: 25-30. Th.—The woman's reward.—2 Kings 4: 31-37. Fr.—A woman restored.—Acts 9: 36-42. Sat.—The message to Martha.—John 11: 18-29. Su.—The message to all.—1 Cor. 15: 50-58.

**INTRODUCTION****I. The Shunammite Woman and Her Husband**

Shunem was a small town in the tribe of Issachar (Josh. 19: 17, 18), near the head of the valley of Jezreel, on the southern slope of the hill of Moreh, also called "Little Hermon." This valley of Jezreel is said to be the most fertile and beautiful one of Palestine. Shunem was four miles north of the city of Jezreel, about seven miles south of Nazareth, and about sixteen miles east of Mount Carmel. "It is now only a village of huts." (McGarvey's "Lands of the Bible.") Here the Philistines camped on the evening before the fatal battle on Mount Gilboa, when King Saul and his sons lost their lives (1 Sam. 28: 4); here David's nurse, Abishag, lived (1 Kings 1: 3); and here was the home of the "great woman" of our lesson. Nabal, although a fool, is called a "very great" man because he had large possessions (1 Sam. 25: 2), and for the same reason Barzillai is



called "a very great man" (2 Sam. 19: 32.) This Shunammite and her husband were well-to-do farmers, but she was also a wise and devout woman. Elisha spent much time in Samaria (2 Kings 2: 25), but he frequently went to Mount Carmel. Visiting the schools of the prophets and his other work required him to travel much from place to place. Mount Carmel is noted as the place of trial between Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18), and seems to have been a sacred place of religious gatherings. (See McGarvey's description of it in "Lands of the Bible.")

In making his journey, "it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem;" and this good and hospitable woman "constrained him to eat bread." After this as often as he passed that way "he turned in thither to eat bread." (2 Kings 4: 8.) By having to be "constrained" to eat with these good people and to lodge in this hospitable home we see at once that Elisha was no religious tramp, seeking food and shelter wherever they could be found. It must be made clear to him that it is right to partake of such hospitality before he would do so. This was a comfortable and convenient place to rest, being about halfway between Samaria and Carmel. Here he found a convenient stopping place, a hearty welcome, and congenial society. The family consisted of only the husband and wife and servants. The names of this good man and his generous wife are not given. From his deportment this observant woman perceived that Elisha was "a holy man of God"—a prophet. (Verse 9.)

## II. The Preacher's Home

This good woman proposed to her husband that they build for Elisha a convenient "little chamber on the wall" and put into it "a bed, and a table, and a seat, and a candlestick." (Verse 10.) This was probably a small room on the flat roof of the house, reached in a private way by an outside stairway. This was all that Elisha needed. The evangelist now appreciates just such treatment, especially the quiet of a "little chamber," with bed, seat, table, and light, where he may study the Bible, meditate, pray, and sometimes rest. The hospitality of this woman is most commendable and worthy of emulation. Her character is seen in the company she sought. The character of our guests now helps to determine the character of our homes. Elisha in a home is a blessing to it. Receiving a prophet in the name of a prophet, this woman received a prophet's reward. (Matt. 10: 40-42.) The Bible exhorts us to be "given to hospitality" and to "forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Heb. 13: 2; see also Rom. 12: 13; 1 Tim. 3: 2.) The room was built and furnished, and Elisha was entertained continually. He was grateful, as every true man would be, and desired to do something for this good woman. To be spoken of to the king or the general of the army in a favorable way was most highly appreciated by most people at that time; but this woman was contented and happy, and desired no favors of this kind. This is a blessed state in which to be. Elisha desired to repay her for her kindness. (See verses 11-13).

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. The Child and Its Death

18-22. Upon the suggestion of Gehazi that she was childless, Elisha promised her a son. At that time it was considered a great misfortune and was a source of much sorrow to be childless. It is a



misfortune to-day for parents to miss the cultivation and development of the graces and virtues which the bearing and proper training of children necessarily produce. This woman did not realize at first that this promise could be fulfilled, and requested Elisha not to mock her; but according to his promise, in due season she became the mother of a boy. (See verses 14-17.) We see from 2 Kings 8: 1-6 (which read) that this was not the only blessing bestowed by Elisha upon this woman. When this child became of sufficient age to go to the field where his father and the reapers were at work, he suffered, it seems, a sunstroke. He was taken home by a servant, received into his mother's arms, and at noon died upon her lap. She laid him on Elisha's bed, saddled an ass and hastened to Elisha, at Mount Carmel, about sixteen miles away. A servant went behind and drove the ass along speedily with a goad.

## II. The Woman Went to Elisha

Elisha saw the woman coming, recognized her, and said to his servant, Gehazi, "Behold, yonder is the Shunammite." He saw from her haste in coming that something uncommon had happened, but he knew not what it was. He sent Gehazi, therefore, in haste to inquire if it was well with her, with her husband, and with her son. Elisha himself was disturbed and anxious to know the trouble. She concealed her emotions from Gehazi, and disposed of him by saying: "It is well." Then, resigned to the will of God, it was well; now when children die or when older ones who serve God die and pass out of the suffering, trials, and sorrows of this life into the rest that remains for the people of God, we say it is well with them. (Verses 25-26.)

27. "When she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught hold of his feet." In her pent-up grief and unutterable sorrow she prostrated herself at Elisha's feet. Not knowing her heart's deep grief, doubtless supposing she was beside herself, and not wishing his master thus troubled, Gehazi, like the disciples who rebuked the mothers for bringing their children to Jesus (Matt. 19: 13), "came near to thrust her away; but the man of God said, Let her alone: for her soul is vexed within her; and Jehovah hath hid it from me, and hath not told me." Eli thought Hannah, in her humiliation and affliction, as she lay prostrate before God at Shiloh, was "drunken." (1 Sam. 1: 9-18.) Elisha saw that this woman was in great trouble and deep grief, but he did not know what it was. Inspired men did not know all truth and facts; they knew only in so far as these were revealed. It was best for the woman for Elisha to learn her trouble from herself.

In verse 28, this woman said to Elisha: "Did I desire a son of my lord? Did I not say, Do not deceive me?" This implies that the child was either dangerously sick or dead. At first, though childless, she was contented and happy; and when Elisha would grant her a favor, she did not request a child; it was given her freely. "Now it would have been better for me," she says, virtually, "not to have borne a son than to have borne him, loved him, lost him, and had all hope for his future crushed by his death." Thus she felt that she had been deceived and mocked. She recognized that all this was by super-human power, but did not understand why the same power that gave the child should so soon take it away. Yet by coming to Elisha she shows that she knew he could comfort and sustain her in her grief; and, it seems, she had hope that he could restore the child.

As stated in verse 29, Elisha sent Gehazi at once in haste to lay his



staff upon the face of the child. Elisha learned from the woman's questions that the trouble was with the child. This staff seemed a symbol of Elisha's prophetic authority, and, like Moses' rod, was a means through which divine power was exerted. Gehazi was not to stop to salute any man by the way. The salutations then and the salutations of the East now are said to be formal and to require no little time; and Gehazi's mind must not be diverted from the one purpose, and he must not be hindered in his hasty journey by stopping along the way to salute people. "Lay my staff upon the face of the child." This was done with the hope that miraculous power would go forth from the staff and restore the child. From verse 32 it may be possible that Elisha did not know yet that the child was dead.

### III. Elisha Went With the Woman

30. It seems that Elisha at first intended, not to go, but to wait until he heard from Gehazi; but the woman would not return without him. She could not trust Gehazi and the staff to restore her child. It is not improbable that she knew more of Gehazi's real character than Elisha did. She had good opportunities of observing him at her home. She perceived that Elisha was "a holy man of God" (2 Kings 4: 9), and why could she not perceive Gehazi's real character? She knew Elisha's power, and trusted that he could restore her child. In her persistence she said, "As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee"—that is, he must go with her. Her persistence prevailed; "he arose, and followed her." Other cases, as well as this case, teach us the importance of persistence and importunity in seeking blessings from God in prayer. Jacob at the Jabbok ford, wrestling with the angel (Gen. 32: 24-32), and the importunate widow, pleading with the unjust judge (Luke 18: 1-8), are examples.

Gehazi preceded them, and laid the staff on the child's face, but without effect. (Verse 31.) We judge from sending this staff to be laid on the child's face that Elisha had before this exerted miraculous power through this means. If he had not, why should he try it in this serious case for the first time? Then, why was not the child restored by this means? Gehazi was a bad man, and it has been said that the staff in his hand was no more than any ordinary staff. "While God can accomplish one end by miracle as well as another, different degrees of spiritual power in the medium are requisite to accomplish different ends. Jesus told his disciples that certain kinds of demons could be cast out only by prayer and fasting. By prayer and fasting they were brought into a better spiritual condition, and could receive the power of God's Spirit more fully, that they might convey it more effectively to the subject—that is, God's Spirit refuses to act effectively, save through one whose spirit is in complete harmony with the will of God." (Lipscomb.) Gehazi was not in harmony with God's will. Under the touch of the staff the child neither spoke nor gave attention. Gehazi returned to meet Elisha, and reported the result. This confirmed the mother in her judgment that it was best to have Elisha go.

32. Entering the house, Elisha found "the child was dead, and laid upon his bed."

### IV. The Child Restored to Life

33. Elijah then went into the room where the child lay, shut the door, "and prayed unto Jehovah." Like casting out certain demons through fasting and prayer, Elisha prayed to God for power to restore the child; for this power must come from God, and Elisha must



be a fit medium through which it may come. Peter prayed before raising Dorcas to life. (Acts 9: 40.)

34. Laying on the staff was a means of imparting a measure of miraculous power, but in this case prayer and a closer personal contact were necessary. It was not uncommon with inspired men—prophets and apostles—to use natural means in imparting miraculous power. God healed Hezekiah with a fig poultice. (Isa. 38: 1-8, 21.) Having prayed, Elisha “lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon him; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.” In this way the natural warmth of Elisha’s body was conveyed to the child’s body. He used this natural means, while he prayed God for miraculous power to do what natural means could not do. The means which Elisha used warmed the body if they could not restore the life. God teaches us to use all natural means in our power to do his will, to use all our abilities to accomplish his work, and then to look to him for help. While we commit ourselves to God’s care, trusting him to supply our needs, we must do in every way all we can and use all possible means.

35. Having thus stretched himself upon the child, Elisha “walked in the house once to and fro.” Natural heat and vital force went from his body into the child’s body, and it is probable that he walked the floor to regain heat and energy. He then stretched himself upon the child again. “The child sneezed seven times,” which was the first sign of restored respiration, and then “opened his eyes.”

We can well imagine the deep solicitude, great suspense, anxious prayer, and quivering hope experienced by the mother while Elisha was in the death chamber with her son. In her despair and hope she had left the child to Elisha. When the child had revived, Elisha called Gehazi and directed him to call the child’s mother. When she came, he said: “Take up thy son.” (Verse 36). She had the pleasure of receiving him into her arms back from the bed upon which she had laid him. She was, indeed, most thankful; before taking up her child, restored to life, she bowed herself in gratitude to the ground at the feet of the prophet. Her reproach of the prophet doubtless made her demonstration of gratitude greater. From her late grief and bitterness her feelings reacted to the greatest joy and deepest gratitude.

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
 Did you read all the references?  
 Repeat the Golden Text.  
 Give the time, place and persons.  
 Repeat the Memory Verse.  
 Give the location and surroundings of Shunem.  
 Relate what occurred there.  
 Why was this woman called "a great woman?"  
 Why did Elisha pass Shunem so often?  
 Describe Mount Carmel.  
 How far was Shunem from this mountain?  
 What did this woman constrain Elisha to do?  
 Why must he be "constrained" to stop with these good people?  
 Why did he then stop as often as he passed?  
 What did the woman propose to her husband to do for Elisha's comfort?  
 What would Elisha be to that home?  
 How is the character of home now determined?  
 To what are we exhorted to be given?  
 What did Elisha first offer to do for this woman?  
 What reply did she make?  
 18-22 What did Gehazi suggest should be done for her?  
 Why did Elisha desire to do anything for her?  
 What did she say to this promise of a child?  
 Was the promise fulfilled?  
 How was she otherwise blessed?  
 Repeat Matt. 10: 42.  
 What befell the child?  
 What then did the mother do?  
 What did he do when he saw her coming?
- What question did Gehazi ask her?  
 What reply did she make?  
 Why did she make this reply?  
 27 What did she do when she reached Elisha?  
 What did Gehazi do?  
 What did Elisha say to him?  
 What did Elisha perceive in the woman?  
 What questions did the woman ask Elisha?  
 What did she mean by these questions?  
 Why did she come to Elisha?  
 What did Elisha direct Gehazi to do?  
 Why was Gehazi not to salute any one on the way?  
 Why was he to lay the staff on the child?  
 30 Why did the woman desire Elisha to go with her?  
 How did she succeed in persuading him to go?  
 Where was Elisha?  
 What other examples have we of importunity?  
 Why did not the staff restore the child?  
 How alone could certain demons be cast out?  
 32 What did Elisha find on entering the house?  
 33 What did he do?  
 Why did he pray?  
 34 What did Elisha do to the child?  
 Why did he do this?  
 What does God teach us in regard to the use of natural means?  
 35 What next did Elisha do?  
 What then came to the child and what signs of life did it show?  
 What did Elisha then direct Gehazi to do?  
 What did the mother first do?



## LESSON VIII—FEBRUARY 19

**ELISHA AND NAAMAN THE SYRIAN—2 Kings 5: 1-27****Print 5: 1-4, 9-14**

2 KINGS 5. 1 Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him Jehovah had given victory unto Syria: he was also a mighty man of valor, *but he was a leper.*

2 And the Syrians had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maiden; and she waited on Naaman's wife.

3 And she said unto her mistress, Would that my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! then would he recover him of his leprosy.

4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maiden that is of the land of Israel.

9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of Jehovah his God, and wave his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

12 Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?

14 Then went he down, and dipped *himself* seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

**Golden Text**—Bless Jehovah, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine equities; who healeth all thy diseases. (Psalm 103: 2, 3.)

**Time**—About 894 B. C.

**Places**—Damascus and Samaria.

**Persons**—Elisha, Naaman, Benhadad, King of Syria; Jehoram, King of Israel; the Jewish captive girl; and Gehazi.

**Memory Verse**—Proverbs 20: 11.

**Devotional Reading**—Psalm 103: 1-12.

**Reference Material**—Luke 4: 16-30; 5: 12-16.

**Home Reading**—Mon., Feb. 13.—The leprous captain.—2 Kings 5: 1-4. Tu.—The captain's journey.—2 Kings 5: 5-9. Wed.—The captain healed.—2 Kings 5: 10-14. Th.—The captain's gratitude.—2 Kings 5: 15-19. Fr.—The great Healer.—Luke 4: 16-27. Sat.—The Healer at work.—Mark 1: 39-45. Su.—Our merciful God.—Psa. 103: 1-12.

**THE KING OF SYRIA**

Benhadad II. was king of Syria at the time of our lesson, and Jehoram was king of Israel. Syria joined Israel on the north and lay between it and Assyria, to the northeast. Damascus is the capital of Syria, and is said to be the oldest city in the world. It is first mentioned in Gen 14: 15; 15: 2. It has to-day one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. It is situated, it is said, in a beautiful plain, and has always been a commercial city. (Ezek. 27: 18.) Damask silk is said to have originated there, and Damascus steel has never been surpassed. Paul's conversion near Damascus and his lodging there, on the street called "Straight," have helped to make the city famous. It is about one hundred and fifty miles northeast from Jerusalem and not so far from Samaria. A railroad now connects it with Beirut, on the Mediterranean Sea.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Naaman

1. Naaman was the commander in chief of the Syrian army. He "was a great man with his master, and honorable." He was a wise, able, and skillful general, and was held in high esteem by the king. Coupled with his wisdom and skill was great courage, for "he was also a mighty man of valor." His wisdom, skill, and courage made him a most successful general. Physical strength and endurance were then taken into consideration in the estimate of great warriors, because, owing to the weapons then used, they were frequently engaged in hand-to-hand conflicts with the enemy and had to possess both strength and skill to be successful. "By him Jehovah had given victory unto Syria." This is offered as a reason for saying that Naaman was "honorable" and "great" with his master. While the Syrians were idolatrous and ungodly people and did not worship Jehovah, the author of the book of Kings (supposed to be Jeremiah) was a God-fearing man and recognized the fact that God overrules all things and directs the affairs of the world; therefore he said that God, through Naaman, had given the victory to Syria. God had done this and was then overruling the Syrian government to the accomplishment of his purposes, although the Syrians did not recognize the hand of God in any of their movements. (See Dan. 4: 25, 32, 34, 35.)

### II. Leprosy and Sin

"But he was a leper." Leprosy was a defiling, loathsome disease. It was sometimes sent as a special affliction from God, as in the cases of Miriam (Num. 12: 10), Gehazi (2 Kings 5: 27), and Uzziah (2 Chron. 26: 16-23). There were different stages and different forms of the disease. At one stage it was contagious, and those afflicted with it had to dwell alone and proclaim their own uncleanness. When it spread over the body and turned the skin white, the one afflicted was then pronounced clean and could return to society. Then it seems not to have been contagious or to have caused much suffering. It gradually weakened its victim, ending in death. In another form of the disease the whole body is defiled with a foul scurf; the joints become swollen, deformed, and ulcerous; and the hair, beard, fingers, and all the extremities rot off. This is said to be the utmost corruption of the human body on this side the grave. The disease, its symptoms, and its treatment are fully described in Lev. 13, 14. It is a fit emblem of sin—that defiling, loathsome disease of the soul. All should be far gladder to escape from sin than Naaman was to escape from leprosy.

### III. A Captive Maiden

2. "And the Syrians had gone out in bands"—that is, marauding companies, carrying away grain, cattle, and such inhabitants of the country as would suit for slaves. (See 2 Kings 6: 23.) Among the captives thus taken was the "little maiden" of this verse. It must have been in consequence of her sprightliness, modesty, training, and orderly conduct that she was selected to wait upon Naaman's wife.

3. She had heard often, no doubt, of the miracles of healing performed by Elisha and of his readiness always to help the afflicted, and she said to her mistress: "Would that my lord [Naaman] were with the prophet that is in Samaria! then would he recover him of his leprosy." From her parents she had received the knowledge of the true God, knew of the wonderful works of his prophet, and desired to



do good. She believed that Elisha would be as glad to heal and bless Naaman as he was able to do it; but she was modest and retiring, and naturally approached her mistress instead of Naaman on the subject. The desire of this girl to do good brought health to a great man and brought him to the knowledge of the true God. We learn from this how the youngest and humblest people can, by using their opportunities to do good, bless men and honor God; we also learn that wherever one is, even a captive in a foreign land, confiding in God, he can still do good and glorify God. Those who seek the good of others are themselves more greatly blessed. Hard indeed it was for her parents to be deprived of this, their little daughter; but a great blessing she proved to the family that held her captive. Let us always so deport ourselves in the homes of others, whether we are guests or captives, that we will prove a blessing.

#### IV. Application for Naaman's Recovery

4. "And one went in, and told" the king of Syria what this maiden had said. The margin of the version used in these lessons says "he," which probably refers to Naaman himself. Naaman and the king believed what this maiden said about the ability of God's prophet to heal. Great was the influence of this captive girl when the king and his general acted promptly on what she said.

Verses 5-8 state that the king of Syria sent Naaman at once to Jehoram, king of Israel, that he might be healed. He sent great presents to the king of Israel. The king of Syria thought, of course, the king of Israel would know all about a prophet who could work such cures. But Jehoram knew far more about the prophets of Baal than he did about God's prophets. Jehoram was astounded that the king of Syria was seeking an impossibility at his hands, and "rent his clothes" in surprise and fear, saying, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?"

He concluded that the king of Syria was seeking a pretext for again making war against him, to invade his kingdom, and to carry away his people unto captivity. It was then that Elisha sent this word to Jehoram: "Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." 2 Kings 8: 4-6 show that the king of Israel knew but little of Elisha and his wonderful works. One most important lesson to be learned from this and to be brought prominently before all was that God had a prophet in Israel—a representative—and that the king of Israel was not he.

Another important lesson is that the blessings of God must be sought in the right way and the right place. In Christ, not out of him, "we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1: 7); and through faith in Christ, turning in godly sorrow from all sin, we are baptized into him. (Gal. 3: 26, 27.)

#### V. Must Seek, Not Demand, Favors of God

9. No doubt the king felt greatly relieved to dispose of Naaman in this way. In the show, pomp, splendor, of military display and earthly greatness, Naaman went, "with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha." His was the attitude of demanding, rather than of seeking, a favor.



## VI. God's Way of Healing, God's Way of Saving

10. "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10: 35), and Naaman, as well as others, must learn this; therefore, as the prophet of God, Elisha did not deign to go out to see Naaman, but "sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." This was to teach Naaman and all concerned to believe in God, and that God, and not human skill and greatness, healed him. There was no curative power in the waters of the Jordan, and God commanded this to show that he himself was the author of the blessing. God could heal Naaman as he chose; but when he chose a certain way, with that Naaman must comply or go on a leper still.

That Naaman must dip thus seven times in the Jordan, about thirty miles away from Samaria, and must make this long journey before he could perform the act, does not make God any the less the author of his cure. That we must believe in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of God and our Savior, repent of our sins, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ unto remission of sins (Acts 2: 38), and that we must continue a life of obedience to his will, does not render God any less the author of our salvation. Jesus is "unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5: 9.)

Doing anything else except dipping seven times in the Jordan would not have been obedience to God on Naaman's part, and nothing is obedience to God now except that which he commands to be done. God required Elisha and the Shunammite to use all possible means to restore the child, because they were all believers in God, and he desired to teach them that, while they trusted him, they must use his means and do all they could to accomplish the end desired. (2 Kings 4: 32-37.) In this case God seeks to bring unbelievers to faith in him; and he requires that in which there is nothing adequate to the end sought, so that all will be bound to see and acknowledge his power.

Elisha's conduct was so different from that which Naaman expected, and the action to be performed was so devoid of curative power and so opposed to earthly show and pride, that he thought Elisha was mocking him, and in disgust he turned away in a rage. He thought that Elisha would come out to him, stand, call upon his God, and "wave his hand over the place"—that is, like heathen priests, use certain formulas of words and ceremonies and strike himself and perform other magic actions. Naaman had his own ideas as to how he should be healed. He was not ready to be healed until he could surrender his own thoughts and ways to those of God. People now cannot be saved from sin by the grace of God so long as they rely upon their own thoughts and ways. (See Isa. 55: 8, 9.) Naaman's reasoning was that the rivers of his country were clearer, purer, and better than the muddy Jordan; and if dipping in water would heal him, why not dip in them? He failed to see the ground upon which God would heal him.

To Naaman man's way seemed better than God's way. God's way was one of humiliation and submission, and Naaman's pride revolted at that. To human wisdom and pride now man's way is better than God's way, and men become enraged at the thought of yielding in humility implicit obedience to God. These rivers are found near Damascus, although they are not now called by the names given in the Bible. The Abana River is called the "Barada River," and the Pharpar River is a less important river.



## VII. The Servant's Reasoning

To pacify him and to persuade him to obey God, his servants came near and said to Naaman: "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, wash, and be clean?" Naaman was worldly great, had his mind on great things, and had brought a great present to him who should heal him. He entirely overlooked the simplicity of God's way. Many to-day make the same grievous mistake in overlooking the simplicity of the gospel and the plain, humble worship of God therein revealed and desire to "do some great thing." The simplicity of this requirement and the ease with which it could be done appealed to Naaman's servants and were reasons for doing it. The servants understood that, after all, God must do the healing; and he could do it on simple and easy terms as well as on those which commended themselves to human wisdom. The worldly-wise and great do not now appreciate and receive the humble and simple order of God's service. Hence "not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble [worldly great]," become Christians. (1 Cor. 1: 26.)

## VIII. Faith Which Obeys Saves

14. Naaman was led to see the wisdom of his servants, to lay aside his anger, to believe what God's prophets said, and to obey God; hence he went down, "and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." We all know who healed Naaman, and that, as he argued, there was no power in the waters of the Jordan to heal leprosy; yet he must obey God before he could be healed. Dipping seven times in the Jordan stood between him and a cure. To refuse to obey God in this simple requirement was to refuse to be healed. Since there was no curative power in what he did, no power to heal him, it was not of works, but by grace through faith. He had no faith at all to begin with, but he was persuaded to reason about the matter and to exercise sufficient faith to obey God. This obedience increased his faith, and he became a true worshiper of God, as the sequence shows.

This all seems clear indeed; yet it is no plainer than the necessity of obedience to God now in order to be saved. Christ says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," etc. (Mark 16: 15, 16); "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2: 38); "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22: 16); "Even as ye have always obeyed. . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2: 12, 13). Since, then, there is no saving power in the waters of baptism, one is baptized, as Naaman dipped in the Jordan, through faith in God; and hence the blessing received through this obedience is not of works, but by grace through faith. Seeing that he was healed, Naaman returned from the Jordan, thirty miles, to express his gratitude and to reward the prophet of God. He confessed his faith in the God of Israel and offered Elisha the present he had brought. Elisha refused the gift for the favor bestowed; he could not receive pay for the gifts of God.

Though rich and great, Naaman must stand as a beggar before God, before whom the rich and the poor are on a common level, and



receive his blessing upon the same conditions. This shows the impartiality and justice of God. Then Naaman begged "two mules' burden of earth" to carry back with him to Syria, of which to make an altar upon which to offer sacrifices to God. God would not accept an offering from an unclean altar, and Syria was an unclean country. These rich gifts of Naaman appealed to the covetousness of Gehazi, and were a means of bringing out his real character. He acted a hypocrite, lied, and was guilty of treason. As a punishment for such sins the leprosy of Naaman came upon him, and he went out from Elisha's presence "a leper as white as snow."

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, places, and persons  
Repeat the Memory Verse.  
Where was Syria?  
What was its capital?  
What is said here of Damascus?  
Who was king of Syria?  
Who was king of Israel?
- Who was Naaman?  
What was his character?  
How was he afflicted?  
Was he a servant of God?  
Describe the nature of leprosy.
  - How had the Syrians warred against Israel?  
Who was in Naaman's house?  
How did she come to be there?
  - What did she say to her mistress?  
What moved her to desire her master's recovery?  
From whom had she received the knowledge of the true God and his prophet?  
What was she to Naaman and his family?  
What may we be wherever we are?
  - How did the king learn of what the maiden said to her mistress?  
What shows the influence of this girl?  
What did the king determine to do?  
Why did he send Naaman to the king of Israel?  
What presents were sent?  
Why did Jehoram know but little about Elisha?  
What did Elisha once say to him?  
When Jehoram read the letter of the king of Syria what did he say and do?  
Why did he conclude the king of Syria had made this request?  
What word did Elisha send to the king of Israel?  
What did Elisha say Naaman should know?  
Which represented God in Israel—Elisha or the king?  
Where must God's blessing be sought?  
In whom is our redemption?
- How do we get into Christ?  
9 In what style did Naaman approach Elisha's house?  
10-13 Why did Elisha not go out even to see him?  
What word did Elisha send him?  
What lesson would God teach Naaman?  
What must Naaman do to be healed?  
Why must he do this, and not something else?  
Because he must do this in order to be healed, does that destroy the fact that God healed him?  
Does obedience to God in order to be saved destroy the fact that he is the author of our salvation?  
Whom does Jesus save?  
Repeat Heb. 5: 9.  
How alone could Naaman obey God?  
What effect did this proposition have upon Naaman?  
What did he think that Elisha would do?  
What did Naaman say of the rivers of his own country?  
Why did he reason thus?  
At what does human wisdom now revolt?  
What speech did Naaman's servants make to him?
- What did they persuade him to do?  
What had Naaman failed to see?  
What did his servants understand?  
Not many of whom now receive the gospel?  
After what do the worldly-wise and great seek?  
What resulted from Naaman's obedience?  
How alone could he be healed?  
What must we do to be saved from the leprosy of sin?  
What did Naaman do upon finding that he was healed?  
Why would not Elisha receive his gifts?  
What then did Naaman request?  
What did he want with this dirt?  
What sins did Gehazi commit?  
What befell him?



## LESSON IX—FEBRUARY 26

**ELISHA'S HEAVENLY DEFENDERS—2 Kings 6: 8-23****Print 6: 8-17**

2 KINGS 6. 8. Now the king of Syria was warring against Israel; and he took counsel with his servant, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.

9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are coming down.

10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of; and he saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11 And the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?

12 And one of his servants said, Nay, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.

13 And he said, Go and see where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan.

14 Therefore sent he thither horses and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host with horses and chariots was round about the city. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 And he answered, Fear not; for they that are with us are more than they that are with them.

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, Jehovah, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear them, and delivereth them. Psalm 34: 7.

*Time*—B. C. 893.

*Places*—Dothan and Samaria.

*Persons*—Elisha and the Syrians.

*Memory Verse*—Psalms 91:17.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 34:1-8.

*Reference Material*—Daniel 6:1-23; Hebrews 1:14; 11:27.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Feb. 20.—Elisha's heavenly defenders.—2 Kings 6: 8-17. Tu.—Daniel's heavenly defenders.—Dan. 6: 16-23. Wed.—Hezekiah's heavenly defenders.—2 Chron. 32: 6-8, 21, 22. Th.—The Hebrew children's heavenly defender.—Dan. 3: 19-25. Fr.—Peter's heavenly defender.—Acts 12: 5-11. Sat.—Paul's heavenly defender.—2 Tim. 4: 14-18. Su.—Our heavenly defender.—Psa. 34: 1-8.

**INTRODUCTION**

All the wonderful works of Elisha are not studied in these lessons. We can learn them all by reading the lesson connections. Let us learn from Elisha's works as well as from those of Christ and the apostles that faith in order to lead to the blessings of God must be manifested.

Naaman must dip seven times in the river Jordan as an expression of his faith, because God directed that to be done. Whenever God gives laws and specific acts of faith to be performed, these must be obeyed before he blesses, as looking at the brazen serpent (Num. 21: 7-9) or washing the blind eyes in the pool of Siloam (John 9: 6, 7). The ten lepers that Christ healed were not commanded to dip seven times in the Jordan, but were healed in doing that which Jesus commanded them to do—going to show themselves unto the priests. (Luke 17: 11-19.) When no acts of faith were specified, God blessed in the presence of inspired persons—prophets, apostles, and Christ—upon voluntary acts of faith, as raising the Shunammite's son, raising Jairus' daughter, healing the paralytic, etc.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Disobedience and Punishment

8. The king of Syria was Ben-hadad II.; the king of Israel at this time was Jehoram. "The king of Syria was warring against Israel." At this time the Syrians were making incursions into the kingdom of Israel, carrying away grain, cattle, and captives. (2 Kings 5: 2.) They were making repeated attacks upon Israel. These God had raised up as adversaries (1 Kings 11: 14) to chastise Israel. Had Israel obeyed God and been faithful in his service, they would have dwelt in peace and safety in their land and God would have given them the victory over their enemies; but in disobedience and idolatry, they were weak and became a prey to the adversary. In times of sin, disobedience, and affliction God sent them prophets, "rising up early and sending them" (Jer. 25: 4; 26: 5; 29: 19; etc.), to warn them against sin, to point out the punishment, thus connecting the punishment with disobedience and the blessings with obedience. Then all this has been written for our warning, encouragement, and salvation. (Rom. 15: 4; 1 Cor. 10: 1-13.) The king of Syria took counsel with his officers and determined, according to their best military tactics, where it would be best to encamp.

### II. Elisha Saved Israel

9. Elisha is called "the man of God" (see 2 Kings 4: 7, 9, 16, etc.) because God's will was revealed through him and he was God's representative to the people. When the king of Syria would determine on a certain movement, Elisha, by inspiration, knew it at once, and would send word to the king of Israel, warning him either to avoid the place or to protect it against an attack. "For thither the Syrians are coming down." Thus the king of Israel anticipated every movement of the enemy, and was prepared to meet him.

10. Therefore "the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of; and he saved himself there, not once nor twice," but many times.

### III. The King of Syria Troubled

11. "And the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing." He was so often thwarted in his plans by the movements of the army of Israel that he was sure the king of Israel had been informed of them, and he knew no way by which the king of Israel could receive such information except through some traitor. His defeat would naturally enrage him, and the thought of any of his trusted servants betraying his plans to the enemy grieved him. Hence he called his servants together and said: "Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?" He, no doubt, thought he would put a stop to this treachery by ascertaining who was guilty.

12. Some one of the servants of the king of Syria knew of Elisha's prophetic powers. Some of the Syrians had been in Israel, and all doubtless knew of Naaman's cure by Elisha. Some of these servants may have been with Naaman when he was healed. One of them, therefore, replied to the implied charge of the king of Syria, that one of them at least was a traitor, by saying: "Nay, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber." Then no one of the servants of the king of Syria was a traitor, but Elisha had been revealing to the king of Israel the plans and secret thoughts of the



king of Syria. That the servants of the king of Syria knew this shows that Elisha's power to prophesy and work miracles was known outside of Israel.

#### IV. An Effort to Stop the Trouble

13. The king of Syria thought he would at once put a stop to this hindering work of Elisha by seizing him—not thinking, in his stupidity, that his plans to capture Elisha would as readily be known to Elisha as his aims and plans against the king of Israel. Hence he sent his servants to learn where Elisha was. They found upon inquiry that he was at Dothan, and so reported to the king. Dothan is the place to which Joseph's brethren had gone when he sought them at Shechem and near which they sold him. (Gen. 37: 12-17.) It was about ten miles north of Samaria and about thirteen miles north of Shechem. Elisha, then, at Dothan was that much nearer the Syrians than the capital of the kingdom of Israel. The Syrians might capture him there without arousing the army of Israel at Samaria.

14. To make sure of a capture, the king of Syria sent, not a marauding band, but "horses, and chariots, and a great host." This large number was sent, doubtless, to surround the city, that none might escape, and to be ready for any emergency should the army of Israel be aroused. This was done secretly and at night, that the purpose might not be discovered. ..

#### V. How God Saved Elisha

15. Elisha's servant—not Gehazi, who was now a leper—disupon rising early the next morning, the host which surrounded Dothan. It seems that Elisha as yet did not know this; God had not revealed it to him. In distress the servant said: "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" To this servant it seemed that there was no escape; they would be captured and destroyed.

16. Elisha was unmoved by such news, and his faith in God was unshaken. He also comforted his servant, saying: "Fear not; for they that are with us are more than they that are with them." How could that be, when there were only two of them, against horses and chariots and a host of Syrians? He meant, as the next verse shows, that God, who was on their side, was greater than all who could be against them. He had perfect confidence in God that an angelic host would come at God's bidding to their relief, if necessary. This host was at hand, and it seems from his prayer below that with his spiritual vision he could see them. Jesus said to Peter: "Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26: 53.)

17. Then "Elisha prayed, and said, Jehovah, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." The servant's spiritual eyes were opened, and he saw all these. This mountain was the hill on which Dothan stood. These "horses and chariots of fire" were like the ones which carried Elijah up into heaven. (2 Kings 2: 11.) This demonstrates the Golden Text: "The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." These forces of God were present to defend the prophet before his eyes were opened to see them. Are there not now angels around God's people, but not visible to the natural eye? "Are they not all ministering spirits,

sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1: 14.)

Had we our eyes opened to discern spirits and angels could we not see them? When the Syrian host came down from the hills around Dothan to capture Elisha, he did not call into service these "horses and chariots of fire," but prayed God to smite the Syrians with blindness, and God did so. ((Verse 18.) This was not a prayer of revenge, but to show the Syrians the goodness and power of God and to impress upon the king of Israel the fact that deliverance was from God. All the host of Syria were groping their way in blindness, "Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek." Elisha then "led them to Samaria." (Verse 19.) Dothan was not Elisha's home, but Samaria was; and he led them to Samaria and to himself in his own city; he also led them to the king of Israel and into the midst of his army. Above all, the Syrians were seeking the king of Israel, and he was in Samaria; but Elisha showed himself to them, as he said.

## VI. Elisha's Treatment of His Enemies (Verses 20-23)

In Samaria and surrounded by their enemies, Elisha prayed God to open their eyes. He did so; and they discovered where they were and stood face to face with Elisha, whom they sought, but whom they could not take. This, no doubt, was as much as surprise to the king of Israel as to the Syrians; but seeing the Syrians were in his power and at his mercy, he said to Elisha: "My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them?" "Thou shalt not smite them." They were as prisoners, and to smite them would be as great a crime as to smite captives taken in battle. Instead of smiting them, Elisha commanded that food and drink be placed before them, and that, when they had eaten and drunk, they be sent back to the king of Syria. Accordingly, food and drink were abundantly supplied them, and then they were sent back. This was returning good for evil. It was magnanimous to spare the enemy when helplessly in his power. This made such a favorable impression upon the king of Syria that the war ceased, "and the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel"—that is, for that time. The warnings of Elisha to the king of Israel concerning the encampments and movements of the Syrians may be used to illustrate God's warnings to us against the temptations and operations of Satan. As Elisha told the king of Israel where the Syrians were and would attack him, so God tells us how Satan attacks us and where the danger is.



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
 Repeat the Golden Text.  
 Give the time, places, and persons.  
 Repeat the Memory Verse.  
 When does faith bless?  
 When God gives laws or specifies  
 any act of faith, what must be  
 done before he blesses?
- 8 Who was the king of Syria at  
 this time?  
 Who was king of Israel?  
 What were the Syrians doing to  
 Israel?  
 Why were they allowed by Jeho-  
 vah to do this?  
 When did Israel have peace and  
 enjoy prosperity?  
 Whom did God send to warn and  
 encourage his people?  
 Why has all this been written?  
 About what did the king of Syria  
 take counsel?
- 9 Why is Elisha called "the man of  
 God?"  
 Of what did he inform the king of  
 Israel?  
 Why did he do this?
- 10 What did the king of Israel do?
- 11 Why was the king of Syria "trou-  
 bled?"  
 What did he do?
- 12 What reply did one of the serv-  
 ants make?  
 How did they know of the works  
 of Elisha?
- 13 What did the king of Syria then  
 determine to do?
- Where was Elisha?  
 Where was Dothan?  
 What had occurred there?
- 14 What and who were sent to cap-  
 ture Elisha?  
 Why were so many sent?  
 Why were they sent at night?
- 15 What did Elisha's servant dis-  
 cover?  
 Did Elisha know this before?  
 What did his servant say?
- 16 What effect did this have upon  
 Elisha?  
 What did he say?  
 What did Jesus say to Peter  
 about angels?  
 What did Elisha pray God to do  
 for his servant?  
 What did the servant see?
- 17 What did Elisha pray God to do  
 for the Syrians?  
 Why did Elisha want this done?  
 What did Elisha then say to  
 them?  
 Did he deceive them?  
 Where did he lead them?  
 What then did he pray God to do  
 for them?  
 What did the king of Israel want  
 to do to them?  
 Why did Elisha say they should  
 not be smitten?  
 What did he order done for them?  
 What effect did this have upon  
 the king of Syria?  
 What lessons may we draw from  
 these facts?

## LESSON X—MARCH 5

# JEHOVAH'S MERCY TO A HEATHEN CITY—Jonah 3: 1-4: 11. Print Jonah 3: 1-10

**JONAH 3. 1** And the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of Jehovah. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city, of three days' journey.

4 And Jonah began to enter the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

5 And the people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

6 And the tidings reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

7 And he made proclamation and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water.

8 But let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and beast, and let them cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands.

9 Who knoweth whether God will not turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

**Golden Text**—Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Isaiah 55:7.

**Time**—During the reign of Jeroboam II.

**Place**—Nineveh.

**Persons**—Jonah and the Ninevites.

**Memory Verse**—Psalms 103:8.

**Devotional Reading**—Isaiah 55:1-9.

**Reference Material**—Psalms 117; 145; Isaiah 45:20-25; 49:5-7; Jonah 1:1 to 2:10; Malachi 1:10,11; John 3:16.

**Home Reading**.—Mon., Feb. 27.—Resisting God's call.—Jonah 1: 1-10. Tu.—Facing the issue.—Jonah 2: 1-9. Wed.—Jehovah's mercy to Nineveh.—Jonah 3: 1-10. Th.—A greater than Jonah.—Matt. 12: 38-45. Fr.—Praise to the king.—Psa. 96: 1-13. Sat.—Jehovah's mercy to all.—Psa. 145: 8-19. Su.—The gracious call.—Isa. 55: 1-9.

## JONAH

Jonah was sent to Nineveh, hence he was a missionary. "Jonah" means "dove." Jonah was a prophet, the son of Amittai, of the town of Gath-hepher, in the land of Zebulun. (2 Kings 14:25; Jonah 1: 1; Josh. 19: 12, 13.) Jonah prophesied that Jeroboam II. would "restore the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath" on the north to the Dead Sea on the south. (2 Kings 14: 25.) He was contemporary with Hosea (Hos. 1: 1) and Amos (Amos 1: 1). Christ refers to Jonah as a prophet and to his being three days and three nights in the whale's belly as a type of the burial and resurrection of the Son of man. (See Matt. 12: 38-41; Luke 11: 29, 30.) No one can believe Jesus and the New Testament and regard the book of Jonah otherwise than a relation of facts. It has been well said that Jesus does not mean that an imaginary something was a type of his burial and resurrection; that imaginary people with imaginary repentance of imaginary sins under the imaginary preaching of an imaginary prophet would stand in the judgment with real people and condemn them for not really repenting of real sins.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Jonah's Commission

1, 2. God called Jonah to "go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it," because of its wickedness. (Jonah 1: 1, 2.) Instead of obeying God when commanded to go to Nineveh, Jonah took ship at Joppa, intending to flee to Tarshish. Tarshish, it is thought, was in southern Spain, the farthest place west then known. Nineveh was about six hundred miles east of Jonah's home. But Jonah could not flee from God. God is everywhere (see Ps. 139: 7-10), and is Lord of heaven and earth. We are familiar with the facts of Jonah's call, his fleeing from Jehovah, the storm at sea, the manner in which the seamen learned on whose account the storm was sent, the disposition made of Jonah, the whale's swallowing him, his prayer, his deliverance, the second charge to go to Nineveh and his going; and we believe these facts. Jonah was honest and a true man and prophet; he told the seamen the truth, confessed the storm was sent on his account, and was willing to suffer the consequences of his disobedience rather than see the innocent suffer further. When he went to Nineveh, he preached the truth—that which God bade him preach; he never changed or modified the message.

### II. Nineveh

3. Nineveh was founded by Nimrod. (Gen. 10: 11.) It was in Assyria on the eastern bank of the Tigris. Assyria is called the "land of Nimrod." (Mic. 5: 6.) Nineveh was the capitol of Assyria. (2 Kings 19: 36, 37; Isa. 37: 37.) It was "an exceeding great city, of three days' journey" in circumference, and contained "much cattle" and one hundred and twenty thousand children not old enough to tell their right hand from their left hand. (Jonah 4: 11.) It is said to have had from six hundred thousand to one million inhabitants. It has been called the "London of the East." It was not a compact city. It is said it was a quadrangle a little more than eleven miles one way and a little less than nineteen miles the other, surrounded by a wall one hundred feet high and sufficiently broad for three chariots to drive abreast upon it, guarded by fifteen hundred towers, each two hundred feet high, and filled with vast temples, grand palaces, gardens of beauty, and miles of dwellings. The wickedness of this city is especially described by Nahum, who prophesied its destruction. Isaiah (chapters 10: 11) prophesied the destruction of Assyria, but Nahum and Zephaniah prophesied the destruction of Nineveh.

### III. The People Believed God

4. "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The condition, unless the people repented, was implied and understood; Jonah so understood it and fled at first because he knew that if the people repented God would not overthrow the city, and the people understood it and repented.

5. "And the people of Nineveh believed God." What Jonah preached was the word of God. God had said to him: "Preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." (Verse 2.) So it was God's preaching. Jesus says: "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." (John 13: 20.) Jesus taught whatever God bade him (John 7: 16, 17; 12: 49, 50), and the apostles taught whatsoever Jesus bade them (John 17: 8, 14,



18; Matt. 28: 19, 20). To hear the apostles is to hear God, just as to hear Jonah was to hear God. To believe and obey what the apostles teach is to believe God. The Ninevites did not repent before Jonah preached and before they believed God. People must believe God now in order to repent. The goodness of God leads to repentance (Rom. 2: 4); but it cannot do this before people believe God is good and consider his goodness. Godly sorrow works repentance (2 Cor. 7: 10); but people cannot become sorry for their sins after a godly sort before they know of God, believe him, and realize they have sinned against him. Jesus says the men of Nineveh "repented at the preaching of Jonah" (Matt. 12: 42); they believed God, were aroused by the threatened overthrow, and turned from their wickedness into the life designated by Jonah's preaching.

#### IV. The People Repented

6. "The tidings" which Jonah preached reached the king, and he believed and repented. He showed his humiliation and penitence by coming down from his throne, laying off his kingly robe, covering himself with sackcloth, and sitting in ashes.

7, 8. The king and his nobles then made the proclamation that man and beast, herd and flock, should fast and not drink water and should be clothed with sackcloth, and that the people should "cry mightily unto God." Above all, they said: "Yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands." Clothing themselves and their beasts with sackcloth, sitting in ashes, fasting and doing without water were not repentance; these were their own customs of expressing their humiliation. Hanging crepe upon the door and upon locomotives, leaving the flag at half mast, and putting on apparel of mourning are not sorrow; they are customs whose intention is to express respect and grief. Crying "mightily unto God" was an expression of dependence upon God. The Ninevites, although heathen, had learned of God, believed him, and repented. Sending Jonah to them shows God's regard for them and his mercy toward them. He now regards all nations, desires their salvation (1 Tim. 2: 3, 4; 2 Pet. 3: 9), sends the gospel to them, and has promised them to Christ for an inheritance (Ps. 2: 8).

9. The king and the people believed in God's mercy, for they said: "Who knoweth whether God will not turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" For God to "turn and repent" was simply to stay the overthrow.

10. "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way." This is what they did, and Jesus says they repented. To turn in godly sorrow from all sin—sins of thoughts, words, and deeds, secret sins and public sins—is repentance. Repentance always produces fruit—"fruit worthy of repentance." Some of this fruit is the effort to repair so far as possible, all injury done to others. The Ninevites upon their repentance were saved from an immediate overthrow; the generation to which Jesus preached will be condemned in the judgment because it refused to repent.

#### V. Jonah's Course

Chapter 4: 1-11 states Jonah's anger at the mercy of God, his reason for fleeing at first to Tarshish, God's reproof, and the story and lesson of the gourd vine.



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
 Repeat the Golden Text.  
 Give the time, place and persons.  
 Repeat the Memory Verse.  
 Why call Jonah a "missionary?"  
 What does "Jonah" mean?  
 Whose son was Jonah?  
 In what country and town and in whose reign did he live?  
 What prophecy did he make concerning Israel?  
 With what prophets was he contemporary?  
 What endorsement does Christ give Jonah?  
 Of what was his being three days and nights in the whale's belly a type?
- 1-4 Give the origin, situation, size, wealth, and wickedness of Nineveh?  
 What other prophets spoke concerning Nineveh?  
 How far was Nineveh to the east of Jonah's home?  
 Where was Tarshish?  
 Can one escape God?  
 Relate the story of Jonah to the time of our lesson.  
 Give the good and bad traits of his character.
- 5 What moved the Ninevites to repentance?  
 Why is it said the people "believed God" when it was Jonah who preached?  
 How can we now hear God?  
 What now leads to and works repentance?
- Can one repent, then, before he believes in the goodness and love of God?  
 What was Jonah's cry?  
 What condition was implied and understood?
- 6 What effect did this have upon the king?  
 How did he show his humility?
- 7, 8 What proclamation did the king and his nobles make?  
 Was clothing themselves in sackcloth, sitting in ashes, fasting, and so treating the beasts repentance?  
 Was crying mightily unto God repentance?  
 What did all this show?  
 Of whom had the Ninevites learned?  
 What does sending Jonah to them show?  
 Whose salvation does God now desire?  
 Whose salvation should we desire?
- 9 What did the king say in regard to God's mercy?  
 What is meant by God's turning and repenting?
- 10 What showed that the Ninevites repented?  
 What is repentance?  
 What fruit does repentance produce?  
 From what were the Ninevites saved?  
 Why was Jonah angry?  
 What reproof did God offer Jonah?  
 Give the story and lesson of the gourd vine.

## LESSON XI—MARCH 12

**AMOS WARNS ISRAEL—TEMPERANCE LESSON****Amos 6: 1-8**

AMOS 6. 1 Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and to them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel come!

2 Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines: are they better than these kingdoms? or is their border greater than your border?

3 —ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near.

4 that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall.

5 that sing idle songs to the sound of the viol; that invent for themselves instruments of music, like David.

6 that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief oils; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

7 Therefore shall they now go captive with the first that go captive; and the revelry of them that stretched themselves shall pass away.

8 The Lord Jehovah hath sworn by himself, saith Jehovah, the God of hosts: I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces; therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

**Golden Text**—Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; and whosoever erreth thereby is not wise. (Proverbs 20: 1.)

**Time**—About 785 B. C.

**Places**—Tekoa and Bethel.

**Persons**—Amos and the people of Israel.

**Memory Verse**—Amos 5: 14.

**Devotional Reading**—Psalm 15: 1-5.

**Reference Material**—Isaiah 5: 11, 12, 22, 23; 28: 1-13; Hosea b: 11; Amos 2: 6-8; 5: 10-15; 8: 4-7; Galatians 5: 19-21.

**Home Reading**—Mon., Mar. 6.—Amos warns Israel.—Amos 6: 1-8. Tu.—Tempting God's leaders.—Amos 2: 10-16. Wed.—Be generous and just.—Amos 5: 10-15. Th.—Brutality through drunkenness.—Amos 5: 10-15. Fr.—Danger of evil companions.—Prov. 1: 7-19. Sat.—Children of light.—Eph. 5: 1-14. Su.—A citizen of Zion.—Psa. 15: 1-5.

**Amos and His Book**

This lesson furnishes a fine opportunity to study the book of Amos. This book is direct and pointed, and can soon be read through. Who was Amos? Why did he prophesy? When and where did he prophesy? His name means "burden." It is different from "Amoz" the father of Isaiah (Isa. 1: 1), which means "strong." The names of Amos' parents are not given. He was a native of Tekoa, a town in the kingdom of Judah, about twelve miles south of Jerusalem and about six miles south of Bethlehem. He was not a subject of the kingdom of Israel, but was sent there to prophesy. He "was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees." (Amos 1: 1; 7: 14, 15.) He kept a sycamore orchard. The sycamore tree, not like our sycamore, was a fruit tree, whose fruit was something like the fig, but sweet and watery, and not very valuable. Amos was a humble man, who made no pretensions to be a teacher and leader.

He was the author of the familiar saying: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son." He meant, as the margin states, that he was not "one of the sons of the prophets." Amos never attended any of the schools of the prophets with the view of making a prophet. He was a righteous and God-fearing man, who studied God's will, loved the truth, and hated iniquity. He was moved by the Spirit of



God to prophesy against other nations, and especially against Israel. He said: "The Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3: 8.) This is similar to Paul's expression: "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." (1 Cor. 9: 16.)

When Amos prophesied in Bethel the destruction of the king's house by the sword and the downfall of the kingdom (Amos 7: 7-11), "Amaziah the priest of Bethel" informed the king that Amos had conspired against him and the land was not able to bear his words. He also invited Amos to leave the country and return to Judah and prophesy there. It was then that Amos told Amaziah that he was not a prophet, or one of "the sons of the prophets," but that God took him from following the flock and sent him to prophesy unto Israel. He then foretold the downfall of Amaziah's family. (Verses 10-17.) He prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam II, son of Joash, king of Israel, "two years before the earthquake." (Amos 1: 1.) The reigns of these kings are given in 2 Kings 14: 23 to 15: 12; 2 Chron. 26. The prophet Jonah preceded Amos. (2 Kings 14: 25; Jonah 1: 1.) Hosea was contemporary with him (Hos. 1: 1), but followed him as a prophet. Joel, it is thought, belonged to this period.

Amos was a brave and heroic prophet; he fearlessly pronounced God's solemn words of condemnation against Israel. He very wisely began by prophesying against other nations—namely, Damascus (the Syrians), Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron (the Philistines); Tyre, Edom, Ammon; Moab, and Judah. This showed that God was just and impartial in his judgments.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. The Financial Prosperity and Moral and Spiritual Depravity of Israel

Let us first read with verses 1-6 the following passages: "And I will smite the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, said Jehovah." (Amos 3: 15.) "Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; they that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father go in unto the same maiden, to profane my holy name: and they lay themselves down beside every altar upon clothes taken in pledge; and in the house of their God they drink the wine of such as have been fined." (Amos 2: 6-8.) "Hear this, O ye that would swallow up the needy, and cause the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit; that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the refuse of the wheat?" (Amos 8: 4-6.)

The wealth and extent of the kingdom under Jeroboam II were greater than they had been since the division, or the days of Solomon. "He restored the border of Israel [see 2 Kings 10: 32; 13: 25] from the entrance of Hamath under the sea of the Arabah, according to the word of Jehovah, the God of Israel, which he spake by his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher." (2 Kings 14: 25.) Hamath was far to the north from Damascus, on the river Orontes, and "the sea of the Arabah" was the eastern



arm of the Red Sea. The Arabah was the valley extending from Mount Hermon to this sea. In the Authorized Version this is called "the plain," except in Josh 18: 18. With this great wealth there was great sin. Covetousness, greed, drunkenness, licentiousness, debauchery, lying, and murder preyed upon the national body like cancerous sores. There was no truth or mercy or knowledge of God left in the land. (Hos. 4: 1-3.) The shameful worship of Baal and the abominable worship of Ashtoreth had supplanted the pure worship of the true God, leaving the people spiritually impoverished. Vice flourished in Bethel and Samaria like plants in a hotbed.

These and other passages show that outwardly Israel flourished, but they give us also an insight into the intemperance and wickedness of the people and especially of the leading men and rulers of the nation.

## II. "At Ease in Zion"

1. To be "at ease in Zion" is a most fearful condition, because those who are "at ease" realize no danger. This was the sin of Judah as well as of Israel; it led to the downfall of Judah, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the captivity. After declaring that Judah was worse than Sodom and Samaria, the Lord says:

"As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done; thou and thy daughters. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: pride, fulness of bread, and prosperous ease was in her and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me; therefore I took them away as I saw good." (Ezk. 16: 48-50.)

The sins of Judah and Israel are frequently compared to the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. (See Isa. 1, 2.) God warns the church—that is, spiritual Israel—against such sins. (See 2 Pet. 2, and Jude.) The church at Laodicea said: "I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing." It was prosperous from the viewpoint of the world; it congratulated itself upon being in this condition, and was "at ease in Zion." But God declares that it was wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, and that without repentance it would be spewed out of his mouth. He instructed it, as he now instructs other such congregations, what to do in order to hide the shame of its nakedness, to become clothed in righteousness, to be fed on spiritual food, and to become rich toward God. (Rev. 3: 14-22.)

That foolish rich farmer, described by our Savior in Luke 12: 13-21, congratulated himself that he had much goods laid up for many years and that his soul could take its ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But that very night God said he was foolish and that his soul was required of him. "The notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel come," or rulers, felt "secure in the mountain of Samaria." The people said: "The evil shall not overtake nor meet us." (Amos 9: 10.) All this is to be "at ease in Zion."

2. See Calneh, Hamath, and Gath on the map. They were chief cities of different countries quite distant from each other. They have not escaped punishment and Israel and Judah will not.

3. "Ye that put far away the evil day" and refused to consider the approaching destruction. They did not know to do right, they "stored up evidence and robbery in their palaces" (ch. 3: 10), "and caused the seat of violence to come near," and still thought their destruction would not come.



4. As stated above, they lived in great luxury and ease and had an abundance of wealth.

5. They sang "idle songs to the sound of the viol"; they invented "for themselves instruments of music, like David." God's woe is pronounced upon whatever was done in this verse as in verses 3, 4.

6. These "idle songs" with instrumental accompaniments were sung in their homes, in their courts, and their feasts or worship. (See ch. 5: 21-24; 8: 10.)

Songs, like pictures, are educational and elevating, or impure, exciting passions, and degrading. With all their other sins these Israelites indulged in idle songs enlivened by musical instruments. This is the character of the songs heard in many homes today. These foolish, idle, evil songs cannot be elevating and refining, but are most certainly a bad sign, because they represent the emotions and sentiments of the heart. All parents, all teachers and all preachers—the whole church—should teach against such songs and music until the very hearts of the young will demand something pure, refining and elevating. But, as just stated, these songs and musical instruments were used in their feasts and worship. David made these instruments of music to be used in the worship of God. (1 Chron. 23: 5.)

They are called "the instruments of David." It seems that after David invented them God regulated their use in his worship. (See 2 Chron. 29: 25-28.) Israel chose a king in disobedience to God, but God directed, then, the course of the king. Later he said: "I have given thee a king in mine anger, and have taken him away in my wrath." (Hosea 13: 10, 11.) Under Christ in his spiritual worship God took away all these musical instruments by leaving them entirely out of his service in the church. Man dare not put into the worship of God under Christ that which God has left out. On this verse let me quote that which Adam Clarke says:

"I believe that David was not authorized by the Lord to introduce that multitude of musical instruments into the divine worship of which we read; and I am satisfied that his conduct in this respect is most solemnly reprimanded by this prophet; and I further believe that the use of such instruments of music in the Christian church is without the sanction and against the will of God; that they are subversive of the spirit of true devotion and that they are sinful. If there was a woe to them who invented instruments of music, as did David under the law, is there no woe, no curse to them who invent them, and introduce them into the worship of God in the Christian church? I am an old man, and an old minister, and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God; and I have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music, as a science, I esteem and admire; but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity. The late venerable and most eminent divine, the Rev. John Wesley, who was a lover of music, and an eloquent poet, when asked his opinion of instruments of music introduced into the chapels of the Methodists, said, in his terse and powerful manner, 'I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither HEARD nor SEEN.' I say the same, though I think the expense of purchase had better be spared."

6. They drank wine from the most costly vessels and used the chief or most costly oils for anointing themselves.

7. Because of their sins the house of Israel went first into cap-

tivity—that is, before the kingdom of Judah. (See ch. 7: 11, 17.) Then their revelry would cease.

8. "The Lord Jehovah hath sworn by himself," by all that he is, saying: "I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces; therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein." He said: "I hate, I despise your feasts." (5: 21.) God declared he would sift Israel and save the good and true. (chapter 9: 8-10.)

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, places, and persons.  
Repeat the Memory Verse.  
What was the worldly and moral condition of Amos at the time of this lesson?  
Give a brief biographical sketch of Amos.  
In what were Paul and Amos alike?  
What occurred between Amos and Amaziah?  
During whose reign did he prophesy?  
What prophets were contemporary with him?  
What shows the rich and outwardly flourishing condition of the kingdom?  
Of what sins were these leaders and rulers guilty?  
Against what nations did Amos prophecy?  
1 Against whom is the woe of this verse pronounced?  
What is it to be at ease in Zion?  
What were the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah?  
What were the sins of Judah and Samaria?  
What is spiritually "the Israel of God today?" (See Gal. 3: 7, 29; 6: 16; Rom. 9: 6-8.)  
Against what does God warn the church?  
What did the church of Laodicea think of itself?  
What did God think of it?  
What did the rich farmer of Luke 12: 13-21, say to himself?  
What did God say to him?  
Who were the "notable men of the chief of the nations?"
- In what did they feel secure?  
What did the people say?  
2 Where are the cities mentioned here?  
What is the point in referring to them?  
3 What facts does this verse state?  
4 How does this verse state the people lived?  
5 Against what sins is God's woe in this verse pronounced?  
Where were these idle songs sung?  
What is the influence of good and true songs?  
State the evil influence of idle and foolish and wicked songs enlivened by instrumental music.  
What should parents, school and church teach in reference to such songs?  
Who invented instruments of music for the worship of God?  
What did God do in regard to them?  
How did he show his disapproval of them in his worship?  
What did he do with them when he instituted his spiritual worship?  
Repeat what Adam Clark says concerning them and this whole matter?  
What did John Wesley say?  
6 What further shows the luxury and ease of Israel?  
7 When would this revelry cease? Which kingdom went first into captivity?  
What did Jehovah swear he abhorred and that he would do?  
By whom did he swear?  
Whom would God destroy and whom save?



## LESSON XII—MARCH 19

**THE DOWNFALL OF ISRAEL—2 Kings 17: 1-18****Print 17: 9-18**

2 KINGS 17. 9 And the children of Israel did secretly things that were not right against Jehovah their God; and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city.

10 And they set them up pillars and Asherim upon every high hill, and under every green tree.

11 And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the nations whom Jehovah carried away before them; and they wrought wicked things to provoke Jehovah to anger;

12 and they served idols, whereof Jehovah had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing.

13 Yet Jehovah testified unto Israel, and unto Judah, by every prophet, and every seer, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

14 Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their neck, like to the neck of their fathers, who believed not in Jehovah their God.

15 And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified unto them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the nations that were round about them, concerning whom Jehovah had charged them that they should not do like them.

16 And they forsook all the commandments of Jehovah their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

17 And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger.

18 Therefore Jehovah was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people. (Proverbs 14: 34.)

*Time*—B. C. 722.

*Places*—Samaria, Gozan, and "the cities of the Medes."

*Persons*—Hoshea and the kings of Assyria.

*Memory Verse*—Matthew 7: 24, 27.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 1.

*Reference Material*—Hosea 7; Amos 2: 6-16.

*Home Reading*.—Mon., Mar. 13.—The sin of Israel.—2 Kings 17: 1-12. Tu.—The judgment on Israel.—2 Kings 17: 13-18. Wed.—The deceptive character of sin.—Hos. 7: 1-10. Th.—The downfall foretold.—Isa. 8: 5-10. Fr.—A dangerous alliance.—2 Kings 16: 1-9. Sat.—Corrupting worship.—2 Kings 16: 10-18. Su.—"The way of the righteous."—Psa. 1.

**INTRODUCTION****I. The Dynasties and Length of the Kingdom of Israel**

In this lesson we come to the downfall of the kingdom of Israel and the final destruction of the ten tribes as a nation. This kingdom had nineteen kings and nine different dynasties. God promised to Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, the first king, that if he would obey him and be loyal to him, as was David, he would establish his family upon the throne of Israel, as the family of David was established upon the throne of Judah (1 Kings 11: 30-40). But Jeroboam refused to obey God; and instead of his family's continuing on the throne, there were nine different families that occupied the throne. The kingdom never turned from the calves and sins of Jeroboam, although it was much worse than that at times. According to the ordinary chronology, the kingdom continued about two hundred and fifty-four years; others put its duration a little less.



This history demonstrates that a nation, as an individual, must reap what it sows. This lesson gives the cause of the downfall and captivity of these ten tribes. The kingdom of Judah continued after this about one hundred and thirty-six years, until the destruction of Jerusalem. (2 Kings 25.) There were nineteen kings over Judah and one queen—the usurper, Athaliah. All the kings of Judah were of the family of David, as God promised; and Christ, on the throne in heaven, was of the tribe of Judah and of the family of David. (See Acts 2: 29-36; 13: 34-36.)

## II. The Cause of the Downfall of This Kingdom

1. Hoshea was the last king of Israel. His name is identical with that of Hosea, the prophet, and means "salvation." This was the name of Joshua at first (Deut. 32: 44) until so changed as to mean "Jehovah is salvation." Hoshea began to reign "in the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah" and reigned nine years before the overthrow of his kingdom.

2. He was contemporary with Hezekiah six years. (2 Kings 18: 1, 10.) Isaiah and Micah (1: 1) were prophesying in Judah, and Amos (1: 1) and Hosea (1: 1) had delivered their prophecies against Israel, before this time. Hosea (11: 5-7; 13: 16) and Amos (8, 9) foretold the downfall of Israel. Hoshea "did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, yet not as the kings of Israel that were before him."

3-6. While this was true, he was an evil doer, and the people had reached that condition which brought upon them the final destruction of God. (See Lev. 26: 1-33; Deut. 28.) Hoshea was first conquered by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria; then he conspired against Shalmaneser, and Shalmaneser "shut him up and bound him in prison," and then invaded the country and besieged Samaria three years. The two tribes and the half tribe east of the Jordan had been carried into captivity before this (see 2 Kings 15: 19, 29; 1 Chron. 5: 25, 26); now all Israel is carried away captive into Assyria and placed in the countries mentioned. Halah was in Assyria; Habor was a river in Gozan; Gozan was in Northern Mesopotamia. "The cities of the Medes" were some distance east from Assyria. (See these places on the map.) We can well imagine the sad and sorrowful scene of the whole population of a country—men, women, and children—with their wagons, flocks, herds, etc., driven along before their captors into foreign captivity.

7-8. God had saved the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, had given them the land of promise, and had greatly blessed them in every way. His goodness to Israel is frequently recited. (See Ps. 78, 79.) Jehovah—"I am that I am," the self-existing, eternal being—was their God, in whom they lived and had their continual existence, and who gave them all things richly to enjoy. Against Jehovah, their God, in the face of all this goodness and mercy, they had sinned. They "feared other gods (worshiped idols), and walked in the statutes of the nations, whom Jehovah cast out." Because of the iniquities and abominations of these nations God cast them out of Palestine and forbade the Israelites making any covenant with them or intermarrying among them. (See Ex. 23: 23-32; 34: 10-17; 1 Kings 11: 1-8; and numerous other passages.) The children of Israel broke God's covenant and adopted idolatry, the licentious worship and immorality of these and other heathen nations. (Judg. 2: 11-15.) They committed the very sins for which God drove out and destroyed these wicked nations; therefore it was just and right that he should now drive them out. They also "walked in the statutes of the . . .



kings of Israel," who made the calves at Bethel and Dan and who introduced the worship of Baal, with all its infamous practices. These heathen practices and customs had become law. (2 Kings 16: 3, 4.)

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Idolatry and Its Attractions

9. They "did secretly things that were not right against Jehovah their God." They practiced some abominable, sensual forms of idol worship in secret. They were bent on idolatry, and made an effort to conceal these practices either from God or men. Some say this means they covered their idolatry with the pretense that it was worship of God. The word "secretly" means more than that; it means they did these things in secret. They set up idols in secret. (Deut. 27: 15.) "They built them high places in all their cities." These "high places" have already been described. "From the tower of the watchman to the fortified city." (See 2 Kings 18: 8.) These towers were built in vineyards (Isa. 5: 2; Matt. 21: 33) and other places, and in them watchmen were stationed to keep guard over crops and flocks. They were frequently in the less inhabited places. Then this expression means that in all places altars were erected for idol worship.

10-12. The "pillars" were "obelisks" (see margin), probably of rough or hewn stone; the "Asherim" were wooden symbols of the goddess Asherah or other wooden images, not simply groves. These pillars and wooden images were set up by the altars. (Ex. 34: 13; Deut. 16: 21, 22.) "Upon every high hill, and under every green tree." Hills and groves were especially selected for these altars and images erected to the worship of idols. Sometimes, to make high, or elevated, places, mounds were thrown up. The groves became temples of the licentious and abominable worship of idols. "In all the high places" the Israelites "burned incense" as worship to these idols. They practiced all the abominations of the nations whom God drove out and "served idols, whereof Jehovah had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing." (Ex. 20: 4-6; Lev. 26: 1; Deut. 4: 15-19; 27: 15.)

Idolatry had its attractions and fascinations. What were they? It appealed to the senses and animal passions; it presented a visible image, or form, of the god worshiped. When Aaron made the golden calf, he intended it as a visible aid to the worship of God. (Ex. 32: 4-6.) In contrast with idols, Jehovah was invisible; and he called attention to the fact that when he appeared to Israel they saw no form. (Deut. 4: 15-19.) Idolatry presented a splendid sensual system of services, embracing revelry, licentiousness, and the exercise of passions, requiring no restraint, repentance, or confession of sins; but every evil thing could be practiced in the name of worship.

It appealed to the worldly and fashionable, and was supported by learning, wealth, and power. All these combined made it a mighty influence for evil and destruction. The worship of the invisible God was pure, true, sincere, righteous, and required, therefore, a forsaking and confession of sin and has always been opposed by worldly wisdom and power. It is a sad mistake now to turn away from that worship of God in spirit and truth taught in the New Testament for any system which appeals to the senses, tastes, passions, and pride of the fashionable, worldly, and wealthy. To try to make the pure, spiritual, holy service of the true, but invisible, God tasteful and attractive, pleasant and agreeable to the refined, cultured, but unconverted, world is to prostitute it to the service of the creature rather than to make it the means of lifting the creature up to the Creator.



## II. "Would Not Hear;" "Sold Themselves to do Evil"

13. God was gracious and merciful, and did not send them into captivity for the first or second transgression. He "testified unto Israel, and unto Judah, by every prophet, and every seer." Seers were those to whom God revealed things by visions. God sent to them Elijah, Elisha, Jonah (2 Kings 14: 25; Jonah 1: 1), Amos, and Hosea; besides, there were the schools of the prophets, of which we have learned; and Hezekiah, in his reform of Judah sent messengers throughout Israel, exhorting all to repent, return to Jerusalem, and worship God "as it is written" (2 Chron. 30: 5-12). God taught them, warned them, persuaded them, and chastised them, doing everything in mercy and love to reclaim and save them. So, later on, he pleaded with Judah. (Jer. 7: 3-7; 18: 11; Ezek. 18: 31; 30: 10-16.) God pleaded with Israel, recounted his goodness, and urged them to repent (see Hos. 11-13); yet they despised his goodness (see Rom. 2: 4).

14. Notwithstanding all God did in teaching, warning, pointing out their sins, and showing the consequences, "they would not hear;" but as oxen under the yoke harden their necks when they are bent on going a certain direction and will not be guided in any other direction, so they were obstinate and self-willed and stiffened their necks (Deut. 31: 27), "like to the neck of their fathers, who believed not in Jehovah." They believed in the existence of God, but did not believe in him. To trust and obey God and to thus show confidence in him and to rely upon his ways and means is to believe in him. Instead of believing in God they "rejected his statutes," broke his covenant, "followed vanity," and "went after the nations" of the land. Idols were called "vain things," and were dumb, lifeless, and powerless to bless and save. In following them Israel "became vain"—weak and helpless.

15-17. These verses show that Israel did not believe "in Jehovah their God." "They forsook all the commandments of Jehovah their God." They turned away from all that was right and good and followed all that was wrong. The "molten images" mentioned here were the two calves made by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12: 28), who caused Israel to sin and from whose influence and example they never turned away; the "Asherah" was a wooden image referred to above; "all the host of heaven" was the sun, the moon, and the stars (Deut. 4: 15-19). This "host of heaven" was represented by Baal, the sun god, and Asherah. They offered their children as sacrifices burned in the fire to the god Molech. (Read again Lev. 18: 21; 2 Kings 17: 31; 23: 10; 2 Chron. 28: 3; Jer. 7: 30-32; 19: 1-13.) They "used divination and enchantments"—different methods of trying to learn future events. Consultation of wizards, witches, and those who had "familiar spirits," and the use of augury, necromancy, and sorcery were forbidden. (Deut. 18: 10-14.) They "sold themselves to do . . . evil." This figure is drawn from the fact of men's selling themselves into slavery and giving themselves up entirely to do the will of their masters. So Israel "sold themselves to do . . . evil" and wholly served their master.

18. This verse says that because of all the foregoing sins and transgressions God "was very angry with Israel." God's indignation was aroused, and he "removed them out of his sight" to the places mentioned in 2 Kings 17: 6. They brought all this upon themselves. (See Prov 1: 20-33.) As stated in the introduction, Judah remained for about one hundred and thirty-six years before the Babylonian captivity.



## QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, places, and persons.

Repeat the Memory Verses.

How many kings did the kingdom of Israel have?

How many dynasties were represented?

How long did this kingdom last?

What promise did God make to Jeroboam?

What did Jeroboam do?

What was the cause of the nation's overthrow?

How many kings in all did Judah have?

What one queen did this kingdom have?

Who was Hoshea?

With whom in Judah was he contemporary?

How long did Hoshea reign over Israel?

What was his character?

Who conquered him?

Why was he imprisoned?

How long was Samaria besieged?

What had become of the tribes east of the Jordan?

What now befell all the remaining ten tribes?

What had God done for Israel?

Why did God drive out the nations of Palestine?

Why now was he suffering Israel to go into captivity?

What different sins and abominations had they committed?

9 What did they do secretly?

What were these "towers"?

Where had they then erected altars?

10-12 What were the "pillars"?

What were the "Asherim"?

Where were the altars and the images placed?

To what did they burn incense?

What were the attractions of idolatry?

What was the worship of God?

What is a prostitution of God's worship now?

13 What efforts had God made to teach and warn them?

Name these prophets.

14 What had the people done?

From what does the figure 'hardened their neck' come?

15-17 Why is it said they did not believe in Jehovah, when they knew he existed?

What did they reject?

What did they make?

What all did they worship?

How did they try to discover future events?

What is meant by "sold themselves to do that which was evil"?

18 What did God then do with them?

How long did Judah remain after this?

## LESSON XIII—MARCH 26

## ISRAEL'S REPROACH—REVIEW—Proverbs 14: 21-35

In the lessons of this quarter we have learned something of the lives of some very wicked kings and some grand prophets. There never reigned over Israel two kings so wicked and rebellious as Jeroboam and Ahaz, and, it seems, there never lived any woman so cruel and diabolical in her plots and the execution of them as Jezebel. On the other hand, there was no prophet more loyal and heroic and daring than Elijah and more faithful and brave than Elisha. This review should show some of the benefit we have derived from the study of these lessons.

*Golden Text*—Jehovah is righteous in all his ways,

And gracious in all his works. (Psalm 145: 17.)

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 130.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Mar. 20.—The revolt of Jeroboam.—1 Kings 12: 12-20. Tu.—Elijah the Tishbite.—1 Kings 17: 1-16. Wed.—Jehovah is God.—1 Kings 18: 30-39. Th.—The prophet's reward.—2 Kings 2: 1-11. Fr.—Elisha's heavenly defenders.—2 Kings 6: 13-19. Sat.—The mercy of Jehovah.—Jonah 3: 1-10. Su.—The forgiveness of Jehovah.—Psa. 130.

*Lesson I*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give a brief history of Jeroboam up to the time of this lesson. What were his chief sins?

*Lesson II*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Relate the little that is known of Elijah's early life; the much of his character; of his faith and obedience. Give the story of the widow of Zarephath.

*Lesson III*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. What tested Elijah's faith? Of what did Ahab accuse Elijah? What was Elijah's reply? Relate the facts of the test proposed by Elijah and the result.

*Lesson IV*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Why did Elijah flee into the wilderness? What transpired there? Why did he return? What was he to do upon his return?

*Lesson V*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Relate the facts of Naboth's vineyard. Why was this story given?

*Lesson VI*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. What relationship did Elisha sustain to Elijah? Who were the sons of the prophets? Relate the story of Elijah's ascension.

*Lesson VII*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Why was this woman called "a great woman?" What did she and her husband do for Elisha? What did he do for them? What befell this child? How was it restored to life?

*Lesson VIII*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who was Naaman? How did he learn of the prophet in Israel who could heal leprosy? How was he healed? What lesson does this teach on faith and obedience?

*Lesson IX*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. What was this heavenly vision? Give the occasion of its appearance? How did Elisha treat his enemies?

*Lesson X*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. To what city was Jonah sent? Where was Nineveh? Relate the story of Jonah and his being swallowed by the whale. What was the preaching he was to do? What was the result of his preaching? What example does Jesus make of this?

*Lesson XI*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give a brief history of Amos. Give the contents of his book. State the condition of Israel from a viewpoint of the world and also morally and spiritually. What is it to be at ease in Zion? Name many of the sins of Israel. What would sin and rebellion bring upon this kingdom?

*Lesson XII*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. How long did the kingdom of Israel continue? Who was its first and who was its last king? What caused its downfall? Describe these idols and their worship.



### Lesson Connections

In order to keep up and understand the parallel history of the two kingdoms, we must not fail to read the chapters designated in the foregoing. From these (not giving the references, but expecting the pupil to look them up in these chapters) we learn the following facts: Rehoboam reigned over Judah seventeen years. He, the Levites, and those from Israel who "set their hearts to seek Jehovah," "walked three years in the way of David and Solomon." While Rehoboam did this, he prospered. He strongly fortified at least fifteen cities in his kingdom to protect it from any inroads of the enemy. He married eighteen wives and had sixty concubines, and was the father of twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.

When he became strong and established in his kingdom, he forsook the law of Jehovah and fell into the abominable idolatry already described. "For they also built them high places and pillars [or "obelisks," margin], and Asherim, on every high hill, and under every green tree; and there were also sodomites in the land; they did according to all the abominations of the nations which Jehovah drove out before the children of Israel." In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, Shishak, king of Egypt, with a mighty army, came against him and captured all the fortified cities of Judah and "came up against Jerusalem."

Upon the reproof of Shemaiah, the prophet, Rehoboam and the princes of Judah humbled themselves and said, "Jehovah is righteous"; whereupon God saved Jerusalem from the king of Egypt, but said that Rehoboam and his princes should be servants of this king. The king of Egypt then took away the treasures of the temple and the king's house and the shields of gold which Solomon had made. Rehoboam made shields of brass in their stead. There was continual war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam.

Jeroboam reigned over Israel twenty-two years; so he reigned five years after the death of Rehoboam. Abijah, called in 1 Kings 15: 1 "Abijam," Rehoboam's son, reigned over Judah upon the death of his father. He began to reign in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam's reign over Israel and reigned three years. There was also war between him and Jeroboam. In a great battle with Jeroboam, Abijah rebuked him for his rebellion against God; and, although greatly outnumbered, Abijah gained a signal victory, because he and his men "relied upon Jehovah, the God of their fathers."

Five hundred thousand men of Israel were slain, and Jeroboam never recovered during Abijah's reign. However, Abijah's "heart was not perfect with Jehovah his God, as the heart of David his father"; for he walked in the sins of his immediate father, Rehoboam. Still for David's sake, as he had promised, God gave "him a lamp [a son to succeed him] in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem."

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

#### I. The Condition of Judah

1. Asa was Abijah's son. Abijah had fourteen wives, and was the father of twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. In 1 Kings 15: 10 it is said that Asa's "mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom"; but really she was his grandmother, for she was his father's mother. (Verses 1, 2.) She is named as the wife whom Rehoboam loved "above all his wives." In 2 Chron. 11: 21, 22, she is called "the daughter of Absalom"; in 2 Chron. 13: 2 she is called



"Micaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah." It is not stated which one of Abijah's wives was the mother of Asa. Both Rehoboam and Abijah were buried "in the city of David." Asa reigned in his father's stead, and "in his days the land was quiet ten years." There was no war during these years. (2 Chron. 14: 6.) They were probably from the fifth year to the fifteenth year of his reign. (2 Chron. 15: 10.)

2. "And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of Jehovah his God." He was reared surrounded by evil influences, with a little good in his father and grandfather. Upon the whole, his father, grandfather, and grandmother were bad, trusting in idols. Idolatry, however abominable, had its allurements. Sin today, however fearful may be its consequences, has its pleasure and fascination. There were good men in the land—the prophets mentioned under the head "Persons" and the Levites. In 1 Kings 15: 14 it is said: "But the high places were not taken away: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect with Jehovah all his days." "There were two kinds of high places in the land: (1) those used for idolatrous purposes, (2) those that were consecrated to God and were used before the temple was built." (Clarke.) These "high places" were doubtless the ones upon which Jehovah was worshiped. (See 2 Kings 12: 3; 14: 4; 15: 35; 2 Chron. 20: 33.) The people may have continued to burn incense on these places in spite of Asa's efforts to persuade them "to do the law and the commandment." "Jehovah his God" means that Jehovah, and no idol, was his God, and that he trusted Jehovah, and not idols.

3. Verses 3-5 give the reason for the statement made in verse 2. "Foreign altars" were altars for the worship of the idols of heathen nations; "the high places" were the mounds, or hills, upon which were placed the altars; "the pillars" were "obelisks" (margin), or images, standing by the altars as symbols of the gods. Gideon was commanded to "throw down the altar of Baal" and to "cut down the Asherah" that stood by it, or upon it. (Judg. 6: 25.) The Asherah, as we noted in the Introduction, was connected with Baal worship, and was a wooden symbol of any god or goddess, such as Ashtoreth (Astarte, or Venus). "The Asherim" were not groves, as in the Authorized Version, but wooden images of Ashtoreth, or Astarte. The margin at Ex. 34: 13 says of Asherim: "Probably the wooden symbols of a goddess Asherah." The worship of Ashtoreth (Astarte, or Venus) was carried on chiefly in groves. "Groves were her temples. In groves consecrated to her such obscenities were committed as rendered her worship infamous." Asa "put away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. And also Maacah his mother [grandmother] he removed from being queen [“queen mother,” margin], because she had made an abominable image for an Asherah; and Asa cut down her image and burned it at the brook Kidron." (1 Kings 15: 12, 23.) This was an obscene figure, and was worshiped, doubtless, with impure rites. This may have been done after the battle described in this lesson. (See 2 Chron. 15: 16, 17.)

## II. Asa a Reformer

4. Asa was a reformer. He not only did right himself, but he "commanded Judah to seek Jehovah, the God of their fathers [not idols], and to do the law and the commandment." That which God wrote upon the tables of stone was called "the law and the commandment" (Ex. 24: 12), and "the covenant, the Ten Commandments" (Ex. 34: 28; see also Deut. 4: 13). God also commanded Moses to teach "statutes and ordinances." (Deut. 4: 14.)



5. Not only did Asa break down these altars and images and remove "the high places" in Jerusalem, but he did this for "all the cities of Judah." These images were probably representations of Baal, the sun god. Thus God commanded the children of Israel: "Ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire." (Deut. 7: 5; 12: 2, 3; Ex. 23: 24; 34: 13.) "And the kingdom was quiet before him." (See 2 Chron. 14: 1.)

6, 7. During these years of peace Asa prepared for war. "He built fortified cities in Judah." He made "about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars." He built these cities as a defense against Israel on the north and Egypt on the south. It is probable that he rebuilt the fortified cities of Rehoboam which Shishak, king of Egypt, had destroyed. (2 Chron. 11: 5-12; 12: 4.) "Jehovah had given him rest" because he and Judah sought God. God gave them "rest on every side" because they sought him. The way they "sought" God was to put away all forms of idolatry and obey God's law and commandments. (2 Chron. 14: 4.) It is God's law and promise: "If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever." (1 Chron. 28: 9; 2 Chron. 15: 1, 2.) "So they built and prospered." God blessed them with peace and prosperity.

8. "Asa had an army," which he had also prepared "out of Judah," "that bare bucklers and spears." "three hundred thousand," "and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand." In all, there were five hundred and eighty thousand. "Bucklers" were heavy shields; "bucklers and spears" were heavy arms; and "shields" and "bows" were lighter arms. "All these were mighty men of valor."

9. At the end of these years of quiet and rest "Zerah the Ethiopian," with one million men and three hundred chariots, came against Asa at Mareshah, a town of Judah, about twenty-five miles southwest from Jerusalem. Asa, having fortified the cities and raised the army mentioned, doubtless refused to pay tribute to Egypt; and this mighty army invaded his country to again subdue it.

10. Asa, undaunted, went out to meet Zerah. They met in battle array "in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah."

11. Asa's army was outnumbered two to one. "Asa cried unto Jehovah his God." Read his prayer. Indeed, there is none like God to help. The few, the weak, with God's help, are stronger than the mighty opposed to God. Relying upon God and in God's name, Asa went against "this multitude." It was God's battle; so Asa prayed: "Let not man prevail against thee." Asa had put down all idolatry in the land, and was maintaining the true worship of God against the heathen and their false gods. There are various instances in the Bible where God's people, though few and weak, prevailed over their enemies because they trusted in God. Gideon and Hezekiah are notable cases. See Hezekiah's prayer. (Isa. 37: 14-25, 36-38.)

12. God heard Asa and "smote the Ethiopians," and they fled. Asa and his army "pursued them unto Gerar; and there fell of the Ethiopians so many that they could not recover themselves ["so that none remained alive," margin]; for they were destroyed before Jehovah, and before his host." Asa also "smote all the cities about Gerar"; and he smote "the tents of cattle [doubtless the camels and other animals used for carrying the baggage of that vast army, and sheep and cattle for food], and carried away sheep in abundance, and camels," and, with these, "much spoil" (for there was "much spoil" in all these cities), "and returned to Jerusalem." See on the map the situation of Gerar. (2 Chron. 14: 13-15.)



### III. The History of Asa Continued

The history of Asa's reign is continued through 2 Chron. 15, 16. The prophet Azariah, guided by the Spirit of God, went to meet Asa on his return from this great battle to encourage and to bless him. God so encourages and blesses his valiant soldiers of the cross in their struggle today "against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph. 6: 10-12.) "But be ye strong, and let not your hands be slack; for your work shall be rewarded." We, like Asa, must be diligent and use all God's appointed means, and our work will be rewarded. This encouragement gave Asa new zeal to extend his reformation and to put down idolatry in "the cities which he had taken from the hill country of Ephraim." When the people of the other tribes—Ephraim, Manasseh, Simeon, etc.—saw that God was with Asa, "they fell to him . . . in abundance." They made a great offering to God of the spoil they had taken in this battle—"seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep." They made a covenant to seek God with all their hearts and souls, and that whosoever would not seek God should be put to death. Over this there was great joy in Jerusalem. This occurred in the fifteenth year of Asa's reign. All, then, that we have studied of his life up to this time he accomplished in fifteen years. He also carried into the house of God the silver, gold, and vessels which he and his father had dedicated. "And there was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa."

### IV. Asa's Sad End

Then when Baasha, king of Israel, went against him, he forgot how God had given him the victory over Zerah and the Ethiopians and sought the assistance of Ben-hadad, king of Syria. For this foolishness and sin God reproved him through the prophet Hanani; and, instead of repenting, he became enraged and imprisoned the prophet and oppressed some of the people. The result of this sin was that Asa let the host of Syria escape out of his hands, and God said from henceforth he should have wars. During the last two years of his reign he was afflicted in his feet with an exceeding great disease, and "he sought not to Jehovah, but to the physicians." It is when people are successful—have eaten and are full; have built goodly houses and dwell therein; their flocks, herds, silver, and gold have multiplied; and their hearts are lifted up (Deut. 8: 11-20)—that they "forget God" and rely upon their own strength. We regret that the good king, Asa, should have made so great a mistake and should have committed so great a sin before God; yet we may do the same. Great and good preachers make the mistake of turning away from perfect reliance upon God's means and power to human aids and institutions. Asa reigned forty-one years (1 Kings 15: 10), and was contemporary, as seen under the head "Persons," with seven kings of Israel. Read the description of Asa's funeral. (2 Chron. 16: 13, 14.)

### QUESTIONS

Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, places, and persons.  
Repeat the Memory Verse.  
When was Chronicles divided into two books?  
When and by whom is it supposed these books were written?  
What different objects are signified by Hebrew names for idols?

What were the "teraphim?"  
What were the "pillars?"  
What was the "grove," or "Asherah?"  
What were the high places?  
What was the God of the Syrians?  
What was the god of the Phoenicians?  
To whom does Astarte correspond?



- What was the god of the Moabites?  
 What was the god of the Ammonites?  
 What was the god of the Philistines?  
 What was the god of the Amorites?  
 What was Baal?  
 What were Gad and Meni?  
 What was Tammuz?  
 What effect did idol worship have upon the worshippers?  
 What worship was connected with the worship of Baal?  
 What does "Baalim" signify?  
 What was "Ashtoreth"?  
 How long did Rehoboam reign?  
 What did he and others who sought God do for three years?  
 How did he prepare against invasion of the enemy?  
 How many wives and how many concubines had he?  
 How many sons and daughters did he have?  
 When he became strong, to what did he turn?  
 What king came against him and with what result?  
 Why was Jerusalem spared?  
 What did Rehoboam and his princes become?  
 What did Shishak take out of Jerusalem?  
 What was the state of affairs between Rehoboam and Jeroboam?  
 Which of Rehoboam's sons succeeded him?  
 How long did he reign?  
 What was the state of affairs between him and Jeroboam?  
 What was the result of the battle between him and Jeroboam?  
 Why did he gain the victory?  
 Why did God leave him a "lamp", or son, to succeed him?
- 1 How many wives and children had Abijah?  
 Where were he and Rehoboam buried?  
 Who succeeded him?  
 Who was Maacah?  
 By what other name was she called?  
 For how long did the land have rest in Asa's day?  
 At what period in his reign was this, probably?
  - 2 What were the influences surrounding Asa's boyhood?  
 What did he do?  
 What is said of the condition of his heart?  
 Why were not all of the high places taken away then?  
 What is meant by "Jehovah his God"?
  - 3 What were "foreign altars"?  
 What were these "pillars"?
- What was the "Asherah"?  
 What were the "Asherim"?  
 Where was the worship of Ashtoreth carried on principally?  
 What was the nature of this worship?  
 What did Asa do with all these altars and images?  
 What did he do with the Sodomites?  
 What did he do with his grandmother and her abominable image?  
 Was all this done at one time?
- 4 What did Asa command Judah to do?
  - 5 What did he do for other cities?  
 What were "sun images"?  
 What commandment had God given the children of Israel in regard to these things?
  - 6, 7 What preparation for war did Asa make in time of peace?  
 Why did God give him quiet and rest?  
 What is God's promise to all?
  - 8 What was the size of Asa's army?  
 How many of these were from Judah?  
 How were they armed?  
 How were the Benjamites armed?
  - 9 Who came up then against Asa?  
 What was the size of his army?
  - 10 At what town and in what valley did they meet?
  - 11 Upon whom did Asa rely?  
 Repeat his prayer.  
 Why was this considered God's fight?  
 What notable cases can you give of others who, in weakness, relied upon Jehovah?
  - 12 State the result of this battle.  
 Where was Gerar?  
 What spoils did Asa take?  
 How was Asa encouraged?  
 Who came to him in great numbers?  
 What offering was made in Jerusalem?  
 What covenant did they make?  
 In what year of Asa's reign did this occur?  
 How long before there was war again?  
 With whom then did Asa have war?  
 In what did he sin?  
 Who reproved him?  
 What did Hanani say would not cease?  
 What effect did this have upon Asa, and what did he do?  
 How was he afflicted the last two years of his life?  
 When do people forget God usually?  
 To what now do good men sometimes turn?  
 How long did Asa reign?  
 With what kings of Israel was he contemporary?

## LESSON II—APRIL 9

## THE LORD PRESERVETH JOASH—2 Kings 11: 1-17

## Print 11: 1-4, 11-17

2 KINGS 11. 1 Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.

2 But Jehosheba the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from the king's sons that were slain, even him and his nurse, and put them in the bedchamber; and they hid him from Athaliah, so that he was not slain.

3 And he was with her hid in the house of Jehovah six years. And Athaliah reigned over the land.

4 And in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the captains over hundreds of the Carities and of the guard, and brought them to him into the house of Jehovah; and he made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of Jehovah, and showed them the king's son.

11 And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, from the right side of the house to the left side of the house, along by the altar and the house, by the king round about.

12 Then he brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, Long live the king.

13 And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people into the house of Jehovah.

14 And she looked, and, behold, the king stood by the pillar, as the manner was, and the captains and the trumpets by the king; and all the people of the land rejoiced and blew trumpets. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason! treason!

15 And Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of hundreds that were set over the host, and said unto them, Have her forth between the ranks; and him that followeth her slay with the sword. For the priest said, Let her not be slain in the house of Jehovah.

16 So they made way for her; and she went by the way of the horses' entry to the king's house, and there was she slain.

17 And Jehoiada made a covenant between Jehovah and the king and the people, that they should be Jehovah's people; between the king also and the people.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Jehovah preserveth all them that love him. (Psalm 145: 20.)

*Time*—B. C. about 878.

*Place*—Jerusalem.

*Persons*—Athaliah, Jehoiada, Jehosheba, Joash, the guards, and the people.

*Memory Verse*—Psalms 23: 4.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 145: 10-21.

*Reference Material*—2 Kings 11: 18-20; 2 Chronicles 23: 1-21; Matthew 2: 13-23.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Apr. 3.—How a boy became king.—2 Kings 11: 1-12. Tu.—How God's priests helped.—2 Kings 11: 13-20. Wed.—The story retold.—2 Chron. 22: 10-23: 11. Th.—God preserves Moses.—Exod. 2: 1-10. Fr.—God preserves Joseph.—Gen. 39: 1-6. Sat.—God preserves the child Jesus.—Matt. 2: 13-23. Su.—God saves and satisfies.—Psa. 145: 10-21.

## I. The Kingdom of Israel

The marriage of Jehoram (or Joram), the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, to Athaliah the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, connects this lesson with the kingdom of Israel. We studied the history of the kingdom of Israel in the lessons of the first quarter from its establishment under Jeroboam, the Son of Nebat, to its final destruction under King Hoshea. Jeroboam reigned twenty-two years; Nadab, his son, two years; Baasha (the beginning of the second dynasty), twenty-four years; Elah, Baasha's son, two years; Zimri, the captain of half Elah's chariots, who killed Elah, seven days; Omri (the beginning of the third dynasty), twelve years; Ahab,



Omri's son, twenty-two years; Ahaziah, Ahab's son, two years; Jehoram, Ahab's son (2 Kings 1: 17; 3: 1), twelve years. Ahab formed an alliance with the king of the Sidonians by marrying his daughter, Jezebel, adding transgressions to his sins. (1 Kings 16: 30-33.)

### Ahab and Jezebel and Jehu

Of Jezebel we have learned much. She was a brilliant, ambitious, unscrupulous, heathen, wicked woman. She introduced into Israel the worship of Baal, for which a temple was erected in Samaria, whence it spread through the kingdom of Judah. Jezebel persecuted and destroyed God's prophets and encouraged and sustained the prophets of Baal and the Asherah. We have learned of this abominable, wicked, licentious worship. During Ahab's reign Elijah appeared, denouncing such idolatry and wickedness, teaching and correcting the people. After him Elisha came, taking up his work and continuing it for more than fifty years. From Ahab and Jezebel and their descendants to the third generation and from Elijah and Elisha went forth two most powerful contrary and conflicting influences, resulting finally, in the overruling wisdom of God, in the extermination of the entire family of Ahab. This was done by the fiery Jehu, son of Nimshi, whom God directed Elijah to anoint king of Israel.

Jehu killed Jehoram, king of Israel; Ahaziah, king of Judah; and had Jezebel pitched out of the window alive and run over by the horses and chariots. He treacherously put to death all the prophets of Baal, destroyed the images and altars, and converted the temple into a public necessary. Yet, with all his zeal, he did not "walk in the law of Jehovah" and "departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, wherewith he made Israel to sin." He was negative in his zeal, tearing down Baal worship, but not building up the worship of God. Better men than Jehu make the same mistake today. An account of all this is given in 2 Kings 9, 10. Jehu (the beginning of the fourth dynasty) reigned twenty-eight years over Israel. Jehu's family occupied the throne through the fourth generation, closing with the reign of Jeroboam II.—a period of one hundred and two years. (2 Kings 10: 30; 15: 10-12.)

## II. The Kingdom of Judah

Returning to the kingdom of Judah, Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, reigned seventeen years; Abijah, three years; Asa, of whom we learned in Lesson I of this quarter, forty-one years; Jehoshaphat, twenty-five years; this reaches the present lesson.

### Jehoram and Athaliah

This lesson shows the power of influence—in this case, the wonderful bad influence of Jezebel. Jehoshaphat "joined affinity with Ahab" (2 Chron. 18: 1); and his son, Jehoram (or Joram), married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (2 Kings 8: 18, 19; 2 Chron. 21: 5-7; 22: 2). Jezebel was the daughter of a king, the wife of a king, the mother of a king, the mother-in-law of a king, the grandmother of a king, and the great-grandmother of a king. Who were all these kings? Jehoram was weak and wicked; Athaliah was ambitious and idolatrous, like her mother. This proved a disastrous union to Judah, for the weak king was wholly under the influence of his wicked wife.

Baal worship was established in Jerusalem and through the country. (2 Chron. 21: 11-15.) There was a temple of Baal in Jerusalem, which Jehoiada, the priest, destroyed in the reign of Joash. (2 Kings



11: 18.) This house of Baal, in all probability, was erected, and this worship was established by Jehoram. It is said of Jehoram: "And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife; and he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah." (2 Kings 8: 18.) "Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and made the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot, and led Judah astray." (2 Chron. 21: 11.) He also slew with the sword "all his brethren" and "divers also of the princes" of his kingdom (Verses 1-4.) For his idolatry and wickedness he suffered the condemnation of God. His enemies were stirred up against him; his wives and children were slain; his people were smitten with a plague; he himself suffered from a great affliction of the bowels, until "day by day" for two years they fell out, "and he died of sore diseases." (Verses 12-20.)

He reigned only eight years. Jehoahaz (also called "Ahaziah"—2 Chron. 22: 2), his youngest son, reigned in his stead; for his enemies had slain all his other sons. Jehoahaz reigned only one year. "He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab; for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly. And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, as did the house of Ahab; for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction." (Verses 2-4.) Jezebel, yet alive, was his grandmother; Athaliah, his mother; and Jehoram, king of Israel, his uncle and contemporary. Both kingdoms at that time were under the wicked influence of Jezebel, and it seemed that the influence of Elijah and Elisha was lost; but it was at work, like leaven, and burst forth, like the sun from behind a cloud, in the widespread destruction of Baal worship in both kingdoms. Jehu slew Jehoram, Jehoahaz, Jezebel, all the sons of Ahab, and all the prophets of Baal. Our lesson shows how Athaliah perished and a new era of the true worship of God dawned upon Judah.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. Athaliah, as we have seen, was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel; the wife of Jehoram, king of Judah; the sister of Jehoram, king of Israel; and the mother of Ahaziah. When she "saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal," including her own grandchildren. (2 Kings 11: 2; 2 Chron. 22: 10, 11.) "The seed royal" were those who could lay any claim to the kingdom. This was a custom then with wicked and ambitious rulers. Athaliah's husband, as we have seen, slew all his brethren. She slew her every possible rival, that she might have undisturbed possession of the kingdom. In her proud, wordly ambition she was unwilling to retire to private life; and to accomplish her wicked purpose, human lives, few or many, were nothing to her. This was the only time in the history of the kingdom of Judah that a woman ruled over it, and she did this by usurpation. This shows how far the kingdom had departed from God and how low it had sunk into idolatry, when its subjects for six years would bear the rule of this half heathen, idolatrous woman.

2. Jehosheba (also called "Jehoshabeath"—2 Chron. 22: 11) was the daughter of Jehoram (or Joram) and the sister of Ahaziah. From her righteous conduct, probably Jehosheba was not Athaliah's daughter, since Jehoram had other wives. (2 Chron. 21: 14.) She was the sister of Ahaziah, the aunt of Joash, and the wife of Jehoiada, the priest. (2 Chron. 22: 11.) When Athaliah was destroying "all the seed royal," Jehosheba stole away from the king's sons that were slain Joash, a babe about a year old (2 Kings 11: 3, 21), with his nurse, and hid them "in the bedchamber," or chamber for storing



away beds (see the margin), and he escaped. Joash's mother was Zibiah, of Beersheba. (2 Kings 12: 1.) He was the grandson of Athaliah and the great-grandson of Jezebel. On the one side he descended from David, Solomon, and all Judah's kings; on the other side, from the wicked Ahab and Jezebel; through Jezebel, from the heathen king of Tyre.

3. Joash was "hid in the house of Jehovah six years." He was probably in some of the chambers about the temple proper, in which it was lawful for Jehosheba and Joash's nurse to enter. This was a safe place to conceal the child from the idolatrous queen, for she had no use for the temple of Jehovah; and besides, the high priest had the chief management of its affairs. During this six years "Athaliah reigned over the land."

4. "In the seventh year" of Joash's age "Jehoiada strengthened himself" (2 Chron. 23: 1) and "sent and fetched the captains over hundreds of the Carites ("executioners"—margin) and of the guard, and brought them to him into the house of Jehovah; and he made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of Jehovah, and showed them the king's son." He made an agreement with them, and took an oath of them that they would carry it out; and then he showed them the young Joash. The names of these captains are given in 2 Chron. 23: 1. Jehoiada did his work cautiously and well. These captains "went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the heads of the father's houses of Isreal (the kingdom of Judah), and they came to Jerusalem." Then all together made a covenant that Joash should be made king and should reign, as God had spoken concerning David. (Verses 1-3.) With the work well planned, all were ready now for execution.

5, 6. Jehoiada then told the captains what they should do. These guards had periods of service and periods when they were off duty, one body of troops relieving the other every Sabbath. (See 1 Chron. 9: 17-27.) Jehoiada chose the Sabbath for this important work, it seems, because both companies of guards—that going off duty and that going on—could be utilized (2 Chron. 23: 8), and the gathering together of the people would attract less attention. A third part of this guard was to be stationed at the place "of the watch of the king's house;" a third part, "at the gate Shur;" and a third part, "at the gate behind the guard." "The gate behind the guard" was the principal entrance to the palace, it seems from 2 Kings 11: 19. It is not known what gate "the gate Shur" was. "And be a barrier." These guards were placed, thus that they might "be a barrier" to any attack of an enemy.

7. The guard that went off duty was divided into two companies, and these were to guard the house of Jehovah, and thus protect the king.

8. They were to surround the king and to slay any man who would attempt to break through the ranks to harm the king.

9-11. The captains carried out Jehoiada's directions. All who had not arms were supplied with "the spears and shields that had been King David's, which were in the house of Jehovah." (See 2 Chron. 23: 9.) "David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem." (2 Sam. 8: 7.) The guard, with weapons in hand, stood "from the right side of the house to the left side of the house, along by the altar and the house," thus forming a circle around the king when he came. None were to go into the temple, "save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites; they shall come in, for they are holy: but all the people shall keep the charge of Jehovah." (See 2 Chron. 23: 4-6.)

12. The guards all placed and everything arranged, Jehoiada then "brought out the King's son"—Joash, now seven years old—and crowned him, "gave him the testimony," anointed him and proclaimed him king. "The testimony" given the young king was the book of the law, for this is called "the testimony" (Ex. 25: 16; 31: 18); and God directed that the king should have a copy of the law in a book and should keep it and read it, "that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God, to keep all the words of his law and these statutes, to do them; that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left; to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel." (Deut. 17: 18-20.) All this done, "they clapped their hands, and said, Long live the king." This was the first public announcement of the fact that Joash had been preserved from Athaliah's wicked hand and made king.

13, 14. When Athaliah heard the shout, "Long live the king," and "the noise of the people running and praising the king" (2 Chron. 23: 12), "she came to the people into the house of Jehovah" (she pressed in among those in the temple); saw the young king standing "by the pillar" ("on the platform"—margin), as the manner was" (see 2 Kings 23: 3; 2 Chron. 34: 31); took in the situation at once; and "rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, treason." Thus her brother said, "There is treachery," when Jehu slew him and her son. (2 Kings 9: 23.)

15. Jehoiada commanded that she should be put out of the temple "between the ranks" and killed, and not killed in the temple; Jehoiada also commanded that whosoever followed her should be slain.

16. The guards did as Jehoiada commanded, and "made way for her; and she went by the way of the horses' entry to the king's house; and there was she slain." There was a gate called "the horse gate." By the entrance of this gate Athaliah went to the king's house, where she was slain. (2 Chron. 23: 15.) Then Jehoiada and the people made two covenants—one, between Jehovah and the king and the people; one, between the king and the people. All covenanted to be true to God and the king. Then all the people went to the house of Baal, destroyed it and all its altars and images, and slew Mattan, the priest of Baal; then the young king, accompanied by the guard, was removed from the temple to the king's house and placed on the throne of the kings. "So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet." (2 Kings 11: 17-20.)



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Memory Verse.  
Give the names of the kings of Judah and the length of the reign of each king, down to our lesson.  
Give the names of the kings of Israel, the different dynasties, and the length of the reign of each king, down to the end of Jehu's reign.  
Who was Jezebel?  
What did she introduce into Israel?  
Through what kingdom did it spread?  
What two powerful and conflicting influences were at work?  
How and by whom was Ahab's family exterminated?  
How did Jezebel die?  
How did Jehu destroy the prophets of Baal?  
In what did he fail?  
How long did he reign?  
Through what generation did his sons reign?  
What period did this cover?  
With whom did Jehoshaphat form an alliance?  
Whom did his son, Jehoram, marry?  
What kind of a woman was Athaliah?  
What was Jehoram's character?  
What sins did he commit?  
How long did he reign?  
What did he suffer on account of his sins?  
How did he die?  
Who succeeded him?  
How long did he reign?  
What was his character?  
Of whom did he seek counsel?  
Who virtually ruled both kingdoms?  
How did Jehoahaz die?  
Who were his mother, grandmother, and uncle?  
1 When Jehoahaz was slain, what did Athaliah do?  
Why did she do this?
- How long did she reign?  
Why was she suffered to reign at all?  
2 Who was Jehosheba?  
What did she do in order to preserve "seed royal" for the throne of David?  
Where was Joash hid?  
Who was Joash's mother?  
What different blood flowed in his veins?  
3 How long was Joash hid?  
Why was he hid in the house of Jehovah?  
4 Who was Jehoiada?  
How did he proclaim Joash king?  
How did he strengthen himself?  
What did he first have these captains to do?  
Whom did he then show to them?  
Where and for what purpose were they then sent?  
When all came to Jerusalem, what covenant did they make?  
5, 6 On what day did Jehoiada arrange to proclaim Joash king?  
Why on this day?  
How were the guards arranged?  
7 How was the temple guarded?  
8 What should be done to any one who should attempt to break through the ranks to the king?  
9-11 What did the captains do?  
How were those supplied with arms who had none?  
How were the guards arranged to protect Joash when he came out?  
Who were not to go into the temple?  
12 What was done next?  
What was "the testimony"?  
Why was it given to Joash?  
What then did the people shout?  
13, 14 What did Athaliah do?  
15 What did Jehoiada command to be done with her?  
What should be done to any one who should undertake to defend her?  
10 Where was she slain?  
State, in order, the acts of the people after this, as given in verses 17-20.

## EASTER

Those who select the subjects for these lessons have selected "The First Easter," or "Why we observe Easter" as the subject for an "Easter lesson;" but they should know there is no such thing in the Bible as "Easter" and "Easter services." Such error should not be taught, and we prefer to give the lesson which is in the order of the other lessons. But for the benefit of those who study these lessons the origin of Easter is given.

Humanity seems prone to celebrate noted events and marked epochs. It has sought in vain to discover the birthday of Jesus in order to celebrate it. Human nature seems prone also to neglect and to reject God's requirements and to institute ways and laws of its own. It honors God to obey him and to follow trustfully his wisdom; it is self-glorification to follow human ways and human wisdom. On fasts and feasts George P. Fisher, in his "Church History," says: "Fasts, at first voluntary, came to be ordained by church law. The Christian festivals related to Christ, and commemorated the principal events of his life, with his death, resurrection, and ascension to glory. . . . The first yearly festival generally observed was Easter, standing in the room of the ancient passover. . . . After Easter followed Pentecost, lasting for fifty days, and commemorating the glorification of Jesus.

"Later the fortieth day was kept as a memorial to his ascension. About the end of this period [the beginning of the fourth century] two new festivals came in. One was Epiphany, originating in the East, not improbably with Jewish Christians, and commemorating the baptism of Christ; the other was Christmas, a festival of Roman origin, taking the place of the heathen festival in honor of the sun, or of the deity bearing that name, which was celebrated at the winter solstice, or on December 25, the time erroneously assigned for the solstice in the Julian calendar." (Pages 64, 65.) This was during the period 100-313. During the next period, 313-390, he says: "Friday continued to be kept in memory of Christ's passion . . . The first feast of the year was Epiphany, the manifestation, which in the East connected itself with Christ's baptism; while in the West, where it appeared later, it commemorated the coming of the wise men and the first exhibition of miraculous power in Cana.

"Christmas originated in the West, and from there passed over into the Eastern churches. Many Christians still took part in the heathen festival of New Year's. To put an end to this practice a fast was proclaimed at this time, and was gradually developed into the festival of Christ's circumcision." (Pages 118, 119.) Easter by this time had grown into "the great religious anniversary of the year," "with its associated feasts."

A period of forty days' fasting preceded it. "The festival began with a Palm Sunday. At that time, to increase the thanksgiving of the people, the emperor was accustomed to publish special decrees of mercy. On Thursday the Lord's Supper was joyously celebrated, without the usual fasting, in commemoration of its original institution. Good Friday was kept with great solemnity, not even the kiss of peace being allowed. Then came the Sabbath (Saturday) before Easter. On that day many were baptized and clothed in white robes. In the evening the people, with torches in their hands, filled the churches, where services were held until dawn. The Easter celebration was concluded, after the manner of the Jewish passover, on the eighth day, 'White Sunday.' Then the baptized laid aside their white robes and appeared with the rest of the church."



"The festival season was prolonged from 'White Sunday' to the day of Pentecost." (Page 119.) All this shows how error crept into the pure, simple worship required in the gospel, and was gradually fastened upon the church as the laws of God. The farther the church drifted from the Bible, the more it grew into imposing ceremonies, empty forms, and expensive displays. These historic references are given that all may know the origin of these fasts and feasts. Not one word is said in the Bible about Christmas, Epiphany, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter, or Whitsunday, with their displays and celebrations; yet thousands are more disposed to observe these than they are to go along quietly and without ostentation in the humble and simple worship of God. These make a display of piety and righteousness. God does not require us to celebrate the birth of Christ, his circumcision, his baptism, his first miracle, and his ascension.

We are to celebrate his resurrection in so far only as we meet upon the first day of the week to break bread, and that is done on one Sunday as much as on another, and every Sunday alike. Celebrating it on Easter with special services and ceremonies is like eating the Lord's Supper on Thursday beforehand. "The name 'Easter' also comes from Ostara, goddess of the morning light, or of the return of the sun in the spring." (Fisher's "Church History," page 145.) The word is found improperly in Acts 12: 4 of the Authorized Version, but very properly in the Revised Version it is called the "passover." The observance of Easter demonstrates another thing: how that bitter strife and contentions arise over things not in the gospel. At first there was a long and bitter contention between the Jewish and Gentile Christians over the proper time to observe Easter.

This controversy was settled by the Council of Nice (325), one cause of which was to settle this controversy. But later another bitter controversy arose between the British Church and the Roman Church about the calculation of the time of observing Easter, and this was finally settled in favor of Roman rule. It is strange that, after being led out of all these things and much more, people manifest such a desire to return to them. Look at the Easter services of today! Christians should discourage everything that looks toward special services, preparations, and displays on this day. The surest and most effectual way to prevent any corruption of the worship of God or any departures from it is to oppose them in their incipency.



## LESSON III—APRIL 16

**THE LOVE OF JOASH FOR GOD'S HOUSE—2 Kings 11: 21-12: 16. Print 7-15**

2 KINGS 12. 7 Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and for the other priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore take no more money from your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house.

8 And the priests consented that they should take no more money from the people, neither repair the breaches of the house.

9 But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of Jehovah: and the priests that kept the threshold put therein all the money that was brought into the house of Jehovah.

10 And it was so, when they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags and counted the money that was found in the house of Jehovah.

11 And they gave the money that was weighed out into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of Jehovah: and they paid it out to the carpenters and the builders, that wrought upon the house of Jehovah.

12 And to the masons and the hewers of stone, and for buying timber and hewn stone to repair the breaches of the house of Jehovah, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it.

13 But there were not made for the house of Jehovah cups of silver, snuffers, basins, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that was brought into the house of Jehovah.

14 For they gave that to them that did the work, and repaired there-with the house of Jehovah.

15 Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to give to them that did the work; for they dealt faithfully.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of Jehovah (Ps. 122: 1.)

*Time*—About B. C. 856.

*Place*—Jerusalem.

*Persons*—Joash, Jehoiada and the other priests, and the workmen.

*Memory Verse*—Verse II.

*Devotional Reading*—Ephesians 2: 19-22.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., April 12.—David plans to build the temple.—2 Sam. 7: 1-13 Tu.—Solomon built the temple.—1 Kings 6: 1-14. Wed.—God dwells in his temple.—2 Chron. 5: 13, 14. Th.—Joash repairs the temple.—2 Chron. 24. Fr.—Longing for the worship of God.—Ps. 84. Sat.—Jesus cleansed the temple.—John 2: 13-17; the second time.—Matt. 21: 12, 13. Su.—God is in his church, the temple, now.—Eph. 2: 19-22.

**INTRODUCTION****I. A Covenant With Jehoram**

Under the king Jehoram (another form of "Joram") and Jehoahaz (also called "Ahaziah"), and the wicked queen, Athaliah, Baal worship flourished throughout Judah, as it flourished throughout the kingdom of Israel under Ahab and Jezebel. It became the popular and fashionable religion. We can easily see what an influence it had for kings and queens to adopt it and maintain it. Many now have the desire to make the worship of God popular and fashionable. A temple of Baal, with altars and images, was erected in Jerusalem (2 Kings 11: 18); and the temple of God, forsaken, had fallen into decay and had been robbed to enrich this temple of Baal. "For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of Jehovah did they bestow upon the Baalim." (2 Chron. 24: 7.)

This was a most sinful and sad state of affairs. As we have learned, as soon as Jehoiada had made Joash king, he and the people made a covenant to be God's people. Then they "went to the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in



pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of Jehovah." (2 Kings 11: 17, 18.) In their oppressions and great deliverances the people readily and solemnly agreed to be God's people and to obey his commandments. (See Ex. 24: 1-8; 2 Chron. 15: 1-15.)

## II. The Worship of God Restored—"As it is Written"

Jehoiada restored God's worship by appointing "the officers [or "offices"—margin] of the house of Jehovah under the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of Jehovah, to offer the burnt offerings of Jehovah, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, according to the order of David," etc. (See 2 Chron. 23: 18, 19.) The only way to worship God acceptably is "as it is written." When Hezekiah restored the worship of God, he did it "as it is written" (2 Chron. 30: 5); when Josiah restored the worship of God, he did it "as it is written" (2 Kings 23: 21); when Ezra restored the worship of God, he did it "as it is written" (Neh. 8: 1, 2, 14); and to worship God acceptably now, we must worship "as it is written" in the New Testament (see 1 Cor. 4: 6; 2 John 9). Jehoiada directed affairs and was virtually king before Joash became old enough to assume control and management of the kingdom. "Joash was seven years old when he began to reign; and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Zibiah, of Beersheba.

"And Joash did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah all the days of Jehoiada then priest. And Jehoiada took for him two wives; and he begat sons and daughters." (2 Chron. 24: 1-3.) "Howbeit the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the high places." (2 Kings 12: 3.) Altars were built on elevated places, such as mounds, hilltops, and mountains. These were called "high places." On such places altars were erected for the worship of God and for idols. It was against God's order for worshipers to erect altars on such places for his worship after the erection of the temple, or "house of Jehovah," in Jerusalem. (Be sure to read Deut. 12: 1-14; see also the article on "High places" in Smith's Bible Dictionary.) Jehu had been king over Israel seven years when Joash was made king, and his zeal in destroying Baalism in Israel no doubt stimulated Jehoiada and Joash and had a good influence over Judah.

## III. Comment on Verses 4-6 Necessary to an Understanding of Preparations for Repairing the Temple

4. "Jehoash" is another form of "Joash." "Joash was minded to restore the house of Jehovah." (2 Chron. 24: 4.) He was now grown, and understood and felt his responsibilities. Under Jehoiada's influence, he was zealous and enthusiastic for the right. As we shall learn after Jehoiada died and Joash came under different influences, he zealously tore down the very work he had built, stripped the temple of God of its vessels and gold to give to his enemy, and turned from God to worship idols. There are people today like Joash. They work well and zealously for the truth and right when under good influences; but under other influences, they are zealous for error and wrong. They belong to that class of hearers in the parable of the sower who receive the word with joy, but have no root in themselves, or stability of character, and fall away under temptation. Some now do well under favorable surroundings, but fail under adverse circumstances and persecution.



Joash saw the dilapidated condition of the temple of God and determined to repair it. So far as the record states, he was the first one to call attention to this much-needed work. He called the priests and Levites together and sent them out into the cities of Judah to collect money of all the people to repair the temple. To them he called it "the house of your God," to make them feel their responsibility for the work. He did this "from year to year"—that is until enough had been collected. In his zeal he told them to "hasten the matter." (See 2 Chron. 24: 5.)

This money was to be gathered from three sources:

(1) "Money of the hallowed things that is brought into the house of Jehovah"—that is, things dedicated to Jehovah, including "the money of every one that passeth the numbering." (Margin.) Moses put a tax of half a shekel on every man twenty years old and over, when the children of Israel were numbered, as "a ransom for his soul;" and this was appointed "for the service of the tent of meeting." (See Ex. 30: 11-16; 2 Chron. 24: 6.) This was a yearly tax, and was now used for the temple service.

(2) "The money of the persons for whom each man is rated"—that is, money for vows and the redemption of the first born. (Lev. 27: 1-25; Num. 18: 15, 16.)

(3) "All the money that it cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of Jehoah"—that is, freewill offerings. The means offered to build the tabernacle were freewill offerings. Moses said, "Whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring" the offering; and "every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing," brought it. (See Ex. 35.) In preparing material for the temple at Jerusalem, David gave abundantly of his means in his love for the house of God; and the princes, the captains, and the people rejoiced and "offered willingly." (1 Chron. 29: 1-9.)

God's people now must give cheerfully and freely, "not grudgingly, or of necessity." (2 Chron. 9: 7.) Only the cheerful, freewill offering blesses the giver and is acceptable to God.

5. "Every man from his acquaintance." The priests went, each where he was acquainted, to do this work. They could accomplish more among their acquaintances than among strangers. "And [with this money] they shall repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found." The walls were cracked, stones were crumbling, timbers were decaying, the metal had been stripped off, and the sacred vessels had been placed in the temple of Baal. The temple had been standing over a hundred years. It was falling to pieces, not because of age, but because of neglect. The work was committed to these priests because they would naturally be supposed to be greatly interested in it. The sequel shows that they were not. They had become lukewarm, through the idolatry of the kings and the people; they had grown corrupt; and had used the money they did collect, it seems, upon themselves. (2 Kings 12: 7, 8.)

#### IV. The Priest's Neglect

6. "In the three and twentieth year of king Joash," who was then thirty years old, these priests had not repaired the house. We have no way of knowing just how long this was since the king first commanded them to do it; but it must have been several years, for they were to collect this money year by year until they had enough. "How-being the Levites hastened it not." (2 Chron. 24: 5.) They were neglectful and dilatory, sordid and corrupt. They themselves were partially supported by this redemption money, of which mention has



been made (Num. 18: 14-19); and it has been suggested that they were slow to use what they considered due themselves in repairing the temple for the public good. Be this true, money from other sources was not for their support; and since they were sent out to collect it for repairing the temple, it could in no sense be considered due them. During the prevalence of idolatry the temple revenues must have fallen off considerably, and these priests felt it.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Honest Care of Others' Money

7. Did these priests appropriate this money to their own use? The king called Jehoiada and the other priests and said: "Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore take no more money from your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house?" "And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the tax of Moses the servant of Jehovah, and of the assembly of Israel, for the tent of the testimony?" (2 Chron. 24: 6.) The Levites served the priests, and the king reproved the priests for not requiring this work of them. If these priests had not appropriated this money to their own use, they had not yet delivered it for the purpose for which they had collected it, and it became necessary to take this work out of their hands. Jehoiada, though a righteous and good man, had not been zealous in prosecuting the work. He was the high priest and "chief" over this work, and was expected to look after it. It has been suggested that, since he was a righteous man, he had some good reasons for not pushing the work under the arrangements then existing. As we shall learn, when the plan for collecting the money was changed, the people gave more liberally and the work went smoothly on. "Now therefore take no more money from your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house." These priests were stopped from collecting money and were directed to deliver what they had collected to be used for the purpose for which they had collected it.

8. "And the priests consented that they should take no more money from the people, neither repair the breaches of the house." They consented to this change of plan—that is, that collecting the money for repairing the temple and the charge of the work itself should be taken out of their hands. From this agreement it seems that there was no real intended dishonesty and embezzlement on the part of these priests. A difference was made between the money due them and that contributed for repairing the temple. "The money for the trespass offerings, and the money for the sin offerings, was not brought into the house of Jehovah: it was the priests'." (2 Kings 12: 16; see also Lev. 4: 24, 29; 5: 15-18; 7: 7; Num. 18: 15-19.) This mixture of matters did not work well, and it became necessary to change the plan and men and to make a distinction between the purposes for which the offerings were made. People like to know, and should know, for what purposes they contribute money and that it will be so applied. On this point Paul says: "For we take thought for things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." He directed that all money contributed by churches for the poor saints should be committed into the hands of men approved by the churches, that no suspicion of any misappropriation of funds could be placed upon him by any man. (2 Cor. 8: 18-21; see also 1 Cor. 16: 3, 4.)



## II. Precaution Against Dishonesty

9. "But Jehoiada the priest took a chest [“so the king commanded”—2 Chron. 24: 8], and bored a “hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, or the right side as one cometh into the house of Jehovah.” “Without at the gate of the house of Jehovah.” (2 Chron. 24: 8.) It was without the gate or door, of the court of the priests and on the right side of the altar; the altar was in front of the holy place. The chest was entirely covered, with a hole in the lid only sufficiently large to admit the money, and the lid must have been locked or securely fastened down. The money, therefore, could not be touched except by the officers who had it in charge. All the people could readily see that the priests could not tamper with it and that it would be applied to repairing the house. In this way the offerings for the priests and the offerings for the temple were separated, and all saw that their contributions would be used for the purpose for which they were made. When this arrangement had been made, “they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in for Jehovah the tax of Moses the servant of God laid upon Israel in the wilderness. And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end.” (2 Chron. 9, 10, 24, ) They gave joyfully. “The priests that kept the threshold,” whose business it was, received and put the money into the chest.

10. When it became full, these priests who had it in charge notified the king’s secretary and the high priest, who weighed the money, put it up in bags (so much in a bag), and returned the chest to its place. “Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance.” (2 Chron. 24: 11.) Money was not coined, but weighed (2 Kings 12: 11); and when they had put so much in a bag, they counted the bags. It is the custom yet in the East for governments, when handling large amounts of money, to put so much in a bag and seal it with the government seal; then every bag passes current for the sum it contains.

11, 12. The officers who had it in charge gave the money in the bags as it had been weighed into the hands of those who had the oversight of the work, “and they paid it out” to the carpenters, masons, and other workmen, and for all material necessary to repair the house. (See 2 Chron. 24: 12.)

13, 14. “But there were not made for the house of Jehovah” these cups, implements, and other vessels of this money, which was contributed and used for repairing the house, until they had “set up the house of God in its state, and strengthened it”; then of the rest of the money these things were made. (See 2 Chron. 24: 13, 14.)

## III. Honest Workmen

15. “Moreover they reckoned not with the men [those who had the oversight of the work and who paid out the money to the workmen and for the material]; . . . for they dealt faithfully.” They were honest and trustworthy. The bags of money, as they had been weighed, were turned over to these men without bond or reckoning, because they were faithful and honest. All men should be just as honest, dutiful, and faithful now. To be a Christian, with all other good qualities, is to be honest and trustworthy.

## IV. The Sad Ending of Joash

This good work of Joash had a sad ending. He “did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him” (2 Kings 12: 2)—that is, so long as Jehoiada



lived. Jehoiada died at the age of one hundred and thirty years; and he was buried "in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, and toward God and his house." (2 Chron. 24:15, 16.)

After the death of Jehoiada, Joash readily yielded to evil influences; and he and the princes of Judah forsook the house of Jehovah and "served the Asherim and the idols." God sent prophets to warn them, "but they would not give ear." Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, was moved by the Spirit of God to warn the people against further transgression, and Joash commanded him to be stoned. This was base ingratitude to Jehoiada, who had saved his life. He killed the son of the priest who saved his life.

Jesus mentions the martyrdom of one Zachariah (Matt. 23: 34, 35) —whether this Zechariah or not, we may not be able to determine. Joash took all these vessels which he and other kings had dedicated to the service of God and gave them to Hazael, king of Syria (2 Kings 12: 17, 18), who invaded Judah, destroyed the princes and people, and carried away much spoil. Joash's servants conspired against him and slew him, and he was buried "in the city of David, but . . . not in the sepulchers of the kings." (See 2 Chron. 24: 17-27.) The temple of God at Jerusalem, which different kings at different times repaired and which was rebuilt after the Babylonian captivity, was a type of the church, or house, of God on earth now. This house of God in many places now needs repairing and strengthening. Restoration is needed wherever any departure has been made from the New Testament and its order of worship.

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
 Did you read all the references?  
 Repeat the Golden Text.  
 Give the time, place, and persons.  
 Repeat the Memory Verses.  
 Before Joash's reign, what had become the fashionable religion of Judah and Israel?  
 What do some strive now to make of the worship of God?  
 For what had a temple been built in Jerusalem?  
 What had befallen the house of God?  
 What had Athaliah's sons done?  
 What did Jehoiada and the people do to this temple of Baal?  
 What covenant did they make?  
 How alone could God's worship then be restored?  
 How alone now can God be acceptably worshiped?  
 How old was Joash when he began to reign and how long did he reign?  
 What were not taken away?  
 What were these "high places?"  
 Where did God direct his people, after the erection of Solomon's temple, to worship him in making their offerings and sacrifices?  
 What did Jehu do for Israel?  
 4 What did Joash determine to do?  
 What did he tell the priests to do?  
 From what three sources were they to gather this money?  
 5 To whom were the priests to go for this money?  
 What then were they to do with it?  
 What was the condition of the temple?  
 How long had it been standing?  
 6 How old was Joash now?  
 How long had it been since he directed the priests to go at this work?  
 How had they succeeded?  
 Why had they not accomplished much or done the work assigned them?  
 7 What had they done with the money they had collected?  
 What directions did the king give them and Jehoiada?  
 8 To what did these priests consent?  
 Between what offerings was a difference made?  
 What should people know?  
 What point did Paul guard?  
 9 How did the king then command Jehoiada to proceed to raise the money for repairing the temple?  
 What assurance would this give the people?  
 What proclamation was then made?  
 What was the result?  
 10 What was done when the chest became full?  
 What is yet a custom in the East in putting up money?  
 11, 12 To whom did these officers give the money?  
 What did these men do with it?  
 13, 14 Why were not cups and other vessels of the temple made of this money at first?  
 When were these things made of the money?  
 15 Why was no reckoning made with those who had the oversight of the work?  
 What should all do now?  
 How long did Joash remain faithful to God?  
 How old was Jehoiada?  
 Where was he buried?  
 Relate the facts, as they occurred, of Joash's departure from God after Jehoiada's death?  
 How did Joash die?  
 Where was he buried?



## LESSON IV—APRIL 23

**UZZIAH'S PRIDE AND PUNISHMENT—2 Chron. 26: 1-21**  
**Print 26: 3-5, 15-21**

2 CHRONICLES 26. 3 Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign; and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Jechiliah, of Jerusalem.

4 And he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, according to all that his father Amaziah had done.

5 And he set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the vision of God; and as long as he sought Jehovah, God made him to prosper.

15 And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by skilful men, to be on the towers and upon the battlements, wherewith to shoot arrows and great stones. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong.

16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly; and he trespassed against Jehovah his God; for he went into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of Jehovah, that were valiant men:

18 and they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It pertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto Jehovah, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from Jehovah God.

19 Then Uzziah was wroth; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy brake forth in his forehead before the priests in the house of Jehovah, beside the altar of incense.

20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out quickly from thence; yea, himself hastened also to go out, because Jehovah had smitten him.

21 And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a separate house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of Jehovah: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Pride goeth before destruction,

And a haughty spirit before a fall. (Prov. 16:18.)

*Time*—Uzziah's reign was from B.C. 808-9 to B.C. 756-7. (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

*Place*—Temple in Jerusalem.

*Persons*—Uzziah, the high priest, and eighty other priests.

*Memory Verse*—Proverbs 11:2.

*Devotional Reading*—Proverbs 16:18-25.

*Reference Material*—Numbers 12: 1-15; Deuteronomy 8:11-14; 2 Kings 5:20-27; 2 Chronicles 25; Jeremiah 9:23, 24; Daniel 4:28-33; Matthew 23:8-12; James 4:6; Revelation 3:17-19.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Apr. 17.—A godly king.—2 Chron. 26: 1-10. Tu.—Pride and punishment.—2 Chron. 26: 11-21. Wed.—The story retold.—2 Kings 15: 1-7. Th.—Deceived through drink.—Prov. 20: 1-11. Fr.—Warning against pride.—Deut. 8: 11-20. Sat.—A covetous servant punished.—2 Kings 5: 20-27. Su.—The grace of humility.—Prov. 16: 18-25.

**INTRODUCTION**

Joash was succeeded by his oldest son, Amaziah, who reigned twenty-nine years. He did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, but not with a perfect heart, for later in his life he worshiped idols. "To do that which is right in the eyes of Jehovah" is to obey him implicitly. God knows what is right and teaches what is right; whatever he teaches is right. It fills one with sadness to read that a king started his reign and prospered by doing that which God commanded and then proved unfaithful and failed and brought suffering



and shame to himself and people by turning to idols or by seeking the favor of God's enemies. Amaziah at first slew the murderers of his father, but, being just, he spared their children. He "hired a hundred thousand mighty men of valor out of Israel" to help him in war; but, reproved by a prophet of God, he dismissed them and relied upon God for the victory. His success, idolatry, pride, downfall, and death are recorded in 2 Chron. 25. He was succeeded by his son and the subject of this lesson—Uzziah.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### Uzziah

3-5. Pride, as we shall see further on, was the ruin of Uzziah. Uzziah is also called "Azariah" (2 Kings 14: 21), but both names mean almost the same. "Uzziah" means "might of Jehovah;" and "Azariah," "whom Jehovah aids." Uzziah was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-two years. He was chosen king by "all the people." It has been suggested for this reason that he was not Amaziah's oldest son. The most important facts in all his history are stated as follows: "And he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. And he set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the vision of God: and as long as he sought Jehovah, God made him to prosper."

He followed his father's good example, but not his bad example of going into idolatry. God has promised to all that whoever seeks him with his whole heart shall prosper. It is noteworthy that "as long as" Uzziah sought God, "God made him to prosper." He had a good guide in Zechariah, the prophet, "who had understanding in the vision of God." Zechariah's name does not occur elsewhere in the Bible. He is not the author of the book of Zechariah. From the mention of the name of Uzziah's mother, Jechiliah, it may be implied that she was a woman of influence and helped to shape his character. Likewise the name of Hezekiah's mother is given. (2 Chron. 29: 1.) Uzziah first built or fortified Elath, called also "Elath" (2 Kings 14: 22), an important place among the Edomites on the eastern arm of the Red Sea. It is mentioned in the following passages: Deut. 2: 8; 2 Sam. 8: 14; 1 Kings 9: 26; 2 Chron. 7: 17; 2 Kings 8: 20; this lesson; and 2 Kings 16: 6. Uzziah waged other successful wars against the people of the south and also against the Philistines on the west. (See verses 1, 2, 6, 7.)

### I. Comment on Verses 8-15—Uzziah's Prosperity

8. The first eight verses of this lesson state the great prosperity of Uzziah. He was contemporary with Jeroboam II, king of Israel. (2 Kings 14: 23.) Israel under Jeroboam II. and Judah under Uzziah enjoyed a period of prosperity which had not been known since the days of Solomon. For a description of the wealth of the rich and the poverty of the poor, the pleasures and sins of Judah and Israel at this time, see Amos 3:6-8; 6:1-6. The "Ammonites gave tribute to Uzziah." These tribes lived on the east of the Jordan. The Ammonites were descendants of Ammon, Lot's son. (Gen. 19: 37, 38.) Uzziah's "name spread abroad even to the entrance of Egypt."

9. He strengthened Jerusalem by building towers at the gates and "at the turning of the wall," mentioned in this verse, and by fortifying them. During the reign of Amaziah the king of Israel



invaded Judah and broke "down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits." (2 Chron. 25: 23.)

10-14. Uzziah further fortified his kingdom by building towers in the wilderness for his sheperds and herdsmen. He "hewed out many cisterns, for he had much cattle." These were both in the lowland and on the tableland. He had also "husbandmen and vinedressers in the mountains and in the fruitful fields." "He loved husbandry." The strength and prosperity of any country depend largely upon the success of agricultural pursuits. He maintained a large and well-equipped army. He had two thousand and six hundred "mighty men of valor," and under them three hundred and seven thousand and five hundred soldiers. These "went out to war by bands." They "made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy." He equipped this army by preparing such armor and weapons of warfare as were used in that time—not such by any means as are now used.

15. He protected Jerusalem with "engines, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and upon the battlements, wherewith to shoot arrows and great stones." These were great then, but nothing compared to the great guns and many ways of destroying life and property now. All this made Uzziah's name famous, and "he was marvelously helped, till he was strong."

## II. Uzziah's Pride and Presumption

16. Prosperity and strength filled Uzziah with pride, and "his heart was lifted up" to his own destruction. His father, Amaziah, smote Edom, and his heart lifted him up to boast and to challenge Israel for a fight. (2 Chron. 25: 19.) "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxed fat, thou art grown thick, thou art become sleek; then he forsook God who made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." (Deut. 32: 15.) Prosperity is frequently more dangerous than adversity. Uzziah disregarded God's commandment that none except the priests should burn incense (Ex. 30: 7, 8; Num. 16: 1-40; 18: 7), and undertook to burn incense upon the altar in the temple. Saul forced himself to offer the burnt offering to his own undoing. (1 Sam. 13: 12-14.) So did Korah and his company. (Num. 16: 1-40.)

17-18. Azariah, the high priest (verse 20), and eighty other priests followed Uzziah into the temple, withstood him, and remonstrated with him that it did not belong to him, but only to the priests, to burn incense, because they were consecrated for this purpose and to go into the sanctuary, and that it would not be to this honor from God to do this.

## III. Uzziah's Punishment

19. This resistance enraged the king, and with censer in hand, he pushed forward to burn the incense, when "the leprosy brake forth in his forehead before the priests in the house of Jehovah, beside the altar of incense." God smote him with leprosy for his transgression, as he smote Miriam (Num. 12: 9-15) and Gehazi (2 Kings 5: 27). Uzziah's sin is parallel with changing God's word or commandments today.

20. When "Azariah the chief priest" and the other priests saw that Uzziah was leprous, they thrust him out of the temple, and he himself hastened to get out, "because Jehovah had smitten him." Why did God not destroy Uzziah as he did Korah and his company? (Num.

16: 1-40.) Uzziah's hastening himself to get out of the temple and not waiting for the priests to drive him out shows that he felt ashamed, and this may be the reason he was not killed.

21. But he was leprous until the day of his death, dwelling in a separate house. It was God's law that lepers should dwell alone. (Lev. 13: 46.) During Uzziah's reign there was an earthquake, mentioned by Amos (1: 1) and Zechariah (14: 5), but we do not know that it occurred at this time. This lawless attempt of Uzziah to burn incense is the only exception to his good reign. His son, Jotham, was placed over his house to judge the people after he became leprous and succeeded him as king when he died. He was buried "in the field of burial which belonged to the kings," but not in the royal sepulchers themselves. (Verse 23; see also 21: 30; 28: 27.)

## QUESTIONS

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Give the subject.<br/>Repeat the Golden Text.<br/>About what king did Lessons V and VI teach?<br/>Who succeeded Joash?<br/>How long did Amaziah reign?<br/>Give the striking features of his character.<br/>What about many kings of Judah fills one with sadness?<br/>Whom did Amaziah slay?<br/>What shows his sense of justice?<br/>Who succeeded him?<br/>3-5 How old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and how long did he reign?<br/>What are the most important facts in his history?<br/>Who was Uzziah's teacher and guide?<br/>Who doubtless also helped to form his character?<br/>What place did he first fortify?<br/>What wars did he wage successfully?<br/>8 State the prosperity of Uzziah.<br/>What is said of his fame?<br/>9 How did he strengthen Jerusalem?<br/>10-14 How did he further fortify his kingdom?</p> | <p>Give the size of his army.<br/>With what was his army equipped?<br/>15 With what was Jerusalem protected?<br/>16 What filled him with pride?<br/>What was his father's ruin?<br/>What is said of Jeshurun?<br/>Who was Jeshurun?<br/>What commandment did Uzziah transgress?<br/>What similar sin did Saul and Korah and his company commit?<br/>17, 18 Who protested against Uzziah's doing this?<br/>What did they say to him?<br/>19 What enraged him, and what did he do?<br/>How did God show his disapproval of this sin?<br/>What other persons were struck with leprosy, and for what sins?<br/>20 When the priests saw the leprosy, what did they do?<br/>What did Uzziah himself do?<br/>21 For how long was he leprous?<br/>Where did he dwell, and why?<br/>Who judged the people until his death?<br/>Who succeeded him?<br/>Where was he buried?</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



## LESSON V—APRIL 30

# ISAIAH'S SUMMONS AND RESPONSE—Isaiah 6: 1-13

## Print 6: 1-8

ISAIAH 6. 1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple.

2 Above him stood the seraphim; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

6 Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar.

7 and he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven.

8 And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Here am I; send me. (Isaiah 6: 8.)

*Time*—The year when Uzziah died—about B.C. 756.

*Place*—The temple at Jerusalem.

*Persons*—Isaiah, the seraphim, and the Lord.

*Memory Verses*—Verses 6-8.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 67:1-7.

*Reference Material*—Genesis 12:1-4; Exodus 3:1 to 4:17; Joshua 1:1-9; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Ezekiel 2:1-7; Matthew 10:5-20; 28:18-19.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Apr. 24.—God calls Isaiah.—Isa. 6: 1-13. Tu.—God calls Abram.—Gen. 12: 1-9. Wed.—God calls Moses.—Exod. 3: 1-12. Th.—God calls Joshua.—Josh. 1: 1-9. Fr.—God calls Jeremiah.—Jer. 1: 4-19. Sat.—Jesus calls his disciples.—Matt. 10: 1-15. Su.—God's help and blessing.—Psa. 67: 1-7.

## INTRODUCTION

### I. Isaiah and the Time of His Prophecies

Why skip in these lessons from the second book of Chronicles to the book of Isaiah? While several books intervene between Chronicles and Isaiah, they do not come in chronological order, and Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of the kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. (Isa. 1: 1.) He was the son of Amoz. He belongs to this period of the national history. Uzziah, during the latter part of whose reign Isaiah began to prophesy, was grandson of Joash, whose history has been studied. Amaziah, son of Joash, succeeded his father and reigned twenty-nine years (2 Kings 14: 1, 2); Uzziah (also called "Azariah"), son of Amaziah, succeeded his father and reigned fifty-two years (2 Kings 15: 1, 2); Jotham reigned sixteen years (verses 32, 33); Ahaz, sixteen years (2 Kings 16: 2); and Hezekiah, twenty-nine years (2 Kings 18: 1, 2). It is not stated at what time in Uzziah's reign Isaiah began his work. "Isaiah must have been an old man at the close of Hezekiah's reign. The ordinary chronology gives B. C. 758 as the date of Jotham's accession (he was viceroy some years before Uzziah's death—2 Chron. 26: 21) and B.C. 698 as the date of Hezekiah's death.

"This gives us a period of sixty years. Since his ministry commenced before Uzziah's death (how long, we know not), supposing him to have been not more than twenty years old when he began to prophesy, he would have been eighty or ninety years old at Manasseh's



accession. Rabbinical tradition says that Isaiah was sawn asunder in the trunk of a tree by order of Manasseh, to which it is supposed that reference is made in Heb. 11: 37." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.) "Isaiah" means "salvation of Jehovah." He says: "Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth in mount Zion." (Isa. 8: 18.)

His wife is called "the prophetess." (Verse 3.) The name of his first son, "Shear-jashub" (Isa. 7: 3), means "a remnant shall return;" the name of his second son, "Maher-shalal-hash-baz" (Isa. 8: 3), means "the spoil speedeth, the prey hasteth." Isaiah sustained to these kings of Judah the same relationship that Elijah and Elisha sustained to the kings of Israel. With these kings of Judah, Joash, Jeroboam II., Zechariah (descendants of Jehu), Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea (the last one) were contemporary. Joash reigned sixteen years; Jeroboam II., forty-one years; Zechariah, six months; Shallum, one month; Menahem, ten years; Pekahiah, two years; Pekah, twenty years; Hoshea, nine years, when the kingdom of Israel was destroyed and the subjects were carried into captivity by the Assyrians. The period of Isaiah's ministry was a critical one. Isaiah was a great prophet. He touched on the destiny of the kingdoms surrounding Judah and Israel, and foresaw beyond the revolutions of kingdoms and the downfall of empires, the coming Savior, whose work and kingdom should surpass all others. For this reason he has been called "the gospel prophet."

## II. Prosperity of Both Kingdoms

Under Uzziah the kingdom of Judah flourished, and he extended it over the country of the Philistines to Elath, on the Red Sea. (2 Kings 14: 22; 2 Chron. 8: 17.)

Lesson IV gives an idea of Uzziah's prosperity. Under Jeroboam II. the kingdom of Israel flourished, and he extended it to "the entrance of Hamath," on the north. (2 Kings 14: 25.) So that the two kingdoms together occupied almost as much territory as the united kingdom did under Solomon. (1 Kings 8: 65.) The kingdoms had never enjoyed so much wealth and worldly greatness since the time of Solomon. With this prosperity, however, came luxury; ease; licentiousness, drunkenness, and immorality of all kinds; idolatry; oppression of the poor; vain confidence in man and a corresponding lack of confidence in God; and with all this was a perfunctory performance of religious ceremonies—a form of godliness without the power.

During this period Amos, Hosea, and Micah prophesied. Amos, who prophesied mostly against Israel, describes the wealth, luxury, ease, and the corruption, debauchery, and other sins of that kingdom, and exhorts all to repentance. These sins rendered Judah, as well as Israel, weak and exposed it to the chastisement of God and invasions of surrounding nations. "In those days (the reign of Jotham) Jehovah began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah." (2 Kings 15: 37; 16: 5, 6.) In Ahaz's reign the Syrians "smote him, and carried . . . a great multitude of captives . . . to Damascus."

The king of Israel, Pekah, also "slew in Judah a hundred and twenty thousand in one day, all of them valiant men: because they had forsaken Jehovah, the God of their fathers." Pekah also "carried away captive . . . two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters," and took "much spoil;" but under the influence of Oded,



"a prophet of Jehovah," these captives were clothed, fed, anointed, and brought (the weak and helpless on asses) to Jericho and sent home. (See 2 Chron. 28: 5-15.) The Philistines from the west invaded Judah. "For Jehovah brought Judah low because of Ahaz," etc. (Verses 18, 19.) The Syrians, too, invaded Judah. (Verses 20-24.)

This gives us some idea of the condition of Judah during the time of Isaiah's ministry and the importance of studying his prophecies in connection with the history of these kings. Isaiah was a great prophet. He touched on the destiny of the kingdoms surrounding Judah and Israel, and he foresaw, beyond the revolutions of kingdoms and the downfall of empires, the coming Savior, whose work and kingdom should surpass all others.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Isaiah's Glorious Vision

1-2. "In the year that king Uzziah died" Isaiah saw this vision. Some think this vision marks the beginning of Isaiah's work as a prophet; but this is hardly probable, because prophets, like other servants of God, grew and developed in their prophetic work from one degree of service to another, and the vision in this chapter shows a high degree of advancement and close relationship to God. Fidelity in little prepares one for the reception of much and for fidelity in that. God gave Isaiah a true insight into the condition of affairs, the cause, and the remedy. He saw it all clearly and felt it keenly. The more righteous he became and the nearer to God he drew, the more heinous and terrible became to him the sins and crimes of his people and the more deeply he felt for them in the awful retribution which overhung them. All that is in the book of Isaiah (2: 1; 6; 8:1; 13:1) was not revealed to him at the same time. As has been stated, he must have advanced as a prophet. If Isaiah prophesied at all during Uzziah's lifetime, this vision was not his call to become a prophet, for it came in the year that Uzziah died. Besides prophesying, he wrote "of the acts of Uzziah" (2 Chron. 26: 22) and "of the acts of Hezekiah" (2 Chron. 32: 32).

This was a glorious vision—the Lord sitting upon a throne in the most holy place in the temple, "high and lifted up," while the skirts of his garments filled the temple, and above him stood the seraphim, each one having six wings. With two wings a seraph covered his face; with two, his feet; and with two he flew. The seraphim, it seems, correspond to the cherubim whose wings overshadowed the mercy seat. (Ex. 25: 10-22; 37: 7-9; 1 Kings 6: 23-28; 2 Chron. 3: 10-14.) From between the two cherubim which were upon the ark of the testimony, above the mercy seat, God gave commandments concerning the children of Israel. (Ex. 23: 22.) The "four living creatures" in Ezekiel's vision had each "four wings;" but in the vision of John on Patmos "the living creatures" had "each one of them six wings." John saw "a throne set in heaven" and these "four living creatures" "round about the throne." (See Rev. 4: 1-8; 5: 6-14; 6: 1, 6; 7: 11; 14: 3; 15: 7; 19: 4.) Some say that covering their faces with two wings showed humility, and covering their feet with two wings showed respect; but I do not know, and care not to guess.

3. The twofold mission of the seraphim was to declare the holiness and praise of Jehovah and to communicate Jehovah's message through Isaiah to the people. (See verse 6.) The "one cried unto another," or spoke alternately, it seems: "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." So said "the four living creatures" in John's vision. (Rev. 4: 8-11.)



4. "And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke." Sinai "quaked greatly" when God came down upon it and spoke. (Ex. 19: 18.) "Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven." (Heb. 12: 26.) The smoke may have been to veil the presence of Jehovah, as "the cloud of the incense" covered the mercy seat when the high priest went into the most holy place. (Lev. 16: 12, 13.) This vision and prophecy, like others, not only referred to the people then, but to Christ and the Jews in his day. John (12: 41) says that in this vision Isaiah spoke of Christ: "These things said Isaiah, because he saw his glory; and he spake of him."

5. Isaiah felt his sinfulness and that he was undone in the presence of God. God said to Moses: "Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live." (Ex. 33: 20.) Different ones saw angels and God's glory; but this filled them with fear and trembling, as in the case of Moses and the children of Israel (Heb. 12: 18-21); Gideon (Judg. 6: 22); Manoah (Judg. 13: 23); Peter, James, and John (Matt. 17: 6; Rev. 1: 17, 18).

6-7. When Isaiah declared that he was "a man of unclean lips" and dwelt "in the midst of a people of unclean lips," one of the seraphim touched his mouth with "a live coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar, and said: Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven."

## II. Isaiah's Response

8. When the Lord said, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah answered, in humility and submission: "Here am I; send me." Samuel when a child, said to Jehovah, "Speak; for thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. 3: 10); and Saul of Tarsus said: "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22: 10). Saul meant not only what should he do in order to be saved from his past sin, but what should he do at all times and that he would do whatever God would have him to do in the future; therefore when God sent him to the Gentiles, he went. (Acts 26: 16-20.) Every one now should manifest the spirit of Isaiah and be as ready to work for the spread of the gospel and to do every other duty.

9-10. These verses contain the message Isaiah was to deliver to the people. It was a sad one indeed. Jesus and Paul frequently quote this passage and apply it to the Jews of their day. Jesus says it was fulfilled by the Jews of his day. (See Matt. 13: 14, 15; Mark 4: 12; Luke 8: 10; John 12: 40; Acts 28: 26, 27; Rom. 11: 8.) The prosperity, luxury, ease, pleasure, fashion, vanity, pride, and evil associations described in chapters 2-4 and referred to in the Introduction closed the eyes and stopped the ears of the people against the truth and the pure worship of God. Their hearts became "fat" and slow and dead to act in obedience to God. God had predicted that when the people had eaten, become full, "waxed fat," they would turn to idols, despise him, and break his covenant (Deut. 31: 20), and Jeshurun, or Israel, "waxed fat, and kicked" (Deut. 32: 15). Jesus says the people closed their eyes, stopped their ears, would not understand with their hearts, and would not turn that he might heal them. (Matt. 13: 15.) It is said that Isaiah closed the eyes, stopped the ears and made fat the hearts of the people because he declared their true condition. This sad message is like Jeremiah's (8: 20) declaration, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved," and Jesus' lamentation over Jerusalem (Matt. 23: 37, 38).



11-13. Isaiah said: "How long?" How long was this sad condition of the people to continue? The response was: "Until cities be waste without inhabitant," "houses" be "without a man," "the land become utterly waste," "Jehovah have removed men far away," "and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land." Even if "a tenth" of the people be left, it in turn shall be eaten up. There should nothing be left only a remnant called "the holy seed," which was "the stock," or substance, like the roots of a terebinth tree and an oak. The terebinth was a small tree of Palestine, from whose stump, when cut down, new branches would spring up. So the remnant left of God's people was like this stump. This condition continued until the Babylonian captivity, until the personal ministry of Jesus on earth, until the final destruction of Jerusalem, and still continues.

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
 Did you read all the references?  
 Repeat the Golden Text.  
 Give the time, place, and persons.  
 Repeat the Memory Verses.  
 Why should we study the prophecies of Isaiah in connection with the history of the kings of Judah?  
 During the times of what kings did he prophesy?  
 Give the length of the reign of each one.  
 What does "Isaiah" mean?  
 What were the names of his sons, and what did these names mean?  
 What kings of Israel were contemporary with these kings of Judah?  
 What was the length of the reign of each one?  
 What was the condition of both kingdoms financially and morally at this time?  
 What prophets were contemporary with Isaiah?  
 Whom did God begin to send against Judah on every side?  
 Why did Pekah return the captives he had taken?  
 Does the Bible make any distinction between home and foreign missions?  
 What is one work of the church?  
 Is any other institution or organization necessary to do this work?  
 What only should be taught in matters of religion?
- When did Isaiah see this vision?  
 Why is it probable that this was not his first call to become a prophet?  
 Why did the sins of Judah appear so heinous and their punishment so inevitable to Isaiah?
  - Describe his vision.  
 Who had similar visions?
  - What was the twofold mission of the seraphim?  
 What did one cry to the other?  
 What did "the four living creatures" that John saw cry?
  - What effect did the voice of him that cried have upon the foundation of the temple?  
 Repeat Heb. 12: 26.  
 For what purpose may have been the smoke?  
 Why say this vision embraced Christ?
  - What effect did the appearance of an angel, or the presence of God, have upon Isaiah and others?  
 What did Isaiah say?
  - What did one of the seraphim do and say?
  - What did the Lord say to Isaiah?  
 What reply did Isaiah make?  
 What did Samuel and Saul of Tarsus say when the Lord spoke to them?  
 What spirit should all manifest today?
  - What message was Isaiah to deliver?  
 To whom do Jesus and Paul frequently apply this message?  
 Describe the condition of the people's eyes, ears, and hearts.  
 What produced this condition?  
 What had God perdicted?  
 Why is it said that Isaiah closed the eyes, stopped the ears, and made the heart of the people gross?  
 Similar to what is this sad message?
  - What question did Isaiah ask?  
 What was the Lord's reply?



## LESSON VI—MAY 7

# ISAIAH'S IDEAL FOR A WORLD AT STRIFE—Isaiah 2: 2-4; 11: 1-9

ISAIAH 2. 2 And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

3 And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.

4 And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

11. 1 And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit.

2 And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah.

3 And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears.

4 but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.

6 And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah. (Isaiah 2:5.)

*Time of Isaiah*—About B.C. 708.

*Place*—Jerusalem.

*Persons*—Isaiah and the people.

*Memory Verse*—Isaiah 2:4.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 46:1-11.

*Reference Material*—Psalm 46; Micah 4: 1-5; Matthew 5: 9; Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 4:8-9.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., May 1.—The gathering of the nations.—Isa. 2: 1-14. Tu.—World peace promised.—Isa. 11: 1-9. Wed.—The coming of the Prince of Peace.—Isa. 9: 1-7. Th.—The givers of peace.—Micah 5: 1-8. Fr.—The peacemaker blessed.—Matt. 5: 1-12. Sat.—Purity and peace.—Gal. 5: 16-5. Su.—God, our refuge.—Psa. 46: 1-11.

## INTRODUCTION

The subject of this lesson is, "Isaiah's Ideal for a World at Strife." Of course, it is understood that God speaks through Isaiah. Isaiah begins his prophecy by saying: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken" (Isa. 1: 2.) So these lessons in Isa. 2: 2-4 and 11: 1-9 are the declarations of Jehovah giving his way of bringing peace and good will to men on earth. This God declares would be brought about through "the Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9: 6, 7.) and his gospel. Jesus is "the Prince of Peace." God is "the God of Peace," the gospel is "the gospel of peace," Christians are "children of peace," and all are commanded to keep the peace.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

## I. "Neither Shall They Learn War Any More"

2. Verses 2-4 of Isa. 2 are almost the same as Micah 4: 1-3. In this verse, and in other places "the latter days" refer to the reign of Christ. "The latter days" used by Peter in quoting the prophecy of Joel concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit "upon all flesh," which began on the first Pentecost after Jesus ascended, refer to the reign of Christ. The temple of Solomon was built on Mount Moriah, and that was literally "the mountain of Jehovah's house," but figuratively and here it represents God's spiritual temple, building, or house. In Christ's day and under him this "mountain" of God's house is "established on the top of the mountains" (or, "at the head," margin) and "exalted above the hills"—that is, it is above all kingdoms and powers, and, as Daniel (2: 44) adds, "shall stand forever."

3. The last prediction of the preceding verse is, "and nations shall flow unto it;" this verse continues this prediction, saying: "And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." This is a prediction of the salvation of the Gentiles. "All peoples" and "many nations" are the Gentiles—the nations of the earth. (See Ps. 22: 27, 28; Jer. 3: 17.) This shows the willingness of the nations to learn and that they invite one another to hear the gospel; that God will reveal his will to all nations and is himself the Teacher. God teaches all nations through Jesus, the great teacher. Jesus sent out his apostles to teach or "make disciples of all the nations" (Matt. 28: 19), to "preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16: 15), and preach "repentance and remission of sins" in his name "unto all the nations beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24: 47.) "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem."

Years before Isaiah and Micah prophesied the law of Moses had gone forth from Sinai; but both declare that in the future from their time—"in the latter days"—the law should go forth from Zion, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. Zion and Jerusalem are the same. Christians have not come unto Mount Sinai, as the Jews of old, but "unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, . . . and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel." (Heb. 12: 18-24.)

When did the law go forth from Zion and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem? "In the latter days." When did they begin? When Christ's reign began. Hence on Pentecost, after Christ's reign began, Peter declared that that which had been predicted should come to pass "in the last days" was being fulfilled. Jesus told the apostles to begin to teach all nations and to preach the gospel to the whole creation from Jerusalem. (See Luke 24: 47, 52; Acts 1: 4, 8.) From Zion the law of Christ (1Cor. 9: 21), "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8: 2), the "law of faith" (Rom. 3: 27), and "the perfect law, the law of liberty" (James 1: 25), went forth, "and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem," when the apostles, baptized in the Holy Spirit, preached that Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God, although crucified by lawless men, had been raised from the dead, exalted to heaven, and made both Lord and Christ; and when they commanded all to believe this and repent and be baptised in the name of Christ unto the remission of their sins with the pro-



mise that they should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and to continue "steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2.) This was preached from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, and must be preached unto the end of time.

4. Through Christ God would judge between great nations and decide concerning "strong nations afar off." Christ convinces the nations of error and sin and has set in operation the true principles of righteousness, justice, and universal peace. Jesus is "the Prince of peace." His birth was celebrated by the song of "the heavenly host:" "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." (Luke 2: 14.) When all nations follow Christ, peace will prevail. Under his reign all nations would "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks," would not "lift up sword against" one another, neither would "they learn war any more." Christians—all subjects of Christ's kingdom—do not study war and how to wage war.

Christians cannot fight. They lay aside their weapons of carnal warfare so soon as they become Christians. The weapons of their warfare are not carnal and they do not war according to the flesh. (2 Cor. 10: 3.) They are commanded to love their enemies, to pray for all who persecute or harm them, to avenge not themselves, and to do good for evil. Christians cannot send their children to military schools where war is taught and the spirit of war is breathed. Christianity is opposed wholly to taking vengeance, to bloodshed, and to the spirit of the world. War is barbarous. General Sherman said: "War is hell." The nations which are called "Christian" yet learn and wage war. They have their military schools and standing armies in which their young men are trained for war. They spend great sums of money in preparing and in maintaining preparations for war. One battleship costs ten million dollars, and costs one million a year to operate it.

To fire one of the biggest guns one time costs seven hundred dollars. Think of the cost of many such ships and guns! The cost of war otherwise is most enormous. The greatest cost is the loss of lives, the making of widows and orphans, the devastation wrought, the loss of morality and the loss of souls. But there is some hope, and Christians rejoice in all efforts to settle differences between nations by arbitration and without bloodshed.

Many disputes between nations have already been settled by peace conferences, and God speed the day when literally nations will learn war no more and all the weapons and munitions of war shall be turned into useful agricultural implements! The hospitals, orphanages, school houses, colleges, universities, etc., which the money spent in building warships, maintaining standing armies, and carrying on war will build cannot be estimated. If some of this money were spent in advancing the agricultural pursuits of the country and in otherwise developing it, what a vast improvement this would be over devastation and bloodshed. When this peaceful and glorious consummation shall have been reached by the nations of earth, it will be due to the influence of Christ. Christianity is the great power and mighty influence which is lifting the nations of the earth up—cannibals out of cannibalism; heathen out of heathenism; barbarians out of barbarism; and civilized and Christian (?) nations, with their standing armies, warships, and other costly preparations for war and bloodshed, out of their carnage into good will and universal peace. Christianity is the greatest thing in the world.



## II. The "Shoot," or "Branch"

1. "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit." In the preceeding chapter Isaiah foretells the invasion of the Assyrian army, the chastisement of God's people for their sins, the impious vaunting of Sennacherib, and the destruction of the great Assyrian host as a vast forest is cut down. In contrast with this forest, the "shoot," or "branch," of this verse is represented as coming forth from the stump and roots of an old tree; but, a twig and tender plant to begin with, it will become fruitful. This "shoot" will come from "the stock of Jesse" and this "branch" from "his roots."

There can be no doubt that this refers to Jesus, for Paul says: "And again, Isaiah saith, There shall be the root of Jesse, and he that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles; on him shall the Gentiles hope." (Rom. 15: 12.) We know that David was the son of Jesse (Ruth 4: 18-22.) and Jesus was "of the seed of David." (2 Tim. 2: 8; see also Matt. 1: 1.) He says of himself: "I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star." (Rev. 5: 5; Rev. 22: 16.) He is the "tender plant" and "root out of a dry ground" mentioned in Isa. 53: 2. Jeremiah (23: 5) says: "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land." (See also Jer. 33: 15, 16; Isa. 4: 2; Zech. 3: 8; 6: 12, 13; Acts 13: 23.)

Sometimes, on account of sin, the people of God were so scattered and reduced that they were represented by only the stump of a tree cut to the ground, or even a root in a dry land; but there was always a remnant. Clark's "Commentary" says: "We have here a remarkable instance of that method so common with the prophets, and particularly with Isaiah, of taking occasion, from the mention of some great temporal deliverance, to launch out into the display of the spiritual deliverance of God's people by the Messiah; for that this prophecy relates to the Messiah we have the expressed authority of St. Paul. (Rom. 15: 12.)" We must see this. Brethren make a great mistake when they make these many references of the prophets to deliverance through Christ apply to some temporal deliverance and restoration of the Jews to temporal blessings and power in Jerusalem.

## III. His Spirit and Judgment

2-5. These verses give the Spirit and judgment of this One to come from the family of Jesse. His Spirit was to be "the Spirit of Jehovah," "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah." Read Isa. 42: 1-4 and see its fulfillment in Jesus in Matt. 12: 18-21; read Isa. 61: 1-3 and find its fulfillment in Luke 4: 18-20.

God sent the Spirit upon Jesus when he was baptized, and by this John the Baptist was to know he was the Christ. (Matt. 3: 16; John 1: 32-34.) God gave the Spirit without measure to Jesus. (John 3: 34, 35.) Jesus has the power and wisdom of God, the righteousness and justice of God, the love and mercy and tenderness of God. His teaching and wonderful works on earth, his gentleness and grace, his reign in heaven, show his wisdom and power, his grace and godly fear. His delight was "in the law of Jehovah." In his prayers, tears, and agony he was "heard for his godly fear." (Heb. 5: 7-9.)

All Christians must cultivate thankfulness and endeavor to "offer service well pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is



a consuming fire." (Heb. 12: 28, 29.) God says: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." (Isa. 66: 2.) People who fear Jehovah, who respect his word, who honor his will, come into his presence with awe, are afraid to disobey him, delight in his service, are the ones he blesses and saves. There is to-day a widespread lack of the fear of God in the land even with his professed children. With the Spirit of Jehovah, delighting in the fear of Jehovah, this One would judge according to the righteousness, equity, and faithfulness of Jehovah. He would not be partial, would not respect persons, would "not judge after the sight of his eyes" or "decide after the hearing of his ears." Righteousness and faithfulness would be his girdle.

The loose, flowing garments worn made it necessary to wear a girdle in order to bind the garments about the body out of the way of action. To have the loins girded was to be ready for action. (Luke 12: 35.) Hence the girdle represents activity and strength. This is a frequent figure of the Bible. Christians as soldiers ready for action, are to have their loins girded with truth (Eph. 6: 13-15), the loins of their mind girded (Pet. 1: 13), and to gird themselves with humility (1 Pet. 5: 5). Girded with righteousness and faithfulness, this judge would be jealous and active and strong in executing justice and doing his work. It is encouraging and rejoicing to know that Jesus, and not man, judges us; and he judges us, not in the prejudice and partiality, presumption and ignorance of men, but in the righteousness, equity, and faithfulness of God.

Both the poor and meek, the arrogant and rich, will be judged alike. In this judgment the earth will be smitten with "the rod" of the mouth of the Judge, and "the wicked" will be slain with "the breath of his lips." "The rod of his mouth and breath of his lips" represent his word, which pronounces the judgment and doom of the wicked.

#### IV. The Reign of Peace

6-9. The figures of these verses, representing the effects of the peace which all enjoy who come under the reign of Christ, are strong and beautiful. The wolf and leopard will not destroy the lamb and the kid, but all shall lie down together: the young lion and calf and fatling shall dwell together; "a little child shall lead them;" "the cow and the bear shall feed" together; "their young ones shall lie down together," and the lion shall become tame and no longer feed upon other animals, but "shall eat straw like the ox." Under "the gospel of peace" and in the church of Christ, those who were wolves and leopards, bears and lions, preying in selfishness, through greed for gain and through fraud and oppression, upon the weak and helpless, are mild and gentle, kind and tender, just and righteous, merciful and gracious.

Much is said in the New Testament about being at peace, keeping the peace, making peace, pursuing peace, and being ruled by peace. But more, in the kingdom of peace one as tender and helpless as "the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp," and as "the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den," and not be hurt. Those who are asps and adders in the world, filled with poison and death, become harmless and helpful in their conversion to Christianity. No advantage will be taken of, no harm will be done to, no fraud will be practiced upon the babes and weaklings, the humblest and poorest of widows and orphans. The cruel and bitter tongue of slander will cease. Further still, the



prophet predicts universal peace and that the earth shall be under the dominion of Christ, for he says: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."

His "holy mountain" represents the dominion of the Lord. Wherever "the knowledge of Jehovah" is, there is peace. To know Jehovah is to submit to him. Jesus is called "the Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9: 6); he is the author of peace; his gospel is "the gospel of peace;" he enjoins peace and rules in his kingdom of peace. Here we recall to mind the song of the angels on the night of Jesus' birth: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." The birth of Jesus redounds to the glory of God on high and to peace among men on earth. It is time that Christians—not in name—but in deed and in the spirit of Christ do not engage in war, do not learn it, and do not encourage it. It is predicted that under the reign of Christ war itself shall cease and men shall learn it no more.

It is most certain, then, that all who yield to Christ—obey him—cannot learn and practice war any more. Christians cannot be for war or encourage war in time of war and for peace only in time of peace. They are under the reign of "the Prince of Peace" in time of war. Just as fast as individuals become Christians, they cease to learn and to practice war.<sup>1</sup> As fast as nations come under the sway of Christ they, too, will cease to learn and practice war. This "root of Jesus" will be the ensign or flag or standard of the people—a flag of peace, and not one of war and bloodshed. When this "branch" shall come forth, all nations shall seek it. This is a prophecy of the salvation of the Gentiles. (See Luke 2: 32; Acts 11: 18.) "His resting place shall be glorious." (Verse 10.) Jesus now reigns and rests in glory and promises rest to all who serve him.

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Memory Verse.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Who spoke these truths through Isaiah?  
Repeat Isaiah 1: 2.  
How is this blessed state to be brought about?  
Repeat Isaiah 9: 6, 7.
- 2 Who made this same prophecy as did Isaiah in verses 2-4?  
What is meant by "the latter days?"  
What is meant by "Jehovah's house established on the top of the mountains?"
- 3 State in order what should come to pass in "the latter days."  
When was this fulfilled?  
To what have Christians come in contrast with Mount Sinai?  
How many different things is this law which went forth from Zion called?  
To what peoples and for how long must it be preached?  
Under this, what must all do to be saved from past sins?  
How must all live to be saved in heaven?
- 4 Through whom would God judge the peoples?  
Of what is Jesus the Prince?  
What song was sung when he was born?  
Under his teachings what will nations learn no more?  
What do Christians lay aside and quit doing as soon as they become Christians?  
Why can they not go to war and fight?  
To what is Christianity wholly opposed?  
Give the fearful costs of war.  
What would be the result if all of this were used to improve the country or to preach the gospel?  
What will bring about universal peace?  
What is the greatest thing in the world?
- 1 State the facts of the preceding chapter.
- What in this verse is placed in contrast with the great forest of the preceding chapter?  
Who is this "shoot" and "branch"?  
What will this tender sprout become or do?  
Types of what did the prophets make great temporal deliverances?  
What mistakes may be made in trying to apply these prophecies?
- 2-5 State in full the Spirit the One in these verses was to have?  
With what fullness did God give the Spirit to Jesus?  
When did the Spirit descend upon him?  
What shows Jesus' power and grace, wisdom and love?  
What is godly fear?  
What is said of Jesus' godly fear?  
What man does God bless?  
State how Jesus, or the Judge of these verses, would judge the people—the poor and meek and wicked.  
What is "the rod of his mouth?"
- 6-9 Give the figures of these verses representing the perfect peace of Christ's kingdom?  
What will people as ferocious as bears, as ravenous as lions, as vile and poisonous as asps and adders, become under Christ?  
What care in the church today must be given the babes and weaklings, the poor and the helpless?  
What further is predicted?  
What is meant by Christ's "holy mountain?"  
What will be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah?  
Of what song are we reminded?  
What will nations learn no more?  
What will be done with the weapons of war?  
Can Christians, then, learn and engage in wars?  
What ensign will this root be?  
Of what is this a prediction?  
Where does Jesus rest?  
What will be given to all who serve him?



## LESSON VII—MAY 14

## HEZEKIAH LEADS HIS PEOPLE BACK TO GOD

## 2 Chronicles 30: 1-27. Print 30: 1-9, 13

2 CHRONICLES 30. 1 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto Jehovah, the God of Israel.

2 For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the assembly in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month.

3 For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves in sufficient number, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem.

4 And the thing was right in the eyes of the king and of all the assembly.

5 So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, at Jerusalem: for they had not kept it in great numbers in such sort as it is written.

6 So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that he may return to the remnant that are escaped of you out of the hand of the king of Assyria.

7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, who trespassed against Jehovah, the God of their fathers, so that he gave them up to desolation, as ye see.

8 Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were; but yield yourselves unto Jehovah, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever, and serve Jehovah your God, that his fierce anger may turn away from you.

9 For if ye turn again unto Jehovah, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that led them captive, and shall come again into this land: for Jehovah your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.

13 And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great assembly.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him. (2 Chronicles 30: 9.)

*Time*—About B. C. 726.

*Place*—Jerusalem.

*Persons*—Hezekiah and the people.

*Memory Verse*—(Psalms 95: 6.)

*Devotional Reading*—(Psalms 96: 1-10.)

*Reference Material*—(2 Chronicles 29: 31; 32; 34: 29-33; Hosea 14; Amos 9: 7-15.)

*Home Readings*.—Mon., May 8.—A godly king's edict.—2 Chron. 29: 1-11. Tu.—The temple cleansed.—2 Chron. 29: 12-19. Wed.—Sacrifices presented.—2 Chron. 29: 20-30. Th.—Sacrifices offered.—2 Chron. 29: 31-36. Fr.—Call to worship.—2 Chron. 30: 1-12. Sat.—The solemn assembly.—2 Chron. 30: 13-27. Su.—Joyous worship.—Psa. 96: 1-10.

## INTRODUCTION

## Hezekiah Sent Out Missionaries

## I. HEZEKIAH'S ENVIRONMENT

Hezekiah was the son of Ahaz—a godly son of a most ungodly father. Hezekiah succeeded his father to the throne. He began to reign at the age of twenty-five years, and reigned twenty-nine years. His name means “strength of Jehovah.” “His mother’s name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah.” (2 Chron. 29: 1.) “Abijah” means “father is Jehovah.” Doubtless Abijah was a good woman, from whom Hezekiah received righteous impressions and impulses; he



also gave heed to the instruction and warnings of Isaiah, who had then been a prophet for more than thirty-two years. Hezekiah's wife's name was "Hephzibah" (2 Kings 21: 1), which means "my delight is in her" (Isa. 62: 4). Hoshea had been king over Israel three or four years when Hezekiah began to reign. (2 Kings 17: 1; 18: 1.) This reformation of Hezekiah was five or six years before the downfall of Israel. "And he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, according to all that David his father had done . . . . He trusted in Jehovah, the God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among them that were before him. For he clave to Jehovah; he departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which Jehovah commanded Moses." (See 2 Kings 18: 3-8.)

## II. CHAPTER 29

This chapter states that Hezekiah began this work on the first day of the first month of the first year of his reign; the reasons he gave for the sad condition of his kingdom, the instruction he gave the priests and Levites, and his earnest exhortations to them; and their zeal in cleansing the temple and setting everything in order that God might be worshipped truly.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. The Necessary Preparation

1. The Levites and priests having sanctified themselves, the temple having been cleansed, the altar and vessels having been replaced, the offering named above having been made, "the service of the house of Jehovah" having been set in order, and everything having been made ready so that the people could worship God "as it is written." Hezekiah then sent messengers (missionaries) with letters of invitation throughout both his kingdom and the kingdom of Israel to come to Jerusalem "to keep the passover unto Jehovah."

2. The king and his princes had consulted, and had decided "to keep the passover in the second month." God ordained the passover, gave the reason for observing it, and set the time for doing so. This time was the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish year. (Ex. 12: 3-6, 14, 17; Lev. 23: 5.) The week following this day was the passover week. How, then, could Hezekiah and his princes set the second month for observing the passover? God had made provision that if any persons should be unavoidably unclean or be afar off at the appointed time for the passover and could not observe it for such reasons, they should observe it on the fourteenth day of the second month. (Num. 9: 1-14.)

3. This verse gives two reasons why the passover could not be observed the first month: (1) there were not enough priests prepared to make the offerings of the passover and to serve the people; (2) the people could not reach Jerusalem in time. "The priests were too few." (2 Chron. 29: 34.) The Levites had to help the priests, and were "more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests." "Sanctify" means to set apart to the service of God exclusively, to hallow. The temple was God's sanctuary, or house used only for his service. The priests and Levites sanctified it at the time by cleansing it of dirt, cleansing the altar and vessels, putting all in their places, and setting in order "the service of the house of Jehovah." (See 2 Chron. 29: 17-19, 35.) The priests and Levites sanctified themselves when they turned from their sins and made the offerings required to purify themselves of all ceremonial uncleanness. (See Lev. 7: 19-20; Lev. 22: 1-9; Num. 19: 11-22.) The people could



not reach Jerusalem by the fourteenth day of the first month, because it required sixteen days to cleanse the dirt out of the temple and the porch (2 Chron. 29: 17-19), some time afterwards to make the offerings named in 2 Chron. 29: 20-36, and to send out the missionaries urging all to come.

## II. "As It Is Written"

4, 5. Making all the preceding preparation and arranging for the passover in the second month according to the will of God were "in the eyes of the king and all the assembly" the right things to do. "So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, at Jerusalem." This was truly missionary. The salvation of Israel, as well as of Judah, was sought. Christians likewise seek the salvation of all peoples. All this preparation had been according to the will of God, and the people from Beersheba to Dan had been urged to come to Jerusalem to keep the passover unto Jehovah for the reason here given: "They had not kept it in great numbers in such sort as it is written." They had kept it, but not "as it is written."

Not to do that which God commands, but to do something else instead, or to attempt to do that which God commands in some other way than that which he commands, is vain worship. (See Mark 7: 1-13.) To keep the passover, but not "as it is written," was not acceptable to God. Hezekiah knew there was no way to reform and save the people except to persuade them to worship God "as it is written" and to work according to his will. Josiah, great-grandson to Hezekiah and another godly king, reformed the people by reading the word of God to them and urging them to worship "as it is written." (See 2 Kings 23.)

Ezra and Nehemiah restored the worship of God after the captivity in the same way. They taught the law of God to the people, and whatever they found written therein they did. They said: "Whosoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done exactly for the house of the God of heaven; for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?" (Ezra 7: 23; see Ezra 7: 10; Neh. 8.) This was done at all cost and to the most serious extent of putting away the wives and the children born of them—"foreign women" and "strange women."

Some of the priests, some of the Levites, and some of the men of Israel had married wives of the wicked nations from which God had written they must not take wives. (See Ezra 9, 10.) God must be obeyed. Jesus resisted the mighty temptations of Satan by saying "it is written" and telling that which had been written. God must be worshiped now "as it is written" in the New Testament—in the "law of faith" (Rom. 3: 27), "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8: 2), the law of Christ (1 Cor. 9: 21), "the law of liberty" (James 1: 25). "As it is written" that the Jews should worship "as it is written" in the law of Moses, so "it is written" that all now must worship God "as it is written" in the law of Christ.

Paul declares that now all should "learn not to go beyond the things which are written." (1 Cor. 4: 6.) "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9.) In all obedience to God we must do that which he has written; nothing else is obedience to him. When we come to worship God on the first day of the week, we must do the things which



are written. What is written? It is written that as Christians we should meet together on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; Heb. 10: 25; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 1 Cor. 11:17, 33); that we should meet then to eat the Lord's Supper; what the Lord's Supper is and why we should observe it (1 Cor. 11: 20-26; 1 Cor. 10: 16); that we should sing together, what we should sing, and the purpose for which we should sing (Eph. 5: 18-21; Col. 3: 16; 1 Cor. 14: 15); that we should pray together (1 Cor. 14: 14-17); that we should study the word of God and edify one another (1 Cor. 14; 1 Cor. 1: 14 and the whole chapter; Col. 4: 16; 1 Thess. 5: 27); that we should contribute every one as he may be prospered. (1 Cor. 16: 1, 2).

Paul preached on the first day of the week, but the church did not meet on that day to hear preaching. So we may preach on that day. Will we do these things on the first day of the week? Then will we do all that God has written for us to do through the week? Enough has been written to keep us busy and to lead us to heaven.

### III. Exhortation to Repentance

6-9. The king of Assyria had distressed Judah and had led many into captivity. "The posts went with the letters," or this sermon, throughout Judah and Israel, exhorting all to repent and turn again to God, and not to be stiff-necked, as were their fathers, whose sins had brought all this distress and humiliation upon them; and with the gracious promise that if they would yield themselves unto God and enter into his sanctuary and serve him truly, he would turn his fierce anger away from them, and their brethren and children should find compassion in their enemies and be rescued from captivity.

### IV. The Result

10-13. These "posts," or missionaries, went from city to city, "even unto Zebulun," preaching their sermon. Some mocked these messengers and laughed them to scorn; but many of the kingdom of Israel, as well as of Judah, humbled themselves and came. Verses 13, 18, 21, and 25 speak of the multitude that assembled to keep this passover. Verse 26 says: "There was great joy in Jerusalem; for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem." The remainder of this chapter and chapter 31 show the good and great work of Hezekiah. After all that was done at Jerusalem, all present made a canvass of both kingdoms and destroyed the altars and images of all idols; and Hezekiah broke "in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made; for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it; and he called it Nehushtan ["a piece of brass"]." (2 Kings 18: 4.) Hezekiah "wrought that which was good and right and faithful before Jehovah his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered."

### V. Some Profitable Lessons

Let us learn some profitable lessons from Hezekiah's example: (1) When true and faithful men to-day preach the New Testament and urge people to worship God "as it is written," for he is not worshipped "in great numbers in such sort," they are mocked and laughed to scorn. They are called by ugly names and considered out of date. Nevertheless, many hear and strive to obey and please God by abiding



in the teaching of Christ. (2) The temple which he repaired and cleansed was a type of the temple, or church, of God now. (Heb. 8: 1-5; 9: 9, 11, 23; 1 Pet. 2: 5.) (3) This spiritual temple in many places needs repairing and cleansing of the trash and filth of worldliness and sin. (4) Before Hezekiah sent out to ask the northern kingdom to come to Jerusalem to worship God "as it is written" he had the temple cleansed and the priests consecrated, so the people could worship God "as it is written" when they did come.

All Christians now are priests of God, and before they ask their neighbors to come and worship God "as it is written" in the New Testament they must "clean up" and live right themselves. (5) Hezekiah could not fully and wholly do his duty by serving God himself; he must seek the salvation of Israel as well as of Judah. So the church to-day must send out missionaries and seek the salvation of all.

## QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons.

Repeat the Memory Verses.

Who succeeded Ahaz?

How old was Hezekiah when he began to reign, and how long did he reign?

What does his name mean?

What was his mother's name, and what does it mean?

What was his wife's name, and what does it mean?

Who was king over Israel?

How long was Hezekiah's reformation before the downfall of the kingdom of Israel?

Give the character of Hezekiah.

How can we account for the son of such a wicked man as Ahaz being such a wise and good man?

What does chapter 20 state?

1 What was the next reformatory step?

2 What was the time for keeping the passover?

How, then, could it be kept in obedience to God in the second month?

3 Why could it not then be kept in the first month?

What does "sanctify" mean?

What did the priests and Levites do to sanctify themselves?

Why could the people not reach Jerusalem for the feast in the first month?

Why was this right in the eyes of the king and his princes?

What proclamation was made?

Wherein is this truly missionary?

What do all Christians seek?

4, 5 Why was all this preparation made and the people urged to come to Jerusalem to keep the passover?

What is vain worship, and what is true worship?

In what way only could the people be reformed?

What course did Josiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah pursue in restoring the true worship of God?

How must God be worshiped now?

Give the names by which the law under which we live is called.

State what is written in this law for Christians to do as worship on the first day of the week.

State what is written to be done through the week.

Why may we preach on the first day of the week?

Has God given in the New Testament all enough to do?

6-9 In what condition was Judah?

Repeat the speech and exhortation the "posts" were to deliver.

What would follow the people's doing this?

10-13 What was the result of this appeal?

Why was there great joy in Jerusalem?

After this, what was done to destroy idolatry in both kingdoms?

Repeat that which Hezekiah "wrought."

State the five lessons we learn from Hezekiah's example.

## LESSON VIII—MAY 21

**HILKIAH'S GREAT DISCOVERY—2 Chronicles 34: 14-33****Print 34: 14-16, 29-32**

2 CHRONICLES 34. 14 And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of Jehovah, Hilkiah the priest found the book of the law of Jehovah given by Moses.

15 And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan.

16 And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and moreover brought back word to the king, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they are doing.

29 Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.

30 And the king went up to the house of Jehovah, and all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, both great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of Jehovah.

31 And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before Jehovah, to walk after Jehovah, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book.

32 And he caused all that were found in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path. (Psalm 119: 105.)

*Time*—Josiah began to reign B. C. 641, and reigned 31 years.

*Place*—Jerusalem.

*Persons*—Josiah, his officers, and the people

*Memory Verse*—Psalm 119: 11.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 19: 7-14.

*Reference Material*—Deuteronomy 6: 6-9; Joshua 1: 8; Colossians 3: 16; 2 Timothy 2: 15; 3: 14-16.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., May 15.—Cleansing the land.—2 Chron. 34: 1-7. Tu.—Repairing the temple.—2 Chron. 34: 8-13. Wed.—Hilkiah's great discovery.—2 Chron. 34: 14-21. Th.—The message of the word.—2 Chron. 34: 22-28. Fr.—The word obeyed.—2 Chron. 34: 29-33. Sat.—Teaching the word.—2 Tim. 2: 1-15. Su.—The priceless word of God.—Psa. 19: 7-14.

**INTRODUCTION****I. Josiah**

Josiah was the son of Amon. Amon followed the evil example of Manasseh, his father, before Manasseh repented; he forsook God and served the idols Manasseh had made. He reigned only two years. His servants, for some unknown reason, assassinated him; but "the people of the land" slew all these servants and made Josiah king. Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, coming to the throne through the assassination of his father. (2 Chron. 34:1.) He was reared under the most unfavorable circumstances, being the son and grandson of wicked kings. Manasseh, however, repented and sought to undo the wrongs he had done. Josiah was the great grandson of the good Hezekiah; but Hezekiah's father, Ahaz, was a most ungodly and wicked man. It is remarkable that Manasseh should at first forsake the instruction of a righteous father, but it is just as remarkable that Hezekiah and Josiah should turn away from the ungodly examples of their fathers. Judging from the age of Jehoiakim, Josiah's son, when he began to reign, Josiah must have married at thirteen years of age. Josiah was thirty-nine when he



died; and Jehoiakim was twenty-five when he began to reign, succeeding his brother, who reigned only three months (2 Kings 23: 31, 37.) For the names of Josiah's wives see 2 Kings 33: 31, 36.

## II. Josiah Did Right Before God

Josiah "did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah," walking "in the ways of David his father" and turning "not aside to the right hand or to the left." This is right today. God's word is our standard. God's ways are high above man's ways. (Isa. 55:8, 9). We are forbidden to do that which is right in our own eyes (Deut. 12: 8; Prov. 14: 12). That only which is right in God's eye must be done (1 Kings 14: 8). When Josiah was sixteen years old and had been king for eight years he began to seek after God, or to learn the true worship of Jehovah; and in the twelfth year of his reign he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of idolatry and idolatrous priests. He extended this work into the kingdom of Israel, slaying the living idolatrous priests upon the altars and burning "men's bones upon them." (See 2 Chron. 34: 2-7; 2 Kings 23: 20; 1 Kings 13: 1-3; 2 Kings 23: 15-18.)

## III. Orders the Temple Repaired

Having purged the land and the temple, Josiah ordered the temple repaired. The temple had been standing since Solomon built it—almost four hundred years. About two hundred years before this, as we have learned in Lesson III, Joash repaired the temple. Hezekiah made some repairs. (2 Chron 29: 3.) Besides the decay wrought by time, such idolatrous kings as Ahaz, Manasseh during the first of his reign, and Amon had greatly neglected and abused the temple. The money to repair the house was gathered and delivered into the hands of faithful workmen to do the work. None of the money was misappropriated or squandered. "There was no reckoning made" with these workmen "of the money that was delivered into their hands; for they dealt faithfully." (2 Chron. 34: 8-13.)

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. The Bible Lost

14. As the introduction states, Josiah ordered Shaphan, the scribe; Maaseiah, the governor of the city; Joah the recorder; and Hilkiah, the high priest, to repair the temple. This was in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign. (2 Chron. 34: 8.) Soon after he began to reign this collection of money for repairing the temple began, and continued until the time of this lesson. It had been gathered by the Levites from the remnant of all Israel and from Judah and Benjamin and stored away in "the house of God." (2 Chron. 34: 9.)

When the persons Josiah had sent to attend to this matter "brought out the money" from where it had been stored "Hilkiah the priest found the book of the law of Jehovah given by Moses;" and the margin says, "by the hand of" Moses. This, then, may have been the original copy of the law written by Moses. Moses commanded the priests to place the copy he had prepared beside the ark of the covenant (Deut. 31: 24-26), while the king was commanded to make a copy of it for his own use in order to "read therein all the days of his life," that he might fear and obey God and teach the people to do the same (Deut. 17: 18-20).



Printing was unknown, the law had to be transcribed, and there were but few copies of it at any time, and less during the times of the wicked kings, for they kept no copy for their own use. They despised God's law, desecrated his temple, destroyed the sacred vessels of his service, set his altar and the ark of the covenant aside (2 Chron. 35: 3), and worshiped and served idols. In all this negligence and wickedness the original copy of the law could have been easily lost and this one found by Hilkiah may have been it. Besides, this verse in the margin says: "The book of the law of Jehovah given by the hand of Moses." How long it had been lost, we have no way of knowing, and it is useless to conjecture. While there were but few copies of the law at any time, God made provision for it to be taught orally.

The priests were commanded to read it at the end of every seven years—the year of release—during the feast of tabernacles to men, women, children, and sojourners assembled for the purpose of hearing it, that all might understand it and fear God and that those who had not hitherto known the will of God might learn and obey it. (Deut. 31: 9-13.) God strictly and solemnly commanded parents to teach his word daily and diligently to their children, to retain it in memory, and to meditate upon it day and night. (Deut. 6: 6-9.)

Jehoshaphat sent his princes and the priests throughout all the cities of Judah to teach the law to the people; but they carried "the book of the law of Jehovah with them" (2 Chron. 17: 7-9), and taught it orally. Josiah taught the law (after it had been found) to the people by reading it to them. (2 Chron. 34: 29-31.) Ezra taught it in the same way. (Neh. 8.) There were not copies of the law in every man's home from which he and his family could read at will. Priests, parents, and others were required to remember it and to teach it to those who knew it not.

This is the law that was "written and graven on stones," but the New Testament is the law of the Spirit written on the tables of the heart. (2 Chron. 3: 1-11.) If, then, God required his people to remember the one, how much the more does he require them to remember the other? In fact, the law of God cannot be written upon the heart unless it is studied and retained in the heart, directing the thoughts and actions. "Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Ps. 119: 11.)

There are Bibles now in every home in the land; yet, in a sense, the word of God is lost to many. Some never read and study it; some read it for its history and literature; some, to pick flaws in it; some, to prove some religious theory, but not to learn and obey the will of God. To all such it is lost. This is a most fearful thought. It is not stated just where Hilkiah found the book of the law, except that he found it in the temple. (Verse 15.) He alone, as high priest, had the right to enter the most holy place; and in removing the rubbish and preparing the temple for the service of God, he found the lost and forgotten law.

Josiah had no copy of the law, and was not familiar with the curses which it pronounced upon the rebellious and idolatrous people. He knew the general laws which had been handed down from father to son. People may find the word of God to-day by studying it, seeking God's will, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and obeying the truth as they learn it.



## II. The Bible Found

15. Hilkiah informed Shaphan of the fact that he had found this book. Hilkiah was, no doubt, deeply interested in the book and aroused over its contents. Shaphan was the scribe, the king's secretary, and was in touch with the king at any time; hence Hilkiah informed him concerning the book. "And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan, and he read it." (2 Kings 22: 8.) Shaphan saw that it was the law of God and that the king should be informed concerning it. We have already seen how the king, as the ruler of the people, was required to know the law.

16. "And Shaphan carried the book to the king," but he did not present it until after informing the king in an orderly manner that his officers had fulfilled their mission in emptying out the money "found in the house of Jehovah" and in delivering it into the hands of the overseers and workmen and that they were doing all the work committed to them. (See verse 17.)

## III. Comment on Verses 18-28 Necessary to Show Josiah's Distress and Procedure

18. Shaphan then informed the king that Hilkiah had given him the book. "And Shaphan read therein before the king." He could not read it all at once, but read "therein"—portions of it. Although Shaphan read the law of God to the king, the king himself could read. (2 Chron. 34: 30.)

19. The astonishment and distress of the king upon hearing the law and the course he pursued show how little he and the people knew of the law and how far short both the kings and people had come of keeping it. He also saw the fearful punishment which must come upon the people as a result of their departure from God. No one can read Deut. 28 without being made to realize how fearful it is to disobey God. This portion of the book, with other portions, Shaphan must have read. When the king heard the terrible curses which must come upon the nation, "he rent his clothes." This was done as an expression of humiliation and distress. So Ezra acted when he learned of the sins of the people. (Ezra 9: 3.)

20. We know who Hilkiah and Shaphan were. Ahikam was the son of Shaphan. Later on he protected Jeremiah from the people (Jer. 26: 24); and Gedaliah, his son, became king under Babylonian rule (Jer. 40: 5). Abdon is called "Achbor" in 2 Kings 22: 12. Asaiah was a servant or officer of the king.

21. These men Josiah sent to "inquire of Jehovah" "concerning the words of the book that" was found. He was sorely distressed over the present sinful condition of the nation and the dire calamities which must befall it on account of its sins. To inquire of God was to go to some prophet. The prophets represented God to the people, and his will was revealed through them. God said, for instance, that Moses should be as God to Aaron (Ex. 4: 16) and Pharaoh (Ex. 7: 1), and that he would put his words in the mouth of Jesus as that Prophet of whom Moses was a type (Deut. 18: 15-19; Acts 3: 22-34). Priests offered sacrifices to God on behalf of the people and represented the people to God. Jesus, as a Priest, appears in the presence of God for us. (Heb. 9: 24; 7: 25; 2: 17, 18.) It was also the duty of priests to teach the people (Lev. 10: 11; Deut. 31: 9-13), and, when they were faithful, to inquire of God for the people (Deut. 17: 8-11). In the corruption and apostasy of the nation there was sometimes not a teaching priest. (2 Chron. 15: 3.) Josiah was in-



terested in Israel as well as in Judah, and wanted to know God's will in reference to all "concerning the words of the book that" was found. His reason was: "For great is the wrath of Jehovah that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of Jehovah, to do according unto all that is written in this book." He acknowledged the sin of the people and the justice of God.

2. Hilkiah and those with him "went to Huldah the prophetess." She was "the wife of Shallum . . . keeper of the wardrobe." This may have been the king's wardrobe or the holy garments of the priests. Huldah "dwelt in Jerusalem in the second quarter ["college"—Authorized Version]." Where this community, or settlement, was is only conjecture. It is mentioned in Zeph. 1: 10. Why did these men go to Huldah? Probably because in the sin and rebellion of the nation there were no men through whom God could speak, and he must speak through this God-fearing woman. This seems to have been the case a few times in the history of God's people. Deborah is another example. (Judg. 4.) Probably Zephaniah had not yet been established as a prophet. (Zeph. 1: 1.) Jeremiah had been prophesying five years (Jer. 1: 7), but he may not have been accessible. "And they spake to her to that effect." These men told Huldah about finding the book, about its contents, the apostasy of the people, the impending punishment, and the deep distress of the king. What is here related is all we know of Huldah.

23. Having heard them, she responded: "Thus saith Jehovah." God spoke through her. "The God of Israel"—the God of the twelve tribes. "Tell ye the man that sent you unto me." The following verses of the lesson contain the message.

24. "Thus saith Jehovah." This expression introduces what Jehovah said to these messengers and to Josiah. "I will bring evil upon this place, . . . the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king." (See these curses in Deut. 28: 15-68.) They were inevitable, because the people had gone so far in apostasy that it was impossible to turn the tide. Josiah could check it for a while: but so soon as he should die, the rushing waters of rebellion would sweep the nation on to destruction.

25. The sins for which the evil and curses foretold were coming are here stated. The people had forsaken God, burned incense to other gods, and provoked him to anger by "all the works [various carved and molten images and all kinds of idols] of their hands." Therefore God's wrath was poured out upon that place, and could not be quenched. Burning incense was a sacred service to God, and the people had committed the sin of offering such service to idols.

26-27. God sent the following encouraging promise to Josiah: "As touching the words (the curses) which thou hast heard (in the book of the law), because thy heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and hast humbled thyself before me, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith Jehovah." God has promised to always hear him who is of a broken heart and contrite spirit and who trembles at his word. (Ps. 34: 18; Isa. 66: 2, 5.) God hears those who hear him, and refuses to hear those who refuse to hear him. "I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered." (See Jer. 35: 12-17.) "He that turneth away his ear away from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." (Prov. 28: 9.)

28. The blessing pronounced upon Josiah was that, so far as the evils foretold in the book of the law are concerned, they would not



come during his life, and that he should live out his days in peace and be gathered to his fathers (die) before their fulfillment. His godly life and reformation among the people stayed the punishment that long. This demonstrates the mercy and forbearance of God. It demonstrates, on the other hand, how easily wicked kings led the people into idolatry and general apostasy and how difficult it was to lead them back to God. It has always been impossible, it seems, to turn the tide of apostasy. It has been checked, and individuals have been saved from it; but it gains new strength and leads on to destruction. The same principles so work to-day.

#### IV. Josiah and the People Made a Solemn Covenant

29-30. Read with these verses 2 Kings 23: 1-3. Josiah continued his good work by gathering the priests, Levites, and people, "both great and small," and reading himself the word of God to them and making a solemn covenant to serve God. Under verse 14 comment is made on studying the Bible.

31. "And the king stood in his place." 2 Kings 11: 14; 23: 3 say "by the pillar," and the margin at both places says "on the platform." There was a place for the king. The covenant was to serve God—"to walk after Jehovah"—and the only way to do that was "to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book." The only way to obey God is to do what he commands, and the place to find his commandments is the Bible.

32. Josiah "caused" all the people to stand to this covenant. The people agreed to do this. They were likewise stirred by the reading of the book of God. Read the covenant Joshua had the people to make just after entering the land of promise. (Josh. 24: 1-28.) Josiah renewed his efforts, begun six years before that (2 Chron. 33: 3), to thoroughly cleanse the land of all forms of idols and idolatry (2 Kings 23: 4-20). The only way to turn to God is to put away sin—to destroy idols. Josiah, as Hezekiah did, extended his good work into the Kingdom of Israel, and made all "that were found" there to serve Jehovah. The ten tribes had gone into captivity, but a few poor people were left. "All his days they departed not from following Jehovah, the God of their fathers." Josiah restored the worship of God "as it is written" in the law of God. He did this by studying the word of God and learning what it teaches. See the account of the passover kept then. (2 Kings 23: 21-25; 2 Chron. 35: 1-19.) Notwithstanding all the good that Josiah did, he did that which the kings of Judah seemed prone to do; he formed an alliance with the king of Assyria, and went out against the king of Egypt at Megiddo, and was slain. (2 Chron. 35: 20-26.) This was a sad termination of the reformation Josiah had so well begun.

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
 Give the time, place, and persons.  
 Repeat the Memory Verse.  
 Whose son was Josiah?  
 How long did Amon reign?  
 What was his character?  
 How did he come to his death?  
 How old was Josiah when he began to reign?  
 How long did he reign?  
 Under what circumstances was he reared?  
 What is remarkable about Hezekiah and Josiah?  
 Why is it thought that Josiah married very early?  
 In whose eyes did Josiah do right?  
 Whose example did he follow?  
 What is our standard?  
 What are we forbidden to do?  
 What did Josiah begin to do when he was sixteen years old?  
 What did he begin to do when he was twenty-four years old?  
 State what he did to altars, idols, and priests.  
 What did he order done for the temple?  
 How long had it been standing?  
 What other kings had repaired it?  
 What kings had neglected and abused it?  
 Unto whom was the money given to do the work?  
 Why was no reckoning made with these men?  
 14 At what time in the reign of Josiah was our last lesson?  
 When and from whom was the money to repair the temple collected?  
 What provision did God make for teaching the law to the people?  
 What were parents solemnly charged to do?  
 What arrangement did Jehoshaphat make for instructing the people?  
 How did Josiah and Ezra teach them?  
 Upon what is the New Testament written?  
 What shows that all should study and retain it?
- In what way is the word of God lost to people now?  
 How may they find it?  
 Where did Hilkiah find the book?  
 Why could Josiah not be familiar with these impending curses and their causes?  
 15 What did Hilkiah do with the book?  
 What did Shaphan first do with the book?  
 16-18 Why did he take it to the king?  
 What report did he first make?  
 19 What did the king see from this book?  
 What impression did it make on him?  
 20, 21 What did Josiah then do?  
 Why did he send to inquire of God concerning these things?  
 What did the prophets represent to the people?  
 What was the work of the priests?  
 In whom was Josiah interested?  
 22 To whom did these men go?  
 Whose wife was she?  
 Where did she live?  
 Why did God sometimes make women his mouthpieces?  
 What did these men relate to Huldah?  
 23 What did God say to these men?  
 24 What message did God send to Josiah?  
 Why were these curses inevitable?  
 25 What grievous sins had the people committed?  
 26, 27 Why did God hear Josiah?  
 Whom does God always hear?  
 28 What blessing did God promise to Josiah?  
 29, 30 How did Josiah continue his work?  
 31 What was his covenant?  
 32 What did Josiah cause the people to do?  
 What had Josiah begun six years before to do?  
 What was done with all idols?  
 How did he restore the worship of God?  
 How long did this reformation last?  
 What sin did Josiah commit at last?



## LESSON IX—MAY 28

**JEREMIAH SPEAKS BOLDLY FOR GOD—Jeremiah 26:****1-24. Print 26: 8-16**

**JEREMIAH 26. 8** And it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that Jehovah had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold on him, saying, Thou shalt surely die.

**9** Why hast thou prophesied in the name of Jehovah, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant? And all the people were gathered unto Jeremiah in the house of Jehovah.

**10** And when the princes of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house unto the house of Jehovah; and they sat in the entry of the new gate at Jehovah's house.

**11** Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy of death; for he hath prophesied against this city as ye have heard with your ears.

**12** Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, Jehovah sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard.

**13** Now therefore amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of Jehovah your God; and Jehovah will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

**14** But as for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as is good and right in your eyes.

**15** Only know ye for certain that, if ye put me to death, ye will bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof; for of a truth Jehovah hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

**16** Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets: This man is not worthy of death; for he hath spoken to us in the name of Jehovah our God.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

**Golden Text**—Amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of Jehovah. (Jeremiah 26:13.)

**Time**—B.C. 602.

**Place**—Jerusalem.

**Persons**—Jeremiah, the prophets, priests, princes, and elders.

**Memory Verse**—Jeremiah 26:14.

**Devotional Reading**—Psalm 103: 13-22.

**Reference Material**—2 Samuel 12:1-14; 1 Kings 21: 17-24; Jeremiah 7: 1-15; Amos 6: 1-8.

**Home Readings**.—Mon., May 22.—Jeremiah speaks boldly for God.—Jer. 26: 1-9. Tu.—Jeremiah threatened with death.—Jer. 26: 10-19. Wed.—A brave prophet's message.—2 Sam. 12: 1-15. Th.—Elijah reproves Ahab.—1 Kings 21: 17-27. Fr.—Jeremiah reproves Israel.—Jer. 7: 1-11. Sat.—Amos reproves sinful indulgence.—Amos 6: 1-11. Su.—God's mercy to the obedient.—Psa. 103: 13-22.

**INTRODUCTION****I. Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim**

We saw in the conclusion of the last lesson how Josiah foolishly espoused the cause of the Assyrians, fought the king of Egypt at Megiddo, lost his life, and terminated suddenly his reformatory work. Jehoahaz, Josiah's son, became king in his stead, but reigned only three months. Pharaoh-necho deposed him, fined the land a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold, and made Eliakim, Jehoahaz's brother, king in his stead. Jehoahaz was placed in bonds and carried into Egypt, where he died. It is not stated why he was deposed. Eliakim, whose name Pharaoh-necho changed to "Jehoiakim," was older than Jehoahaz. It is not stated, either, why he was not made king by the people upon his father's death.

It was customary, it seems, when one in authority placed others in office, to change their names in order to show supremacy of power.



Examples can be seen in Gen. 41: 45; 2 Kings 24: 17; Dan. 1: 6, 7. Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years. "And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, according to all that his fathers had done." (2 Kings 23: 31-37; 2 Chron. 36: 1-8.) He was a cruel and oppressive tyrant. See the description of his character by Jeremiah (22: 13-19). He slew the prophet Uriah with the sword, and, it seems, would have slain Jeremiah also, had not Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, protected him. (Jer. 26: 20-24.)

## II. Jeremiah and His Prophecies

Jeremiah prophesied during the reign of this wicked and blasphemous Jehoiakim. "The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiyah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin: to whom the word of Jehovah came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month." (Jer. 1: 1-3.) Anathoth was only two or three miles northeast from Jerusalem, and was a city of priests. (Josh. 21: 18.) Hilkiyah, Jeremiah's father, is thought to be a different man from the high priest of that name so prominent in Josiah's time.

Jeremiah began to prophesy while young (Jer. 1: 6), and continued from the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign until a short while after the downfall of Jerusalem—a period of more than forty years—and was carried into Egypt, where it is thought he was martyred. In studying the reigns of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin or Jeconiah (Coniah in Jer. 22: 24), and Zedekiah, one should study the book of Jeremiah, as he should study the book of Isaiah in studying the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Jeremiah prophesied the downfall of Jerusalem and the nation because of sin, and then advised the people to submit to the Babylonians as chastisement from the Lord.

Great and grievous were the sins of the people—rebellion against God, rejection of his word, dishonesty, oppression of the poor, covetousness, murder, adultery, falsehood, treachery, deceit, idolatry with all its abominable practices, etc. Jeremiah's prophecies and his advice to submit to the Babylonian captivity as chastisement greatly displeased the people, as well as the king; and Jeremiah was shut up, and at times placed in the dungeon—a horrible pit. His life was a martyr's life. Chapter 25, this lesson, and 27: 1-11 are samples of Jeremiah's warning and advice in Jehoiakim's reign. Jeremiah taught much by object lessons—the girdle hidden in the cleft of the rock by the Euphrates (13: 1-11), jars of wine (13: 12-14), the potter's vessel (18: 1-12), the bottle broken in the valley of Hinnom (19), good and bad figs (24), bonds and bars (27: 1-15), the Rechabites (35), buying land and recording the deed. (32: 6-35.) Jeremiah has been called "the weeping prophet". We can not read his prophecies and not be impressed with his tears and lamentations over the sins of the people and his earnest prayers to God. While studying this and three following lessons, we should read the entire book of Jeremiah.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Jeremiah Arrested

8. Read verses 1-7. The facts recorded in this lesson occurred "in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim." God sent Jeremiah to "stand in the court of Jehovah's house" and teach all who came from



all the cities of Judah to worship. This was a public place, and many people could be reached in this way. (See Jer. 7: 2; 19: 14; 2 Chron. 24: 20, 21; Luke 19: 47, 48.) Jeremiah was not to "diminish" a "word" of all Jehovah had commanded him. That which he said was very unpleasant for the people to hear, but he must say it. If the people would hearken unto him and turn from their evil ways, then God would stop the evil which was coming upon them. But if they would not hearken to God, to walk in the law he had set before them, to his words which he had spoken through his prophets, then he would destroy the temple of Solomon, as he had destroyed Shiloh, and would make Jerusalem "a curse to all the nations of the earth." "The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of Jehovah." Jer. 7 is similar to this lesson.

When Jeremiah had spoken all that Jehovah had commanded him to speak at this time, the priests, prophets, and people arrested him and said to him: "Thou shalt surely die." Their intention was to have him killed. Jeremiah's courage, faithfulness, and whole character are admirable. He never flinched and never ceased his warnings until he had declared "the whole counsel of God." He reminds us of Paul. Paul at no time shrank from declaring "the whole counsel of God," at no time kept back anything that was profitable to the church, but "admonished every one night and day with tears," and at no time held his "life of any account as dear unto" himself. (See Acts 20: 18-38.)

His one purpose, as was the purpose of Jeremiah, was to save the people. Why did the priests, prophets, and people threaten Jeremiah's life and seek to kill him, when he, too, was a prophet and sought the salvation of the people? Did not all other prophets and did not the priests—the spiritual guides of the people—seek the same? As we are told now, were they not all "seeking the same end and going to the same place?"

The following declarations and many similar ones in the book of Jeremiah show why the prophets, priests, and people sought Jeremiah's life: "A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means ("at their hands"—margin); and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. 5: 30, 31.) "I sent not these prophets, yet they ran: I spake not unto them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my council, then had they caused my people to hear my words, and had turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." (Jer. 23: 21, 22.) "For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth. . . . And their course is evil, and their might is not right; for both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith Jehovah." (Jer. 23: 10, 11.) "And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied by Baal, and caused my people Israel to err.

"In the prophets of Jerusalem also I have seen a horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies; and they strengthen the hand of evil doers, so that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them become unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah." (Jer. 23: 13, 14.) "Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods that ye have not known, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered; that ye may do all these abominations?

"Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it, saith Jehovah." (Jer.



7: 8-11.) The New Testament abounds in solemn warnings against false prophets (Matt. 7: 15; Rom. 16: 17, 18; 2 Cor. 11: 13-15; Tit. 1: 10, 11), but these warnings seem of little importance to most people and are but little heeded. "Beware of false prophets." False prophets always come in sheep's clothing and with smooth and fair speech. The priests and scribes were the leaders in persecuting and crucifying Jesus and in persecuting the church afterwards.

## II. Jeremiah Tried

9. Having been arrested, Jeremiah was tried "in the house of Jehovah," and all the people were gathered there for that purpose. He was asked why he had prophesied in the name of Jehovah, saying: "This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant." For some time after the Israelites had crossed over the Jordan into the land God had promised them, their camp and the tabernacle were at Gilgal (Josh. 4:2, 8, 20; 5:9, 10; 10:43); then they removed to Shiloh and "set up the tent of meeting there" (Josh. 18: 1). It remained there for about one hundred and thirty years (Josh. 18: 31; 21: 19; 1 Sam. 1: 3)—until the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant and Eli's house was destroyed. (1 Sam. 4:10-22) God destroyed Shiloh because of the sins of the priests and the people, and he would destroy Jerusalem, where his temple was, and make all a desolation.

10. The princes, having heard of the arrest of Jeremiah and the assembly of the people, went "up from the king's house" and took charge of and conducted the trial. The princes were the king's cabinet, or counselors. The good king, Hezekiah, had his princes, and he and they took counsel together. (2 Chron. 30: 2.)

11. The priests and prophets accused Jeremiah to the princes and all the people, saying: "This man is worthy of death; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears."

12. Jeremiah "was his own lawyer" as we say, and defended himself. To the princes and the people he replied to the accusation of the priests and prophets as follows: "Jehovah sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard." He did not deny the charge, but said God had sent him, and all that he had said was the word of God. This he could not change; and let the consequences be what they may, he could but speak the word of God.

13. Jeremiah continued by saying that the only way to escape destruction was, neither by his retracting nor by killing him, but by the repentance of priests, prophets, and people. "Now therefore amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of Jehovah your God; and Jehovah will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you."

14-15. Continuing, Jeremiah said he was in their hands, and they could do as seemed good to them; but if they killed him, they would bring innocent blood upon themselves, upon the city, and upon its inhabitants, because God had sent him to speak all he had said. Killing the speaker does not kill the truth he speaks; yet in this way, in different ages, many have sought to destroy the truth. Crucifying Jesus did not destroy, but established, the truth.

## III. Jeremiah Acquitted

16. The princes, having heard the charge against Jeremiah and his defense, decided that he was innocent, and hence not worthy of death. The reason they gave was a wise and just one: "For he hath spoken to us in the name of Jehovah." No one should be killed for speaking the word of God.



17-18. Certain elders then arose and addressed the assembly, citing the case of the prophet Micah and Hezekiah's treatment of him when he prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem. He said: "Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest."

19. But instead of putting Micah to death, Hezekiah feared and entreated the favor of Jehovah, and Jehovah withheld the punishment. The conclusion was that to kill Jeremiah would be to commit great evil against their own souls. The remaining verses of the chapter—20-24—show the difference between the conduct and end of the prophet Uriah and the conduct and end of Jeremiah. Uriah also prophesied against Jerusalem and the land of Judah; but when the king sought to put him to death, he feared and fled into Egypt, whence he was brought back and killed. Jeremiah stood his ground and was spared. Jeremiah said they could kill him, but that would not destroy the truth or change the purpose of God.

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Memory Verse.  
How did Josiah die?  
Who succeeded him?  
How long did Jehoahaz reign?  
Who deposed him?  
How much was the land fined?  
What became of Jehoahaz?  
Who succeeded him?  
How old was Jehoiakim when he began to reign, and how long did he reign?  
What was his character?  
Who was Jeremiah's father?  
Where was he brought up?  
When did he begin to prophesy, and how long did he continue?  
On what account did he prophesy the downfall of the nation?  
Name these sins.  
By what object lessons did Jeremiah teach?  
Why has he been called "the weeping prophet?"
- 8 When did the facts recorded in this lesson occur?  
Where did God send Jeremiah to teach?  
Why?  
What was he not to do to the word of God?  
How must we treat the word of God?  
Upon what condition would God stop the punishment?  
What would he do unless they should repent?  
Who heard Jeremiah?
- 8 What did the priests, prophets, and people do to Jeremiah?  
With what did they threaten him?  
In what was he like Paul?  
Why did other prophets and the priests seek to kill Jeremiah?  
Name the different sins of the prophets, priests, and people.  
Against whom does the New Testament warn all?
- 9 Where was Jeremiah tried?  
What question was he asked?  
Where was Shiloh?  
Where did Israel first camp after crossing the Jordan?  
To what place did they remove?  
How long was the tabernacle there?  
Why was Shiloh destroyed?
- 10 Who conducted the trial?  
Who were the princes?
- 11 What accusation was brought against Jeremiah?  
By whom was it brought?
- 12 Who pleaded Jeremiah's cause?  
What answer did he make?
- 13 What was the only way to escape destruction?
- 14, 15 What would still be true should they kill Jeremiah?  
Why did he speak all they had heard?
- 16 What decision did the princes render?  
What reason did they give for this?
- 17, 18 What did certain elders say?
- 19 What example was furnished?  
Why was Uriah killed and Jeremiah spared?



## LESSON X—JUNE 4

# JEHOIAKIM TRIES TO DESTROY GOD'S WORD—Jeremiah 36: 1-32. Print 36: 4-8, 20-24, 32.

**JEREMIAH 36. 4** Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of Jehovah, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book.

**5** And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of Jehovah:

**6** therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of Jehovah in the ears of the people in Jehovah's house upon the fast-day; and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities.

**7** It may be they will present their supplication before Jehovah, and will return every one from his evil way; for great is the anger and wrath that Jehovah hath pronounced against this people.

**8** And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of Jehovah in Jehovah's house.

**20** And they went in to the king into the court; but they had laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe; and they told all the words in the ears of the king.

**21** So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll; and he took it out of the chamber of Elishama the scribe. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes that stood beside the king.

**22** Now the king was sitting in the winter-house in the ninth month: and there was a fire in the brazier burning before him.

**23** And it came to pass, when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, that the king cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was in the brazier, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was in the brazier.

**24** And they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words.

**32** Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and there were added besides unto them many like words.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

**Golden Text**—"The word of our God shall stand forever." (Isa. 40: 8.)

**Time**—B.C. 606.

**Place**—Jerusalem.

**Persons**—Jeremiah, Baruch, Jehoiakim and his princes.

**Memory Verses**—Proverbs 3: 1, 2.

**Devotional Reading**—Isaiah 40: 1-8.

**Reference Material**—Isaiah 55: 8-11; Matthew 5: 17-19.

**Home Readings**.—Mon., May 29.—God's word received and recorded.—Jer. 36: 1-8. Tu.—God's word read to the people.—Jer. 36: 9-19. Wed.—The king tries to destroy God's word.—Jer. 36: 20-26. Th.—The prophet rewrites God's word.—Jer. 36: 27-32. Fr.—God's covenant word.—Isa. 55: 1-3. Sat.—Jesus and God's word.—Matt. 5: 17-26. Su.—God's word shall stand forever.—Isa. 40: 1-8.

## GOD TOLD JEREMIAH TO WRITE A BOOK

While Jeremiah was acquitted in the trial given in the last lesson, he was afterwards imprisoned and treated most shamefully. The occurrences of the last lesson were in the first year of Jehoiakim's reign. In the third year of his reign Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and carried away some prisoners and a part of the vessels of the house of God and placed them in the house of his god. Among the captives were Daniel and his companions. (Dan. 1: 1-7.) After three years, Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. Chaldeans and others invaded the land of Judah. (2 Kings 24: 1-4.) After Jeremiah had been shut up, God told him to write all the words God had spoken through him against Israel, Judah, and other nations from the time he began to prophesy until that day in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim,



saying: "It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin." (Jer. 36: 1-3.)

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. The Book Was Written

Baruch was Jeremiah's secretary, and drew back at first, but was encouraged by Jeremiah to be faithful and loyal to God. (See Jer. 45.) "Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of Jehovah . . . upon a roll of a book." This book was a piece of parchment, both ends of which were fastened to a roller; and as it was read, it was rolled off one roller upon the other. Hence it was "a roll of a book." "And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of Jehovah: therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of Jehovah in the ears of the people in Jehovah's house upon the fast day; and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities." Baruch did this, but the people did not repent.

### II. Intervening Verses, 9-19, Are Necessary

In the fifth year of the reign of Jehoiakim the people of Jerusalem and of the cities of Judah proclaimed a fast. "Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of Jehovah, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the upper court, at the entry of the new gate of Jehovah's house, in the ears of all the people." Micaiah, Gemariah's son, heard what Baruch read, and reported it to the princes who at the time were assembled in the scribe's chamber. These princes sent for Baruch to come with the book and read it to them. When they heard the contents of the book, "they turned in fear one toward another," and said they would surely inform the king. They asked Baruch to explain how he wrote the book, and he did so. They seemed to have been seriously impressed with the contents of the book, and thought the king should know them; yet they felt apprehensive that his wrath would be aroused, and said to Baruch: "Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah; and let no man know where ye are."

### III. The Book Read and Burned

20-21. Having heard the word of God read by Baruch, the princes went to the king into the court, but left the book in the chamber, or office, of Elishama, the king's Secretary of State. "They told all the words in the ears of the king," either thinking an oral report would be sufficient or desiring to see first what effect this report would have upon him before producing the book. This report so interested the king that he desired to hear the book read. He, doubtless, wanted to see if its contents confirmed the impression this report made upon him, intending, if it did, to destroy it. It is human nature to want to hear that which pleases and justifies oneself in his course, and not that which reproves and condemns. Jesus pleased God always (John 8: 29), and not himself (Rom. 15: 3); and he who follows Jesus seeks to please God. He who really serves God seeks the will of God, and not his own preference and pleasure. The king sent Jehudi, one of his officers, "to fetch the roll;" and having done so, Jehudi "read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes that stood beside the king." It is necessary to read the Bible itself, and not



simply books about the Bible; and it is also necessary to read it, not to pick flaws in it and to destroy it, but to learn God's will in order to obey it.

22. "The king was sitting in the winter house in the ninth month." Those who have traveled in the East and are acquainted with the customs, houses, etc., of that country, say the "summer house" is usually the open part, and, if the house has two stories, usually the upper part; and the "winter house" is the closed part, and usually the lower part of the two-story buildings. The "brazier" was not a grate or fireplace, but a fire pan. The houses have no chimneys. In the night of Jesus' betrayal and trial a fire of coals was kindled in the court of the high priest. (Luke 22: 55; John 18: 18.) The ninth month of the Jewish year was about our December. The Jewish year began about the first of our April.

23. "When Jehudi had read three or four leaves ('columns'—margin)"—enough to confirm the king in his opinion of the contents of the book—he cut it to pieces and burned it in the fire. Had he been like Josiah or Hezekiah, he doubtless could have led the princes and the people into repentance and the worship of God. We are impressed with the great contrast between his conduct and that of Josiah when the latter heard the word of God. The word of God was displeasing to Jehoiakim. He was not seeking God's will, but his own way. He and his princes claimed to be servants of God; and yet he sought to destroy the word of God, because it was contrary to his feelings and ways. He wanted Jeremiah, as the false prophets were doing, to say that Jerusalem and the nation would not be overcome by the Babylonians; but Jeremiah told the truth, which condemned the king's wicked course. It was blasphemy to destroy God's book, and we can find no word to express how horribly wicked it was; but is not the same thing virtually done to-day? The Bible is virtually destroyed by those who refuse to obey it, or who read it with prejudice against what it teaches and reject such portions as do not suit them. Some men go so far as to arouse prejudice against the teaching of the Bible on given questions.

24. "And they were not afraid, nor rent their garments." Jeremiah expresses his amazement that the warnings, woes, and denunciations of the word of God made no impression for good on the king and his princes, and that the impious act of burning the word of God did not fill them all with horror. The ungodly Ahab acted differently (1 Kings 21: 27), and we have seen what Josiah did. Neither the king nor his princes felt any fear of incurring God's displeasure or manifested any grief over their sins. This shows how far people can go in sin and rebellion against God and yet claim to be his servants. The Jews worshiped God after the traditions and commandments of men, while they crucified Jesus and rejected the gospel. (See Mark 7: 1-13.) All the worship of God to-day after the commandments and ways of men is vain worship.

#### **IV. The Wicked Course of Jehoiakim Hastened Destruction —His Own Destruction Foretold (Comment on Intervening Verses Shows This)**

25 Three of the king's princes—Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah—went so far as to remonstrate with the king against his burning the book; yet they showed no grief or horror that he did so. He gave no heed to them. We can conceive of no greater sin than mutilating and destroying the word of God. All this is a solemn warning to us.



26. "Take Baruch . . . and Jeremiah." This means to destroy them. The king had killed Uriah and had before sought to kill Jeremiah, as we have learned. This demonstrates the prudence of the princes in advising Baruch and Jeremiah to hide themselves. "But Jehovah hid them." This was done in the providence of God, and it is said he did it. He had promised to protect both Jeremiah (Jer. 15: 20, 21) and Baruch. (Jer. 45) Only as much of what we call "evil" comes to God's children as is good for them.

27-28. After the king had destroyed the roll, God instructed Jeremiah to write on another roll all the words which had been written on the first one, and to add to them many like words. (Verse 32.) This shows the impotence of man to destroy the word of God, which "liveth" and "abideth forever." (1 Pet. 1: 23-25.) God's word can never be destroyed, and his gospel is everlasting. One generation or nation may reject it; but it continues, and will prevail. God's faithful servants sometimes become discouraged; but his truth lives, and cannot go down or be destroyed. The wicked may flourish for a time; yet they will fail and be cut off, while the end of the righteous is peace. (See Ps. 37: 35-38; 92: 7, 8.)

29. To the presumptuous and wicked king God sent the message which follows. That which especially offended the king was the prophecies of Jeremiah that Jerusalem would be burned and the land destroyed by the Babylonians. God instructed Jeremiah to reiterate all this and to add more. The only way for Jehoiakim to have avoided such desolation was to repent before it was too late. When it became too late to avoid the destruction, all were advised to humbly submit to God's chastisement and go into captivity. The wicked course which the king pursued only hastened the captivity and desolation. Had he repented and used his influence and authority to induce the people to repent, as did Hezekiah and Josiah, God would have been merciful and would have stayed the punishment, or would have done for the people what was best for them.

30. This curse upon Jehoiakim was added to the above: "He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost." Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim, did reign three months and ten days; but it was under Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. (2 Chron. 36: 8-10.) Of Jehoiachin, God said: "Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no more shall a man of his seed prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling in Judah." (See Jer. 22: 24-30.) "Either in an engagement with some bands of the Chaldeans, or else by the hand of his oppressed subjects, who thought to conciliate the Babylonians by the murder of their king, Jehoiakim came to a violent death in the eleventh year of his reign. His body was cast out ignominiously on the ground, and then, after being left exposed for some time, was dragged away and 'buried with the burial of an ass' (Jer. 22: 18, 19), without pomp or ceremony, beyond the gates of Jerusalem." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

31. This punishment is extended to Jehoiakim's servants and the people, because neither the servants nor the people repented when they heard the word of God. While some of these servants remonstrated against Jehoiakim's burning the book, they did not openly stand out against such a sin and openly contend for God's word. It is a sin not to contend for the faith when it is assailed, and he who is unwilling to forsake all for Christ and his word is unworthy of him. (Matt. 10: 32.) These servants dishonored and disowned God when they refused to contend for his word.



## V. God Commanded Jeremiah to Write Another Book

32. As verse 28 states, God commanded Jeremiah to write another book and add other words to it. "Then took Jeremiah another roll." The one used before had been burned, but God's word had not been destroyed. Baruch wrote again from the mouth of Jeremiah "all the words" of the former book, "and there were added besides unto them many like words." Jeremiah was inspired, and God spoke miraculously through him. This lesson teaches us the folly of trying to destroy, or even to evade, the word of God. The only right course to pursue is to humbly bow to God's authority and to obey his will.

### QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Did you read all the references?  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Memory Verses.  
After Jeremiah was acquitted, how was he afterwards treated?  
When was Jerusalem besieged?  
By whom?  
Who and what were carried away?  
What did God command Jeremiah to write?  
Why was all this written after it had been spoken?  
1-8 Who was Baruch?  
Why was this book called "a roll of a book?"  
When this had been written what was Baruch commanded to do with it?  
9-19 How did the princes learn what Baruch was doing?  
What did they have Baruch to do?  
What effect did this have upon them?  
What did they determine to do?  
Why were Baruch and Jeremiah told to hide themselves?  
20, 21 What did these princes do first?  
What did the king have done?  
What is necessary for all to do for themselves?  
22 Where was the king?  
23 What disposition did he make of this book?  
Why did he do this?  
In what ways may the Bible be destroyed today?
- 24 At what does Jeremiah express amazement?  
What does this conduct in the king and his princes show?  
25 What did three of the princes do?  
What is one of the greatest sins?  
26 What did the king command to be done with Jeremiah and Baruch?  
In what way had God hidden them?  
How much of what we call "evil" does God allow to come upon his children?  
27, 28 What did God instruct Jeremiah to do?  
What does this show?  
What is the end of the wicked and the righteous?  
29 What message did God send the king?  
How could he have avoided the destruction foretold by Jeremiah?  
30 What curse did God pronounce upon Jehoiakim?  
Who succeeded him?  
How long did Jehoiachin reign?  
What was his end?  
How is Jehoiakim supposed to have died, and what kind of burial did he have?  
31 Why were the king's servants and the people punished?  
What does the conduct of some of these servants show to be a great sin?  
In what did these servants disown God?  
32 What did Jeremiah then do?  
What does this lesson teach?



## LESSON XI—JUNE 11

**JEREMIAH CAST INTO PRISON—Jeremiah 37: 1-38: 13****Print 38: 4-13**

**JEREMIAH 38. 4** Then the princes said unto the king, Let this man, we pray thee, be put to death; forasmuch as he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.

**5** And Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he is in your hand; for the king is not he that can do anything against you.

**6** Then they took Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchijah the king's son, that was in the court of the guard; and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire; and Jeremiah sank in the mire.

**7** Now when Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch, who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon (the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin).

**8** Ebed-melech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying,

**9** My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die in the place where he is, because of the famine; for there is no more bread in the city.

**10** Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die.

**11** So Ebed-melech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence rags and worn-out garments, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah.

**12** And Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these rags and worn-out garments under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so.

**13** So they drew up Jeremiah with the cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

**Golden Text**—Be not afraid because of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Jehovah. (Jeremiah 1: 8.)

**Memory Verse**—Isaiah 43:5.

**Devotional Reading**—Psalm 40: 1-8.

**Reference Material**—Genesis 39: 19-23; Jeremiah 20: 1-18; Luke 3: 18-20; Acts 12: 1-11; 16: 19-34; 24: 22-27; Revelation 1:9.

**Home Readings**.—Mon., June 5.—The prophet's warning.—Jer. 37: 1-10. Tu.—The prophet accused and imprisoned.—Jer. 37: 11-15. Wed.—The prophet appeals to the king.—Jer. 37: 16-21. Th.—The prophet consigned to the dungeon.—Jer. 38: 1-6. Fr.—The prophet rescued from the dungeon.—Jer. 37: 7-13. Sat.—John the Baptist imprisoned.—Luke 3: 15-20. Su.—Jehovah's deliverance.—Psa. 40: 1-8.

**INTRODUCTION****I. The Beginning of the Captivity**

Reference was made in the last lesson to Jehoiakim's reign. In the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took Jerusalem, carried away some of the vessels of the temple, Daniel, and other captives, and put Jehoiakim in chains, intending to carry him to Babylon, but, it seems, changed his purpose, and left Jehoiakim as tributary ruler at Jerusalem. (Jer. 25: 1, 2; Dan. 1: 1, 2; 2 Kings 24: 1; 2 Chron. 36: 6, 7.)

Jehoiakim served Nebuchadnezzar three years, and then rebelled. Nebuchadnezzar then "sent against him bands of the Chaldeans," Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites, who were subject to Babylon, and who made havoc of the whole country from time to time until the subjugation and shameful death and burial of Jehoiakim referred to in the last lesson. God emphasizes in this connection the fact that the sins of Manasseh led to this. (2 Kings 24: 1-7.)



This was the beginning of the Babylonian captivity. Jehoiachin (called also "Jeconiah" and "Coniah") succeeded his father, Jehoiakim; but he was governor under Nebuchadnezzar and reigned only three months and ten days. Jeremiah said of Jehoiakim, "He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David" (Jer. 36: 39), which was true, because Jehoiachin was only viceroy, or ruler, under a conqueror. Jerusalem was again besieged.

Nebuchadnezzar joined the siege in person after it had been begun, and soon Jehoiachin surrendered. The temple was again plundered, and a great number of captives were carried to Babylon. Among the number were Ezekiel (Ezek. 1: 1, 2); Shimei, Mordecai's grandfather (Esth. 2: 5, 6); and Jehoiachin, his mother, wives, officers, and chief men of the land (Jer. 29). Jehoiachin remained in prison in Babylon for thirty-seven years. After the death of Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-merodach gave him liberty, changed his prison garments, raised him above other captive kings, and made him sit at his own table. (2 Kings 24: 8-17; 25: 27-30; 2 Chron. 36: 9, 10; Jer. 52: 31-34.)

## II. Nebuchadnezzar Besieged Jerusalem

Zedekiah, another son of Josiah, and uncle of Jehoiachin, was made king by Nebuchadnezzar. (Jer. 37: 1-3) His original name was "Mattaniah," which Nebuchadnezzar changed to "Zedekiah." He reigned eleven years. Nebuchadnezzar put Zedekiah upon oath to be a faithful tributary (2 Chron. 36: 13); but in the fourth year of his reign we find Zedekiah in the lead of the whole of Syria, in an effort to throw off the yoke of Babylon.

Ambassadors from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon were sent to Jerusalem to consult with Zedekiah in regard to this. Haniah, the prophet, went so far as to say that God had declared through him that in two full years the yoke of Babylon would be broken, and all vessels of the temple and the captives would be restored. (See Jer. 27, 28.) In the ninth year of his reign Zedekiah rebelled against Babylon and sent ambassadors to Egypt for assistance. (Ezek. 17: 15-20) Learning of this, Nebuchadnezzar, with his army, went up against Jerusalem and besieged it, building "forts against it round about." The siege lasted eighteen months, and was terrible. (2 Kings 25: 1-8; Jer. 52: 3-7.)

It progressed steadily to the most extreme starvation and suffering, and famine and pestilence raged. Children cried for bread, and there was none, and the tongues of sucking children cleaved to the roof of their mouths for thirst; men and women searched dunghills, hoping to find scraps of bread; and, more horrible still, delicate women and tender mothers boiled and ate their own children. (See Lam. 4: 1-10.)

Jeremiah not only prophesied that Jerusalem would be destroyed and the people led away into Babylonian captivity, but also that, after seventy years, they would return; and he showed his faith in this by purchasing a piece of land during this siege. (Jer. 32.) During this siege Jeremiah reminded Zedekiah, by the command of Jehovah, of his refusal to keep the solemn covenant he had made with the people, that every man according to the law should set his servants free, and that for a breach of this covenant the sword, famine, and pestilence should come. (See Jer. 34.) In his distress, Zedekiah requested Jeremiah to pray for him, saying: "Pray now unto Jehovah our God for us."

Zedekiah was weak and vacillating. While he allowed Jeremiah's imprisonment, he felt his dependence upon him, had secret inter-



views with him, and asked for his prayers and the word of God, but would not then act according to that word. (See Jer. 21: 1-14; 38: 14-26.) Jeremiah showed his true courage in all these interviews by plainly declaring that the city would be destroyed and the people led into captivity, that it was vain to look to Egypt for help, and that the only safe thing to do was to submit to the Chaldeans. (See verse 17.) Jeremiah was not yet cast into prison, but "came in and went out among the people."

### III. The Siege Lifted for a Short While

After beginning the siege of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar learned that the king of Egypt was coming with an army out of Egypt, and he broke up the siege to go and meet the Egyptians, but only to return shortly and renew it. (Jer. 37: 5.)

### IV. Jeremiah Arrested

During the cessation of the siege Jeremiah was arrested and imprisoned. Taking advantage of the withdrawal of the Chaldeans, he started out of Jerusalem to the land of Benjamin "to receive his portion there," which was probably a piece of land near Anathoth or its products due him. Anathoth was three or four miles north of Jerusalem, and was Jeremiah's home, as we have already learned. "The gate of Benjamin" was the north gate of the city. "In the midst of the people." Many people, as well as Jeremiah, were taking advantage of the withdrawal of the Chaldeans to go out of the city—some for one purpose and some for another. As Jeremiah was passing out of the gate, he was arrested by Irijah, "a captain of the ward," and accused of "falling away to the Chaldeans" as a traitor. Jeremiah denied this charge, saying: "It is false; I am not falling away to the Chaldeans." Having been arrested, Jeremiah was taken before the princes. The names of some of the princes are mentioned elsewhere. (Jer. 38: 3; 20: 1, 2; 21: 1.) Jeremiah had compared Zedekiah, his princes, and the people who resisted his prophecies, to bad figs. (Jer. 24.) These princes smote Jeremiah and cast him into prison—"in the house of Jonathan the scribe." The house of Jonathan had been converted into a prison. Jeremiah was not at this time put in the dungeon. Later he was cast "into the dungeon house" (or "house of the pit"—margin), "and into the cells"—one of the cells, where he "remained many days."

Zedekiah had secret interviews with Jeremiah. Whenever Zedekiah asked Jeremiah concerning the word of God, he frankly, sincerely, and courageously spoke the truth. He said, "There is word from Jehovah"—and stated what it was—namely: "Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon." This was not pleasant news to the king, but it was the truth.

Jeremiah then asked the king: "Wherein have I sinned against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison?" Jeremiah was conscious of his rectitude and of having spoken only the word of God.

Also he asked the king: "Where now are your prophets that prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this place?" The prophets were false, and the facts had showed them false. By this Jeremiah sought to lead the king to act upon the truth.

Jeremiah next earnestly besought the king not to send him back to prison, lest he die there. (Jer. 37: 14-20.)



While the king was weak and vacillating and would not follow the word of God, yet he respected Jeremiah and granted his request not to be sent back into prison. He gave orders that Jeremiah be committed "into the court of the guard" and allowed a loaf of bread daily so long as there should be any in the city. (Jer. 37: 21.) "The court of the guard" was the quarters of the guards of the palace. (Jer. 32: 2.)

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Jeremiah Cast into the Pit

"The princes" Shephatiah, Gedaliah, Jucal, and Pashur, heard the words, which Jeremiah spoke to the people, saying: "Thus saith Jehovah. He that abideth in this city shall die of the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey, and he shall live. Thus saith Jehovah, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it; and when they heard this they said to the king: 'Let this man, we pray thee, be put to death; for as much as he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.'" These princes were like not a few well meaning, it may be, but misguided people of to-day, who think the very ones who seek their good and the good of the church are their enemies.

Paul was considered their enemy by some for speaking the truth. He asks the Galatians: "So then am I become your enemy by telling you the truth?" (Gal. 4: 16.) Jeremiah was the very best friend and really the only true friend the king and his princes and the people had. To encourage or even to defend people in sin is to become their enemies. Whom the Lord loves he chastens. His love is shown in his teaching and correcting his own people (Heb. 12: 4-13.) To teach people the truth, to cry aloud and spare not, to show them their sins, and to persuade them to repent is to love and to save them.

5. The king did not want to be counted as the murderer of Jeremiah, and did not really want to kill him; but he again showed his weakness when he listened to the accusations of his princes against Jeremiah as recorded in this chapter. They sought his life, and the king said: "Behold, he is in your hand; for the king is not he that can do anything against you." The king had neither the courage nor strength of character to do the right and to protect Jeremiah. It is most necessary and most admirable to stand for the right against the mighty popular current and in face of opposition and death.

6. These princes did not kill Jeremiah outright, but put him into the dungeon, where he would have died, most likely, of suffocation and starvation. This dungeon, or pit, was that of Malchijah, the king's son, and was "in the court of the guard." It was deep, because Jeremiah had to be let down into it and drawn up out of it with cords. It was a pit, or cistern, from which the water had been exhausted by the famine; but it was damp and filled with foul gasses, and the filth and mire on the bottom were deep. Into this mire Jeremiah sunk. It was common to use such pits for prisons. (Isa. 24: 22; Zech. 9: 11.)

As the Introduction clearly states, Jeremiah had been in prison before, but not in this way. It was the same old story with Jesus



and the apostles. Figuratively Jesus was in the mire, and the deep waters. (See Ps. 69: 2, 14, 15.) This is said in this Psalm with other prophecies concerning Jesus. (See Vs. 5: 9.)

The apostles were imprisoned at different times, and some were killed. Some of their sufferings are described in 1 Cor. 4: 9-13. The early disciples suffered likewise. To-day and forever more "all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3: 12.) And those who are of the flesh now persecute those who are "after the Spirit," or God's true children. (Gal. 4: 29.) All who have a name to be church members are not Christians; and some church members are as vile slanderers and persecutors of real Christians as Satan can have. It was his own fellow Jews who imprisoned and bitterly persecuted Jeremiah.

## II. An Ethiopian Saved Jeremiah

7-9 It is remarkable that an Ethiopian eunuch, the king's servant, saved Jeremiah from death at the hands of his own Jewish brethren. To-day some men of the world show much more mercy and kindness and have a higher sense of rectitude and honor than some church members, as the term "church member" is commonly used.

He is not a Christian who is one outwardly, but who is one from the heart in spirit and truth. Such always treat others in justice and righteousness, mercy and love, as they would be treated. This eunuch and servant was Ebed-melech. Having heard that Jeremiah had been cast into this dungeon, he "went forth out of the king's house" to the king, then sitting in the gate of Benjamin, and interceded with the king in behalf of Jeremiah, stating that Jeremiah would surely die there. He gave his reasons: the men who put the prophet in this dungeon had done an evil thing, and there was "no bread in the city" because of the famine. Heretofore while a prisoner "in the court of the guard," Jeremiah had been allowed "a loaf of bread out of the baker's street, until all the bread in the city was spent." (Jer. 37: 21.)

There was no more bread in these public places to be had and Jeremiah would now die of starvation. That Ebed-melech "went forth" to the king while in this gate and in this public place and made this appeal show courage and magnanimity. A deep sense of right and strong convictions against wrong will make any one brave and fearless and magnanimous.

10-13. Ebed-melech prevailed upon the king to have Jeremiah taken up out of this place. He commanded Ebed-melech to take thirty men with him "from hence"—from the gate of Benjamin—as guards against any opposition with which he might meet, and take Jeremiah up out of the dungeon "before he die." Ebed-melech, no doubt, gladly proceeded with his guard to Jeremiah's relief.

He took with him "rags and worn out garments." These were let down by cords to Jeremiah in the dungeon and he was instructed to place them under his arm holes between his flesh and the cords so that the cords would not cut his flesh while being drawn up. Thus he was drawn up out of the dungeon and was allowed to remain "in the court of the guard until the day Jerusalem was taken." (Verse 28.) Even after this Zedekiah had a secret interview with Jeremiah and promised that he should not be put to death; also the princes had an interview with him.

It is cruel and basely ungrateful to seek one's advice and help and then turn right away and persecute such an adviser and gracious helper. After all this persecution, Jeremiah still stated the



truth to the king and his princes and advised them as to what was best to do. (Verses 14-28.) A true man cannot do otherwise; he is always the same concerning truth, justice, righteousness, and faithfulness to God, regardless of circumstances, conditions, and public opinions. Concerning these high and holy principles one cannot be one thing today and another thing tomorrow.

### Ebed-melech Rewarded

For this justice, magnanimity, and kindness to Jeremiah, God's true prophet, God rewarded Ebed-melech. See what this reward was in Jer. 39: 15-18. The next lesson will show what became of the poor, weak, and vacillating king. I had rather be a godly Ethiopian in slavery and poverty than to be a weak, cowardly, ungodly king.

### QUESTIONS

Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Memory Verse.  
Who was Nebuchadnezzar?  
When did he attack Jerusalem?  
What and whom did he carry away?  
What was done with Jehoiakim?  
How long did he serve Nebuchadnezzar?  
Who were sent against him?  
How long did he reign?  
What was his end?  
Whose sins led to this?  
When did the Babylonian captivity begin?  
Who succeeded Jehoiakim?  
How long did he reign?  
What disposition was made of him?  
Who were carried into captivity with him?  
How long did he remain in prison?  
Who released him?  
Who was made king instead of Jehoiakim?  
What was Zedekiah's original name?  
Whose son was he?  
How long did he reign?  
What oath did he make to Nebuchadnezzar?  
How did he keep it?  
What prophecy did Hananiah deliver?  
What did Nebuchadnezzar do?  
How long did this siege last?  
To what condition were the people of Jerusalem reduced?  
When did Jeremiah say the Jews would return from captivity?  
How did he show his faith in this?  
When did Zedekiah rebel against Nebuchadnezzar?  
To whom did he send for help?  
Of what breach of promise was Zedekiah reminded, and what was the penalty?  
What request did Zedekiah make of Jeremiah?  
What shows the weak and vacillating character of Zedekiah?

What shows Jeremiah's true courage?  
Why did Nebuchadnezzar withdraw during the siege?  
State in full the answer God gave to Zedekiah.  
What advantage did Jeremiah take of Nebuchadnezzar's withdrawal?  
When and where was he arrested?  
Of what was he charged?  
What reply did he make to this?  
16 What was done with Jeremiah after he was arrested?  
What house had been converted into a prison?  
What did Zedekiah seek with Jeremiah?  
What did he ask him?  
What was the reply?  
What questions did Jeremiah then ask Zedekiah?  
How did Jeremiah show that the prophets were false?  
Why did Jeremiah request the king not to put him back in prison?  
What did the king do with him?  
What was "the court of the guard?"  
4 Repeat what Jeremiah said to the people.  
Who reported this to the king?  
What did they request should be done with Jeremiah?  
Why should he be put to death?  
In what are the princes like some misguided people of today?  
How is true friendship and love shown?  
Of what is the Lord's chastisement a manifestation?  
5 Did the king really desire to have Jeremiah put to death?  
But what did he say to these princes?  
What great quality of character did he lack?  
What is a most necessary and admirable characteristic?  
6 How did princes seek to destroy Jeremiah?  
Describe the dungeon.



Was Jeremiah placed in prison before this?  
 In what way similar to this were Christ and his early disciples treated?  
 How will all who live godly in Christ be treated?  
 Of what sins are some so-called church members guilty?  
 7-9 Who interceded in behalf of Jeremiah?  
 What do some men of the world manifest more of than many church members?  
 What did Ebed-melech request to be done for Jeremiah?  
 What reasons did he give?

How much bread before this had Jeremiah been allowed?  
 What is necessary to render one courageous and magnanimous?  
 10-13 What did the king order Ebed-melech to do?  
 How was Jeremiah lifted out of the dungeon?  
 What need was there for old, worn-out garments?  
 What of Jeremiah did the king and princes further seek?  
 What still showed their cowardice?  
 What will a true man never do under any sort of trials and circumstances?  
 How was Ebed-melech rewarded?

## GOD RULES

Just after several lessons in this quarter in the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and several in the preceding one concerning Elijah and Elisha, we should derive greater benefit from the study of the prophets and be more deeply impressed with the sublime fact that God rules throughout the universe, from the worm to the largest and to the remotest star, from the poorest and most humble man on earth to the archangels.

He rules in justice and mercy, righteousness and love, wisdom and power, seeing the sparrow fall, hearing the ravens cry, answering the widow's prayer, and directing the angels upon their missions.

We should see still greater reasons than formerly for studying the prophets—both their lives and their teaching.

The writer of these lessons has besought people in general and the church in particular since the beginning of the great world war to read again and again and to study as never before the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, and others, in order to learn, with other things, that God rules in the kingdom of men; gives it to whomsoever he will; sets up over it, as serves his purpose, the lowest of men (Dan. 4: 17); changes times and seasons; removes kings and sets up kings; gives wisdom unto the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; reveals deep and secret things; knows what is in darkness, for light dwells with him (Dan. 2: 21, 22); leads armies to battles and creates peace (Isa. 45: 7; Amos 3: 6); all the inhabitants of earth are as nothing before his power; he does according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth, and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What doest thou?" (Dan. 4: 34, 35). He declares "the end from the beginning." (Isa. 46:10.)

Also all should study the Bible in order to learn the principles upon which God deals with men, and that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever—"even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." (Ps. 90: 2.)

It is a calm, serene, safe contentment and blessed assurance to fully commit one's way to God, to acknowledge him in all things—the gentle dewdrop and raging storms, in peaceful homes, and the upheaval of nations—and to be anxious for nothing, "but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving" to let all "requests be made known" to him. It is then "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," guards the heart and thoughts in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4: 6, 7.) God rules.



## LESSON XII—JUNE 18

## THE DOWNFALL OF JUDAH—2 Kings 25: 1-21

## Print 25: 1-12

2 KINGS 25. 1 And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and encamped against it; and they built forts against it round about.

2 So the city was beset by the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

3 On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land.

4 Then a breach was made in the city, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden (now the Chaldeans were against the city round about); and the king went by the way of the Arabah.

5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho; and all his army scattered from him.

6 Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him.

7 And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in fetters, and carried him to Babylon.

8 Now in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem.

9 And he burnt the house of Jehovah, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, even every great house, burnt he with fire.

10 And all the army of the Chaldeans, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

11 And the residue of the people that were left in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon, and the residue of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away captive.

12 But the captain of the guard left of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (Galatians 6: 7.)

*Time*—B. C. 588.

*Places*—Jerusalem and Babylon.

*Persons*—The Jews and Babylonians.

*Memory Verse*—Ecclesiastes 12: 13.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 137: 1-6.

*Reference Material*—Deuteronomy 28: 15-19, 25, 36, 37; 2 Chronicles 36: 11-23; Jonah 1: 1, 2; Luke 19: 41-44.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., June 12.—A servile king.—2 Kings 24: 1-9. Tu. A captive king.—2 Kings 24: 10-20. Wed.—The downfall of Judah.—2 Kings 25: 1-12. Th.—The temple and the land despoiled.—2 Kings 25: 13-21. Fr.—God warns his people.—Deut. 28: 15-24. Sat.—Jesus warns Jerusalem.—Luke 19: 41-48. Su.—Sorrow in captivity.—Psa. 137: 1-6.

## INTRODUCTION

This lesson brings us to the consummation of the repeated sins of the kingdom of Judah. 2 Kings 17: 7-26 gives an account of the destruction of the kingdom of Israel and the captivity of the ten tribes more than one hundred and twenty-five years before this. The destruction of the kingdom of Judah had long since been foretold, and the people had God's warnings against sin and rebellion and the results to which they would lead. The good and loyal kings had stayed at times this destruction by temporary reformations, but during the reigns of the wicked kings the people had relapsed until now it was inevitable. God sent numerous prophets to warn and to teach the people, but they gave no heed. Jeremiah labored faithfully until old age, and was then cast into the dungeon to be starved to death because he spoke the truth.



We are astonished that the people then did not heed God's solemn warnings and serve him; it is still greater astonishment that people now, with all this before them, do not believe his warnings against sin and repent and obey him. We have recorded by inspiration all that befell the kingdom of Israel and Judah because of sin for our instruction and warning; and, besides this, we have all that the New Testament contains. Like the Jews, people are sinning and persisting in rebellion against God in the face of all truth. That fearful "destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (2 Thess. 1: 7-10) of which the New Testament gives solemn and repeated warnings will as surely come as destruction came upon the Jews.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. The City Besieged, Captured, the King and His Men Fled

1-4. Zedekiah was the son of Josiah. His former name was "Mattaniah." (2 Kings 24: 17.) Josiah was succeeded by his son, Jehoahaz, who reigned only three months. Eliakim, another son of Josiah, was made king by Pharaoh-necho, who changed his name to "Jehoiakim." Eliakim reigned eleven years, and was succeeded by his son, Jehoiachin, who reigned only three months. Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah, uncle to Jehoiachin and son of Josiah, king, and changed his name to "Zedekiah." (See 2 Kings 23: 31 to 24: 20.)

Zedekiah began to reign at the age of twenty-one years, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. (2 Chron. 36: 11.) "He did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah his God." (2 Chron. 36: 12.) He followed the example of his brother, Jehoiakin, and other wicked kings, and not the good example of his father. "He humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of Jehovah." (2 Chron. 36: 12.)

Jeremiah warned Zedekiah from God against rebelling and fighting against the king of Babylon; but while at times he consulted Jeremiah and seemed disposed to listen to him, he would not obey the word of God spoken by Jeremiah. For this and the continued sins of the Jews, God brought the Babylonians against Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah to destroy them.

In this sense Nebuchadnezzar is God's "servant" and "battle-ax and weapons of war," although a wicked and heathen king. (See Jer. 29: 9; 27: 6; 43: 10; 51: 20.) Nebuchadnezzar made war upon the Jews with wicked intent to plunder and to destroy; but God, in his overwhelming power, used him to chastise his people.

In the ordinary record of human events it is said that Nebuchadnezzar did this, but in the divine record we see the hand of God "in it all." (See Dan. 4.) God brought upon Jerusalem the king of the Chaldeans. (2 Chron. 36: 17.) When God had served his purpose with the Chaldeans, he destroyed Babylon for its own wickedness. See the terrible punishment pronounced against Babylon in Jer. 50, 51. This demonstrates the fact that God overrules a wicked nation to chastise and punish others, and yet does not approve of that nation, but destroys it for its wickedness. "Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon." (2 Kings 24: 20.)

In the fourth year of his reign Zedekiah took an oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 51: 59; Ezek. 17: 11-21), but he broke this oath and sent ambassadors to Egypt to obtain help in his rebellion against Babylon. In addition to the sins of the king, the chief priests and the people "trespassed very greatly after all the abominations of the nations; and they polluted the house of Jehovah which he had hallowed in Jerusalem." (2 Chron. 36: 14.)



These abominations are mentioned in Jer. 7: 8-11; 23: 9-15; Ezek. 8: 18. Against all these abominations and the transgressions of his people God warned them through his prophets, "rising up early and sending" them, "because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place." (2 Chron. 36: 15; see Jer 25: 4-11; 7: 13-15.) God knew to what fearful destruction the many and repeated sins of the people were leading them, and in great compassion and mercy he continually warned and persuaded them, if by any means he could save them.

But the people "mocked the messengers of God." They killed Uriah, and beat and imprisoned and sought at times to kill Jeremiah. (Jer. 26: 20-24.) They despised the word of God and "scoffed at his prophets" until his wrath arose against them without remedy. (2 Chron. 36: 15, 16; see Ezra 5: 12.) Nebuchadnezzar went against Jerusalem in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim. It was then this captivity began. (Jer. 25: 1; Dan 1: 1; 2; 2 Kings 24: 1.)

The Chaldeans put Jehoiakim in chains for the purpose of carrying him to Babylon; but, it seems, Nebuchadnezzar changed his purpose and retained him as king. (2 Chron. 36: 5, 6.) Nebuchadnezzar went against Jerusalem again in the reign of Jehoiachin, when the second captivity took place. (2 Kings 24: 8-16; Ezek. 1: 1-13.)

The siege of this lesson began on the tenth day of the tenth month of the ninth year of the reign of Zedekiah and continued until the ninth day of the fourth month of the eleventh year of his reign—eighteen months. (Jer. 52: 4-6.) During this siege there was a short cessation when the Chaldeans went to fight back the Egyptians. (Jer. 37: 11.) "There was no bread for the people of the land." The inhabitants of Jerusalem were reduced to the sorest famine and greatest suffering.

The book of Lamentations describes the horrors of the famine and the great desolation of this siege. (See Lam 2: 11, 12, 20, 21; 4: 6-10.) In order to avoid all this suffering, Jeremiah long beforehand advised submission to the Chaldeans; but for his wise counsel he was persecuted. When God's people were obedient to him, he advised them not to submit to heathen nations, and always gave them the victory over their enemies; but now the greatest mercy he could show them was to advise submission.

At this time the complete downfall of the nation and the destruction of the city came. It seems from Jer. 33: 4 that houses within Jerusalem were torn down to strengthen the walls of the city, weakened by the enemy's battering rams; but to no avail. A breach was finally made in the wall. "All the princes of the king of Babylon came, and sat in the middle gate." From 2 Sam. 18: 24 it seems that there were two gates to the entrance—an outer and inner gate.

The inner gate may be "the middle gate;" I cannot say. It had been declared that the Chaldeans would be gathered "into the midst of the city." (Jer. 21: 4.) When Zedekiah and his men of war saw these officers and generals of the Chaldean army sitting "in the middle gate," probably holding a conference as to how to proceed, they fled out of the city by night.

They went "by the way of the king's garden, through the gate betwixt the two walls." (See Jer. 52: 7.) 2 Chron. 32: 5 tells of the two walls. Zedekiah "went by the way of the Arabah." The Authorized Version says "the plain" where the American Revised Version says "the Arabah." This was the depression of the Jordan Valley.



5. Zedekiah and his men, having left the city, went toward Jericho, doubtless hoping to cross the Jordan and to escape arrest. "But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho." His army had scattered and left. (2 Kings 25: 5.) Having arrested Zedekiah, the Chaldeans took him to Nebuchadnezzar, "to Riblah in the land of Hamath" (consult the map), and Nebuchadnezzar "gave judgment upon him."

## II. The Punishment of the King

6-7. The judgment was that Zedekiah's sons should be slain at Riblah "before his eyes." Also "all the nobles of Judah" were slain "in Riblah." (Jer. 52: 10.) In Jerusalem also young men were slain "with the sword in the house of their sanctuary," where they had gone for refuge. No compassion was shown to "young man or virgin, old man or hoary-headed." (2 Chron. 36: 17.) The further judgment was that Zedekiah's eyes should be put out and he should be bound in fetters and carried to Babylon. The last thing his eyes beheld was the death agonies of his sons and nobles.

A horrible picture for a blind man to the end of his life! Ezekiel (12: 13) prophesied that Zedekiah should be carried "to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there." Jeremiah (32: 3-5) said that Zedekiah should not escape out of the hands of the Chaldeans, but should surely be captured and should speak mouth to mouth with Nebuchadnezzar and should look into his eyes. Zedekiah's eyes did look into Nebuchadnezzar's eyes. This was done at Riblah, whence Zedekiah, blind, was carried to Babylon; and hence, although there, he saw not the city.

## III. The People Taken as Captives to Babylon

8-10. The temple was again robbed, and everything that was left after the former spoiling (2 Chron. 36: 10) was carried to Babylon. A description of these things is given in Jer. 52: 17-23. The king's house and all the houses of his princes were robbed of all their treasures. The king's house, the temple, and all the palaces of the city were burned, and all goodly vessels not removed to Babylon were destroyed. The walls of the city were broken down. All this came to pass as Jeremiah had foretold. (See 2 Chron. 36: 21; Jer. 7: 12-15; 21: 8-14; 25: 11; 29: 10; 34: 1-5; etc.)

11-12. All who escaped from the sword, even the deserters who fell away to the Chaldeans, were taken as captives to Babylon. Only the poorest of the people were left; these were left as vinedressers and husbandmen. A great number of the best people were taken away before this, with Jehoiachin. (Jer. 52: 28-30.) Jeremiah had foretold that the captivity should continue for seventy years—"until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths." (2 Chron. 36: 21.) God ordained that the land should rest every seventh year—"keep a Sabbath" (Lev. 25: 1-7); and in Lev. 26: 27-35 he warned the people that if they did not obey him in allowing the land to rest every seventh year, he would scatter them among their enemies until the land should keep its Sabbaths. This was fulfilled. Nebuchadnezzar made provision for Jeremiah's safety and comfort. (See Jer. 39: 11-14.)



# QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
 Repeat the Golden Text.  
 Give the time, place, and persons.  
 Repeat the Memory Verse.  
 How long had the ten tribes been in captivity at the time of this lesson?  
 At what should we be astonished?  
 Against what destruction are we solemnly warned?  
 1-4 Who was Zedekiah, and how long did he reign?  
 What was his character?  
 Against what did God through Jeremiah warn Zedekiah?  
 Why did God bring the Babylonians against Jerusalem?  
 What use does God make of wicked nations?  
 When God has so used wicked nations, what does he finally do with them?  
 What led to the siege in the last lesson?  
 What sins did the priests and people commit?  
 What were "the abominations of the nations?"  
 What does "rising up early and sending" the prophets mean?  
 For how long did Jeremiah warn the kingdom?  
 How did the people receive all these warnings and treat God's prophets?  
 Why did God finally give them up to destruction?  
 Relate in order, the attacks of the Chaldeans upon Jerusalem and the different times people were taken into captivity.
- What describes the horrors of the sufferings of the siege?  
 Why were the Jews advised to submit to the Chaldeans?  
 How were the walls of Jerusalem fortified?  
 What had been declared as to where the Chaldeans would gather?  
 Where did the princes assemble?  
 Where was Nebuchadnezzar?  
 How did Zedekiah and others escape?  
 What was the Arabah?  
 5 Where was Zedekiah captured?  
 To whom was he taken?  
 6, 7 What was the judgment of Nebuchadnezzar against him?  
 What further judgment was there against him?  
 What was the last thing Zedekiah beheld?  
 How was it that Zedekiah saw the king of Babylon face to face and was taken to Babylon, and yet did not see the city?  
 8-10 State the destruction wrought in Jerusalem.  
 11, 12 What was done with all who escaped the sword?  
 How long was this captivity to continue?  
 What was the law concerning the rest which should be given to the land?  
 What had God said he would do if this rest was not given?  
 What was done with Jeremiah?



## LESSON XIII—JUNE 25.

# JUDAH'S PROSPERITY AND ADVERSITY—REVIEW— Jeremiah 11: 1-8

*Golden Text*—Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah. (Psalm 33: 12.)

*Memory Verse*—Psalms 39: 7.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 65: 1, 2, 8-13.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., June 19.—A good king.—2 Chron. 14: 1-8. Tu.—Giving and working for God's house.—2 Kings 12: 9-16. Wed.—Pride and punishment.—2 Chron. 26: 11-21. Th.—God's call to Isaiah.—Isa. 6: 1-12. Fr.—A call to worship.—2 Chron. 30: 1-12. Sat.—The king tries to destroy God's word.—Jer. 36: 20-26. Su.—The downfall of Judah.—2 Kings 25: 1-12.

It would be well to commit Psalm 65 entire. Suppose the teachers do this and request all others in the class to do the same. Then call attention to praise ascribed to Jehovah for his forgiveness and power and goodness.

All are asked to repeat the Golden Texts, for it is good to commit as much of the word of God as possible.

The lessons for the past six months have embraced much of the prosperity and adversity of Judah from the beginning of the reign of Rehoboam to the Babylonian captivity. From the prophets and kings we should have learned many useful and helpful lessons.

## QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Can you repeat Ps. 65?

*Lesson I.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who was Asa? State his characteristics and good work. How long did he reign?

*Lesson II.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. From whom and what was Joash preserved? When did he begin to reign and how long did he reign? Who preserved his life, and in what way?

*Lesson III.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. How did Joash show his love for God's house? What were his leading points of character?

*Lesson IV.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who was Uzziah? When did he begin to reign, and how long did he reign? What sin did he commit? What was his punishment?

*Lesson V.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who was Isaiah? Through the reigns of what kings did he prophesy? Give this vision. What was its application?

*Lesson VI.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. State what this lesson says shall come to pass in "the latter days." What was this law? Under Christ, what do men do with their weapons of war so soon as they become Christians? Under the reign of Christ what will nations learn no more?

*Lesson VII.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who was Hezekiah? How long did he reign? How did he lead the people back to God?

*Lesson VIII.*—Give the subject.

Repeat the Golden Text. What was Hilkiah's great discovery? How was it made? When did Josiah begin to reign? How long did he reign? What great work did he do?

*Lesson IX.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who was Jeremiah? When did he prophesy? What in his prophecy greatly displeased the Jews? What are admirable in his course and teaching? Of what sins did he say the people were guilty? What did they do to Jeremiah?

*Lesson X.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. What next was done to Jeremiah? What did he write while in prison? What did king Jehoiakim do with this book? What then did God tell Jeremiah to do? How do people today destroy the word of God? What became of Jehoiakim?

*Lesson XI.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who besieged Jerusalem? Why did he break the siege? Why was Jeremiah arrested? Where was he first put in prison? In what was he placed next? Describe this dungeon. Who interceded for him and saved him? Who must suffer persecutions?

*Lesson XII.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who was king when Jerusalem was destroyed? Describe the suffering of the people. How long did the siege last? What became of Jeremiah?



## THIRD QUARTER

## THE EXILE AND THE RESTORATION

## LESSON 1—JULY 2

**EZEKIEL, THE WATCHMAN OF ISRAEL—Ezekiel 2: 1-3: 27. Print 2: 1-6; 3: 17-21**

**EZEKIEL 2. 1.** And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee.

2 And the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet; and I heard him that spake unto me.

3 And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to nations that are rebellious, which have rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me even unto this very day.

4 And the children are impudent and stiff-hearted: I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah.

5 And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear (for they are a rebellious house), yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

6 And thou, son of man be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

**Golden Text**—Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55: 6, 7.)

**Time**—B. C. 594.

**Place**—Tel-abib.

**Persons**—Ezekiel and the Jews.

**Memory Verse**—John 10: 11.

**Devotional Reading**—Psalm 121.

**Reference Material**—2 Kings 17: 13-14; Isaiah 6: 1-13; Jeremiah 1: 1-19; Ezekiel 33: 1-6; Matthew 23: 37-39; Acts 20: 18-21, 26, 27, 29-31.

**Home Readings**.—Mon., June 26.—Ezekiel's commission.—Ezek. 2: 1-10. Tu.—Ezekiel, the watchman of Israel.—Ezek. 3: 16-21. Wed.—Watchmen on the towers.—Isa. 21: 5-12. Th.—The invitation to all.—Isa. 55: 1-7. Fr.—Watching for the king.—Luke 12: 35-40. Sat.—A watchful church.—Rev. 3: 1-6. Su.—Watching over all.—Psa. 121.

## INTRODUCTION

## I. Some Facts of History

This lesson is in the book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel was taken captive with Jehoiachin and others eleven years before the destruction of Jerusalem. These captives were settled at Tel-abib, an unknown place on the river Chebar. Chebar was a river of Babylonia, which emptied into the Euphrates from the east almost two hundred miles north of Babylon. Some say this river was in the vicinity of Babylon. Ezekiel was the son of Buzi, and belonged to the priestly family. (Ezek. 1: 1-3; 2 Kings 24: 8-16; 2 Chron. 36: 9, 10.) He began to prophesy before the destruction of Jerusalem in the fifth month of the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, and "in the thirtieth year," either of his age or of "the new era of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar, who began to reign B.C. 625." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.) The Jews in captivity with Ezekiel were yet rebellious



and idolatrous (Ezek. 2: 3; 20: 33-39), and hearkened unto false prophets (Ezek. 13: 1-19). Jeremiah exhorted them to hearken not to false prophets, but to seek the peace of the city where they were held as captives, for in the peace of their conquerors would they have peace; and to take wives, rear children, build houses, and till the ground until the expiration of seventy years. (Jer. 29: 1-32.)

When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem, he made Gedaliah ruler over the poor people left in the land (2 Kings 25: 23; Jer. 50: 5), with his seat of government at Mizpah. Ishmael slew Gedaliah. (Jer. 44: 1-10.) Johanan rescued the Jews whom Ishmael had compelled to follow him, and, through fear of the Chaldeans, persuaded them against the wise counsel of Jeremiah to go into Egypt. (Jer. 41: 11-18.) These Jews who fled to Egypt against the counsel of God for safety from Nebuchadnezzar were slain by him there. (Jer. 42.) During this time Ezekiel was prophesying and encouraging the Jews in captivity. The last date he mentioned is the twenty-seventh year of the captivity (Ezek. 29: 17); so he prophesied for at least twenty-two years. During a part of this period at least Daniel also was a famous prophet. (Ezek. 14: 14; 28: 3.)

## II. Ezekiel's Prophecies

Of Ezekiel as a prophet Smith's Bible dictionary says:

"His predictions are marvelously varied. He has instances of visions (as 8-11), symbolic actions (as 4-7), similitudes (as 12, 15), parables (as 17), proverbs (as 12: 22; 18: 1, 2), poems (as 19), allegories (as 23, 24), open prophecies (as 6, 7, 20, etc.)." His book has been divided into nine sections: "I. Ezekiel's call (1: 1 to 3-15). II. The general carrying out of the commission (3: 16 to 7: 27). III. The rejection of the people because of their idolatrous worship (8-11). IV. The sins of the age rebuked in detail (12-19). V. The nature of the judgment, and the guilt which caused it (20-23). VI. The meaning of the now commencing punishment (24). VII. God's judgment denounced on seven heathen nations (25-32). VIII. Prophecies after the destruction of Jerusalem concerning the future condition of Israel (33-39). IX. The glorious consummation (40-48)."

## III. The Vision of "the Living Creatures"

Read the previous part of the book to this lesson. Chapters 1 and 2 give a description of "the living creatures," "the wheels beside them," the quick and gliding motion of the living creatures and the wheels, the "stormy wind out of the north," the "great cloud," the "brightness round about" the cloud, the "fire flashing continually," "the likeness of a firmament," "the likeness of a throne" above the firmament, the one upon the throne, and the appearance of the bow. I cannot say what the "four living creatures," with their four different faces, each signify; or whether or not each face—that of a man, of a lion, of an ox, and of an eagle—represents some peculiar feature of divine power and wisdom. All together represent the overruling providence, the wisdom, the power, and the glory of God. These wonderful appearances made a profound impression on Ezekiel, and he fell upon his face. God commanded him to stand upon his feet.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Ezekiel's Commission

Ch. 2: 1-6. God spoke to him, the Spirit entered into him, and he stood as God commanded, God setting him upon his feet. Then



God gave him his commission "to the children of Israel." They were "impudent and stiff-necked" and "rebellious"; and whether they would hear or not hear, Ezekiel was to speak God's word unto them. He was not to flinch. God said to him: "But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that which I give thee." Ezekiel then ate the roll of the book which God gave him and commanded him to eat. It was full of lamentation, mourning, and woe. It was as sweet as honey, because it was joyous to receive the word of God and to be his messenger. But Ezekiel was moved at the rebellion of his people, and he went with his message of lamentation and woe "in bitterness" and "heat" of spirit.

In Rev. 10: 9, 10, when John ate the "little book," it, too, was as sweet as honey, but afterwards became bitter, doubtless, because of the condemnation of sinners which it contained. God made Ezekiel's face as hard as adamant, that he might deliver this message. (Verse 9.) We should all eat the word of God—digest and assimilate it—that it may nourish and sustain the inner man. All preachers, like Ezekiel, are commanded to "preach the word." Ezekiel was sent "to them of the captivity." God said they would not hear because they were "of a hard forehead and of a stiff heart." Ezekiel's face was "hard against their faces" and his "forehead hard against their foreheads." He was not to be dismayed.

## II. Ezekiel Made a Watchman. (Comment on Verses 12-16)

"Then the Spirit lifted me up and took me away." Ezekiel had been prepared and was ready to go. In what way he was transported by the Spirit to the place where he was to warn the captives I cannot say. Behind him he heard "the voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of Jehovah from his place," and "the noise of the wings of the living creatures as they touched one another, and the noise of the wheels beside them." This noise is described in chapter 2: 24, 25.

As stated above, the lamentation, mourning, and woe of his message filled him with bitterness and heat of spirit. He was determined to speak the word of God, and was moved at the stubbornness of his people. "The hand of Jehovah" represents the power of Jehovah. It supported Ezekiel and urged him on.

Tel-abib, as stated in the Introduction, was an unknown place on the river Chebar. "And I sat there overwhelmed among them seven days." He was overwhelmed with grief over the fearful condition of heart of the people and the punishment they had to endure. Job's comforters "sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great." (Job 2: 13.)

During these seven days God gave to Ezekiel no immediate revelation. He may not have been yet prepared to receive and deliver it, either because of his bitterness of spirit or great grief for his people.

## III. Work and Responsibility of a Watchman

17. Ezekiel is frequently called "son of man," and so is Daniel. (Dan. 8: 17.) Christ is called "the Son of man." Christ speaks of himself as "the Son of man" (Matt. 8: 20; 16: 15), doubtless in his humility in the flesh; and Ezekiel and Daniel are called "son of man," probably that in their visions of wonderful things they may be reminded that they are only men. "I have made thee a watchman



unto the house of Israel." The work and responsibility of a watchman are clearly set forth in this lesson, and also in Ezek. 33: 1-21, which read. As a soldier was placed on guard on the walls of a city or a high tower to warn the army within of any approaching danger, so Ezekiel was a watchman to Israel. Ezekiel was to guard, protect, and warn the people. He was to watch for the good of their souls and to preach and pray for their welfare and salvation.

That he might be properly equipped and might discharge his whole duty as a watchman, God charged him to "hear the word" at God's mouth. Nothing then but the word of God could save men; nothing now but the word of God can save men. No creeds and traditions of men could ever save. "And give them warning from me." When Ezekiel delivered God's word only, he warned the people from God. They heard God when they heard his word through Ezekiel, and they refused to hear God and rebelled against God when they refused to hear Ezekiel. Jesus says: "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." (John 13: 20.) To hear the apostles whom Jesus sent is to hear him, and to hear Jesus is to hear God. He that rejects whom Christ sends rejects Christ. "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me." (Luke 10: 16.)

As God sent Christ, so he sent the apostles; and as God told Christ what to preach, so he told the apostles what to preach. (See John 17: 8, 18; 12: 44-50.) One cannot receive Christ and be saved by him while rejecting what the apostles teach. God teaches by Christ and the Holy Spirit through the apostles. God taught the Jews through Ezekiel and other prophets. "Yet many years didst thou bear with them, and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit through thy prophets; yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the peoples of the lands." (Neh. 9: 30.)

To "preach the gospel;" to preach "Christ, and him crucified;" to "preach the word," is the whole duty of preachers now, and to hear and obey "the word" is the whole duty of man. God tells the people plainly what to do to be saved: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16: 15, 16.) When people hear and believe the gospel, tremble in their sins, and want to know what to do to be saved they are told: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2: 38.) All who have done this in trust and confidence in Jesus and obedience to God from the heart have been pardoned or saved from their old sins. Such are commanded to continue "steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2: 42.) By a steadfast continuance in well-doing, Christians "seek for glory and honor and incorruption" unto eternal life. (See Rom. 2: 6, 7; 2 Pet. 1: 1-11.)

Paul declares that he was pure from the blood of all men, because he shrank not from declaring the whole counsel of God, kept back nothing that was profitable, and showed by example all things. (Acts 20: 18-38.) All Christians are watchmen; all are responsible for the blood of men to the extent of their ability to teach and influence people to turn to God; all are the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

18. When God said the wicked should die and Ezekiel did not warn them, their blood would be required at his hands.



19. If he warned the wicked and the wicked heeded not the warning and were destroyed in their sins, he then had delivered his soul. This shows the duty and responsibility of Ezekiel and of all watchmen. It is implied that the wicked would be saved whenever they should turn to God. This is clearly declared in Ezek. 18: 21-24; 33: 14-16. One's being saved depends upon his willingness to turn from his sins and to obey God.

20. "And I lay a stumbling-block before him." God lays stumbling-blocks in that he allows all to be tempted or tried. All must be tried, as gold in the fire: and all who stand the test are true metal. "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. . . . Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him." (James 1: 2-12) If Ezekiel did not warn the righteous against falling away from God into sin, the righteous would do this and be destroyed, but their blood would be required at his hands. The righteous then did "turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity;" Christians may do so now; hence the many solemn warnings against falling from their steadfastness and from God. (2 Pet. 3: 17; Heb. 3: 12-19.) When the righteous turns from righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteousness will be remembered. Preachers, teachers, and all Christians should warn and exhort one another to-day. "But exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called to-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." (Heb. 3: 13; see also Gal. 6: 1, 2; James 5: 19, 20.)

21. Nevertheless, should Ezekiel warn the righteous man that he sin not, the righteous will live, because he took warning, and Ezekiel would deliver his own soul. This teaching is clear, these duties are plain, the responsibilities are great; but by the grace of God all can do their duty and meet their responsibilities. From this, as God so clearly declares, he is unwilling that any should perish, but desires the salvation of all. He uses all possible means to warn and induce people to be saved. All are told they must die, and after death the judgment. (Heb. 9: 27.)

## QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Memory Verses.

Did you read all the references?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons.

When was Ezekiel taken captive?

Where were the captives settled?

Where was the river Chebar?

Whose son was Ezekiel?

To what family did he belong?

When did he begin to prophesy?

In what condition of heart were the Jews in captivity?

What did Jeremiah exhort them to do?

Whom did Nebuchadnezzar make ruler when he destroyed Jerusalem?

What became of Gedaliah?

Who rescued the Jews from Ishmael?

What became of him and the ones he rescued?

About how long did Ezekiel prophesy?

Give the variety of Ezekiel's predictions.

Give the nine sections into which his book is divided.

Give the contents of chapters 1 and 2.

What do these things represent?

What effect did these things have upon Ezekiel?

2: 1-6 To whom did God send him?

What was he to speak?

What was he commanded to eat?

How did it taste?

Of what was it full?

How did God prepare Ezekiel to deliver such lamentation, mourning, and woe?

Upon what should all feed?

Why would the Jews not hear Ezekiel?

What then did the Spirit do for Ezekiel?



- What did he hear behind him?  
 With what was Ezekiel filled?  
 What caused this bitterness?  
 Where was Tel-abib?  
 What overwhelmed Ezekiel?  
 How long before he prophesied?  
 Why did not God deliver to him  
 any immediate revelation during  
 the seven days?  
 17 What is Ezekiel called?  
 Why so called?  
 Why is Christ called "the Son of  
 man?"  
 What did God say he had made  
 Ezekiel?  
 What was he to Israel, and what  
 were his duties and responsibilities?  
 How was he equipped for these  
 duties and responsibilities?  
 What cannot save?  
 When the people heard Ezekiel,  
 then whom did they hear?  
 Through whom did God teach and  
 warn the people of the Old Tes-  
 tament?  
 How are the Holy Spirit, Jesus,  
 and God heard now?  
 How do we learn what to do to  
 be saved?  
 Whom does one reject when he re-  
 fuses to hear the apostles?  
 What must sinners do to be  
 saved?  
 How must all, then, live to enter  
 heaven finally?

- What freed Paul from the blood  
 of all men?  
 What are Christians in this re-  
 spect?  
 For what are all responsible?  
 18 When would the blood of sinners  
 be required at Ezekiel's hands?  
 When will it be required at our  
 hands?  
 19 When was Ezekiel free from the  
 blood of sinners?  
 When are we?  
 20 How does God place a stumbling  
 block before the righteous?  
 Why must all be tried?  
 Why count it all joy to fall into  
 manifold temptations?  
 When are temptations blessings?  
 If Ezekiel should not warn the  
 righteous, what would become  
 of him?  
 Give some of the many scriptures  
 which show that Christians may  
 fall away from God.  
 When the righteous turn from  
 their righteousness and commit  
 iniquity, what will not be re-  
 membered?  
 What should Christians do to pre-  
 vent this falling away?  
 21 How could Ezekiel deliver his  
 soul?  
 How can Christians deliver theirs?  
 What lessons do these facts clear-  
 ly teach?

## "GOD RULES IN THE KINGDOM OF MEN"

### I. Nebuchadnezzar

The Babylonian Empire was founded by Nabopolassar the father of Nebuchadnezzar, B. C. 625. Nebuchadnezzar succeeded his father as king B. C. 604. He reigned 43 years, dying B. C. 561.

Nebuchadnezzar was a warrior. He was placed by his father at the head of an army and sent against Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt, who had invaded all the country from Egypt to Carchemish on the Euphrates. At this place Nebuchadnezzar defeated Pharaoh-necho in a great battle (Jer. 46: 1-12), recovered this country, took Jerusalem, and pressed on into Egypt. At this time Daniel and his companions were taken to Babylon and became men of great influence.

We learn much of Nebuchadnezzar as a warrior from the Bible—his capture of Jerusalem especially; his siege and capture of Tyre, and his invasion of Egypt. (See 2 Kings 24 1; 2 Chron. 36: 5; Jer. 22: 18, 19; 36: 30; 37: 5-8; 46: 13-26; Ezek. 17: 16; 29: 2-20.)

His cruelties are seen in his slaying the sons of Zedekiah before their father's eyes and then putting out Zedekiah's eyes and taking him in fetters to Babylon (2 Kings 25: 7); and in casting Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego into the fiery furnace, heated seven times hotter than usual.

But Nebuchadnezzar was not so much of a warrior as he was a constructive statesman, beneficent ruler, and king devoted to the arts of peace. In his great works it is said he was a man of genius and grandeur. His buildings and other constructions—reservoirs, canals, palaces, fortifications, the hanging gardens of Babylon, and even cities—were numerous and magnificent, and have never been



equaled, unless by the works of one or two kings of Egypt. He built a palace in fifteen days, ascended upon its roof, whence he could behold the city which he had built, and proudly exclaimed: "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling place by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" (Dan. 4: 29, 30.)

It was then God cast him out for a time. Daniel describes his greatness as follows:

"Thou O king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory; and whosoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens hath he given unto thy hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all: thou art the head of gold." (Dan. 2: 37, 38.) And again:

"Thou, O king, art grown and become strong; for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth." (Dan. 4: 22.)

Nebuchadnezzar's empire was one of the four universal empires of the world.

But the most important thing in Nebuchadnezzar's entire eventful life and the greatest lesson to be learned from his history is that God made him his servant. Although an idolatrous, heathen, cruel king he was God's servant. How could that be? He was not God's servant in that he was righteous and godly and a man of faithful obedience to God, as was Abraham, Moses, and others. What he did of the will of God was not intentional obedience to God. He declared himself that he did it by his own wisdom and power and military skill. He was God's servant in that God overruled him and his powerful armies to tear down and destroy some nations, to overthrow Jerusalem and to take the Jews, God's own people, into the chastisement of Babylonian captivity. God says that he himself made the earth and the men and beasts upon it by his wisdom and power, and gives all to whom it seems right to him.

He then adds: "And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field also have I given to serve him. And all the nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the time of his own land come; and then many nations and great kings shall make him their bondman. And it shall come to pass, that the nation and the kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith Jehovah, with the sword and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand" (Jer. 27: 5-8.)

## II. All Other Kings and Rulers

This same truth is declared in Jer. 25: 8, 9. (read the entire chapter), also in Jer. 43: 10, and other scriptures. God so overruled and used as his servants different kings of Assyria, of whom we read in the Bible, for instance Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings 15: 29; 16: 9; 1 Chron. 5: 26); Shalmanezar (2 Kings 17: 5; Hos. 10: 14); Sargon (Isa. 30: 1); Sennacherib (2 Kings 18: 13 to 19: 37), and Ezerhaddon (Ezra 4: 2). Jehovah called Sennacherib his chastening "rod," "the staff" of his indignation, and his battle ax, telling what he would accomplish through Sennacherib, and how afterwards he would punish Sennacherib (See Isa 10: 5-34.)

God so overruled the kings of the Medes and Persians—Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes (see Ezra 1: 1; 6: 1; 4: 7; 7: 1). God called



Cyrus by name about 175 years before Cyrus was born and called Cyrus his shepherd in sending the Jews out of Babylonian captivity back to Jerusalem and furnishing means for their work. (Isa. 44: 24 to 45: 7.) God declared that he had surnamed Cyrus, although Cyrus had not known him.

Thus "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the lowest of men." (Dan. 4:17.) A few of many passages will suffice to show that God overrules and uses all nations of earth as his servants to accomplish his just, righteous, and holy purposes. Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the huge tree was to teach that "the heavens do rule", that "God's dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hands, or say unto him what doest thou?" All God's works are truth, and his ways justice; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." (See Dan. 4: 26-27.) Even now Jesus is the ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1: 5); he is "King of kings and Lord of lords."

God today dethrones kings, sets aside czars, deposes emperors, and builds up republics as serves the gracious designs of his righteous and holy purpose.

How wonderfully safe, contented, and secure the children of God feel, realizing that He, who created the heavens and the earth, upholds all things by the word of his power, overrules all kingdoms and nations of the world, sees the end from the beginning, yet hears the raven's cry and sees the sparrow fall, works all things—absolutely all things—together for good to those who love him, to those who are the called according to his purpose! May all so love him and be used by him to accomplish his purpose!



## LESSON II—JULY 9

# DANIEL INTERPRETING NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM—Daniel 2: 1-49. Print 2: 36-45, 47

DANIEL 2. 36 This is the dream and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

37 Thou, O king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory;

38 and whosoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens hath he given into thy hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all; thou art the head of gold.

39 And after these shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that crusheth all these, shall it break in pieces and crush.

41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but there shall be in it the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

43 And whereas thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron doth not mingle with clay.

44 And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever.

45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou hast been able to reveal this secret.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 11:15.)

*Time*.—B. C. 603.

*Place*.—Babylon.

*Persons*.—Magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, Chaldeans, Daniel, Arioch and Nebuchadnezzar.

*Memory Verses*.—James 1:5, 7.

*Devotional Reading*.—Isaiah 11:1-10

*Reference Material*.—Isaiah 9:6, 7; 13; 14; 47; Daniel 4:30, 34-27; John 18:33-38; Revelation 11:15

*Home Readings*.—Mon., July 3.—Nebuchadnezzar's dream.—Dan. 2: 31-35. Tu.—Isaiah's interpretation.—Dan. 2: 36-45. Wed.—Jacob and the angel.—Gen. 32: 24-30. Th.—Pharaoh's dreams.—Gen. 41: 1-7. Fr.—Joseph's interpretation.—Gen. 41: 25-32. Sat.—Peter's vision.—Acts 10: 9-15. Su.—Isaiah's vision.—Isa. 11:1-10.

## INTRODUCTION

### I. The Book of Daniel

This lesson, and the two following ones, are in the book of Daniel. This is in order, because the kingdom of Judah has been overthrown, God's people are in captivity, and this book gives the history and teaching of Daniel in captivity. This book is both historical and prophetic. The first six chapters are chiefly historical and the remainder prophetic. The visions of the book, like the image and huge tree seen by Nebuchadnezzar, the handwriting on the wall seen by Bel-



shazzar, and the visions of Daniel himself, are clear and striking, and show to God's people in their degeneracy and captivity that God's arm is not so shortened that it cannot save, and to the enemies of God's people the difference between Jehovah and idols and God's people and heathens. The prophecies of the book extend from Daniel's time to the resurrection of the dead. The Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires and the kingdom of Christ are all represented and described. Those who know tell us that the book was written, like Ezra, partly in Hebrew and partly in Chaldee—that is, Aramaic. In the historical portion of the book Daniel is spoken of in the third person and in the prophetic in the first person. Jesus mentions Daniel as a prophet (Matt. 24: 15), and reference is doubtless made to him in Heb. 11: 33, 34.

## II. DANIEL

### Read Here Daniel 1

Daniel was a young man of noble birth, "of the seed royal," who lived in Jerusalem and who was carried into captivity with others in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim. An account of this is given in 2 Chron. 36: 5-8 and Dan. 1: 1-7, which read with care. With Daniel and others were Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. These, like Daniel, were "of the seed royal and of the nobles; youths in whom was no blemish, but well favored, and skillful in all wisdom, and endued with knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability to stand in the king's palace."

Daniel was one of the most remarkable characters of the Old Testament, and is classed with the notably wise (Ezek. 28: 3) and with those who had special power in prayer and righteousness with God (Ezek. 14: 14, 19, 20; see also Jer. 15: 1). The book of Daniel shows his wisdom and power. By his wisdom and righteousness he was promoted by the different heathen kings whom he served to high places of trust and honor. "So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian." (Dan. 6: 28.) "And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus" (Dan. 1: 21), and at least to the third year of the reign of Cyrus (Dan. 10: 1). He lived through the entire seventy years of captivity and saw his people return to Jerusalem; hence he lived to a ripe old age. "He . . . served five kings—Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus. Few courtiers have had so long a reign, served so many masters without flattering any, been more successful in their judgment of public affairs, been so useful to the States where they were in office, or have been more owned of God, or have left such an example to posterity." (Clarke's Commentary.)

Nebuchadnezzar ordered Ashpenaz, the master or prince of his eunuchs, to select of the children of Israel such young men as the ones described above and to "teach them the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans." They were to be trained for royal servants and officers. "And the king appointed for them a daily portion of the king's dainties, and of the wine which he drank, and that they should be nourished three years; that at the end thereof they should stand before the king."

It seems that it would require so long for them to learn the language and science of the Chaldeans. Doubtless youths from other provinces were selected: but from Judah the following were chosen: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. According to the custom of the conqueror of changing the names of the conquered, Daniel's ("God is my judge") was changed to Belteshazzar (having refer-



ence to Bel (Baal), the chief god of the Babylonians, and meaning perhaps "the protection of Bel"—Dan. 4: 8); Hananiah ("Jehovah is gracious"), to Shadrach (having some reference to the sun god or moon god); Mishael ("He who comes from God"); to Meshach ("belonging to Sheshach," a deity of the Babylonians—Jer. 25: 26); Azariah ("Jehovah is my helper"), to Abed-nego ("servant of Nebo," another deity of the Babylonians).

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. The Dream

36. "This is the dream." The previous part of the chapter states the facts which lead to Daniel's interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar could not recall his dream. He was troubled in spirit and his sleep went from him. He called upon the magicians, enchanters, soothsayers, and Chaldeans to first reproduce his dream and then to give its interpretation. They replied that his demand was unreasonable, and no such thing had ever been required of them; but that if he would relate the dream, they would interpret it. He answered them, saying that if they possessed the power to interpret dreams, they could by the same power reproduce his dream and if they did not do so, they should be "cut in pieces" and their houses destroyed. In this parley he became angry and furious and ordered the destruction of "all the wise men of Babylon." This included Daniel and his companions.

Daniel requested that a time be appointed him, saying that he would show the king the dream and its interpretation. But, first, Daniel and his companions prayed; they asked God to grant to them mercy that they might not be slain. In answer to their prayer God revealed to Daniel this dream and its meaning.

Before proceeding further Daniel thanked God, and said of him: "And he changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth kings, and setteth up kings; he giveth wisdom to the wise; and knowledge to them that have understanding; he revealeth the deep and secret things; he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him." Connect this with the article on "God rules in the kingdom of men." Daniel was then taken before the king, to whom he stated that God in heaven, who reveals secrets, was making known to the king through this dream that which should come to pass "in the latter days."

### II. A Great Image

This was the image of a man. It was mighty, its brightness excellent, and its aspect terrible. "Its head was of fine gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, its legs of iron, its feet part of iron and part of clay." As the king was gazing upon this huge image, a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, as if thrown by some great power, smote it upon the feet, which were of iron and clay, and broke them into pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold were broken in pieces together, and, as chaff of the summer threshing floor, were carried away by the wind, and there was no place found for them.

This stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

### III. The Interpretation

There can be no mistaking the meaning of this dream, because Jehovah gives what he means by it. This image represented four universal empires. Nothing less than a universal empire is con-



sidered. The stone represented another, but very different government or kingdom from the four. The four were earthly, political, and were soon to pass away; the other was spiritual, of heaven, and to stand forever.

37-38. "The God of heaven" had "given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory" with all "the children of men," the beasts of the field, and the birds of heaven to Nebuchadnezzar, and had made him "king of kings." God says to him: "Thou art the head of gold." There can be no mistake about this. Nimrod began this kingdom (Gen. 10: 8-10) B.C. 2233 and it ended on the night in which Belshazzar was slain, B.C. 538 (See Dan. 5: 30). But this was a universal kingdom only 87 years. It was at its height of prosperity, power, and glory under Nebuchadnezzar.

The greatness of this kingdom was identified with Nebuchadnezzar. (Dan. 4: 30.) Babylon is called "the golden city" (Isa. 14: 4) and a "golden cup." (Jer. 51: 7.)

39. The second and inferior kingdom represented by the breast and arms of silver, was the Medo-Persian empire. This is clearly seen from Dan. 5: 28, 31 and 8: 20; 2 Chron. 36: 20. It has been said that "the kings of Persia were the worst race of men that ever governed an empire." (Prideaux in Jamieson-Fausset-Brown.) Politically, in unity and energy, as well as in morality, this kingdom was inferior to the Babylonian. It was overthrown by Alexander the great B. C. 331, having existed 207 years. The "third kingdom," the one "of brass," was the Grecian empire (See Dan. 8: 21; 10: 20; 11: 1-4.) The Greeks were renowned for their brazen armor. This kingdom was to "bear rule over all the earth," and it did. Alexander the Great wanted to be called "king of all the world." At the death of Alexander, B.C. 323, his kingdom was divided between his four generals: Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Selucus.

These divisions were reduced by the Romans at different times; the last one, the one under Ptolemy, was reduced B.C. 30. Thus through struggling vicissitudes and growth the Roman empire superseded finally the Grecian and became a universal kingdom 30 years before Christ was born.

40. The kingdom represented by the feet of iron and clay is the Roman empire. This kingdom at first was as strong as iron, because "as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron crusheth all these, shall it break in pieces and crush." The powers out of which the Roman empire was formed were violent and cruel; and the Roman empire itself partook of the nature of iron, and under the figure of the fourth beast in Dan. 7: 7 is represented as "terrible and powerful, and strong exceedingly," having "great iron teeth," devouring and breaking in pieces.

41. But whereas the feet and toes were part of iron and part of potters' clay, it should become a divided kingdom, yet retaining the strength of iron inasmuch as the iron and clay were mixed.

42. But inasmuch, too, as there was clay as well as iron in this mixture, the kingdom should be partly brittle as well as partly strong.

43. The conquests of Rome weakened it. Amalgamating different nations, some weak and some strong, forming different alliances by marriage and otherwise—mingling "themselves with the seed of men"—they did not cleave together. The empire was finally overrun by barbarous hordes from the north, and fell A.D. 476.



### IV. Note Some Facts

1. We have before us the image as a whole and in all its parts, from the beginning to the end of the kingdoms which it represents.
2. It began B. C. 625 and ended A. D. 476, a period of 1001 years.
3. The only division taught by the image is that of strength and weakness.
4. The two arms represented no divisions; why should we seek divisions for the legs and toes?
5. Some imagine that the "belly" may refer to Alexander's drunkenness and Ptolemy's luxury. Why not guess this, if we are going beyond God's own explanation to draw conclusions?
6. Sometime between B.C. 604, when Nebuchadnezzar began to reign as king, and the downfall of the Roman empire, A. D. 476, the God of heaven "set up a kingdom"—not before, not after.

### V. This Kingdom of Heaven

44-45. The declarations of verse 45 are given as the reasons for the ones of verse 44. "Forasmuch as thou sawest that a stone was cut out of the mountains without hands," etc, this wonderful kingdom of heaven will be "set up," grow, accomplish that which God declares, and "stand forever." Jesus is frequently called a stone. The truth that he is the Christ, the son of God, is the rock on which his church has been built. (Matt. 16: 18.) As a descendant from Jacob Jesus is called "the shepherd and stone of Israel" (Gen. 49: 24); he is the foundation stone, the tried stone, the precious corner stone of sure foundation, laid in Zion (Isa. 28: 16; 1 Pet. 2: 6-8); he is the stone set at nought by the builders (Ps. 118: 22; Matt. 21: 42; Mark. 12: 10; Luke 20: 17; Acts 4: 11); he is the chief corner stone (Eph. 2: 20); to the Jews who stumbled at his word, "being disobedient," he is "a stone of stumbling and rock of offense" (Isa. 8: 14, 15; 1 Pet. 2: 8)—Paul speaks of the stumbling block of the cross (Gal. 5: 11); he is the stone, upon which if a man fall, he "shall be broken to pieces," as the Jews who stumble at Christ but may return (Rom. 11: 23); but the stone, which if it shall fall upon a man it will grind him to powder, or scatter him as dust (Matt. 21: 44)—as when Christ "shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power" and shall be ready to "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father." (1 Cor. 15: 24.)

The "stone" of this lesson represents the kingdom which God was to set up and which would be hurled with divine power against the image and break it in pieces. Of this kingdom Jesus has been made King. He is "King of kings and Lord of lords." (1 Tim. 6: 12.) Jesus Christ to-day is not only "the faithful witness, the first born of the dead," but he is also "the ruler of the kings of the earth." (Rev. 1: 5.) "Cut out of the mountain without hands," means by inspiration, by the direction and power of God, without human wisdom, military skill and victories, or any human and earthly power.

This was to be a spiritual kingdom—its foundation, its principles and laws, and its head or king, and the citizenship of whose subjects is in heaven. (Phil. 3:20.) It was not only not established by human wisdom and military power, but it is not ruled by worldly wisdom, worldly policies, or upheld and extended by the sword. The miraculous birth of Jesus was different from that of any ruler of earth; besides his humble birth of a poor virgin, with a manager for his cradle, in a small village, and reared in a town of disfavor—all mark the small beginning of Christ's kingdom. His kingdom in this particular is like a grain of mustard seed.



There are references in the Bible to spiritual buildings, or spiritual work, "not made with hands"—namely, "a circumcision not made with hands" (Col. 2: 11); "the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands" (Heb. 9: 11); "a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens,"—not our earthly body or home, but our heavenly one. This helps to understand what is meant by "without hands." "In the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." This is called in the New Testament "the kingdom of God" (Matt. 6: 33; John 3: 3-5); "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 3: 2; 4: 17; 10: 7; 22: 2; 25: 1 and other places), the kingdom of Christ—the son of God's love (Col. 1: 13); it is a kingdom not of this world (John 18: 36); and is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14: 17.) God "set up" this kingdom "in the days of those kings" or he did not. He said he would do so and he did. Somewhere between B. C. 604 and A.D. 476 he set up this kingdom.

Jesus was crucified, ascended, and was made king in heaven when the Roman government was in its height of "imperial splendor, military glory, legislative authority, and literary eminence" (Adam Clarke), and was at peace with the whole world.

Jesus was crucified, ascended, and was made king in heaven (Acts 2: 36) during the reign of Tiberius Caesar. So "in the days of those kings" "the God of heaven did 'set up' a kingdom." This does not say which kingdom was to be in existence when God should set up this kingdom; but it was done while some one of them was in existence. Here is a similar expression: "And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, there was a famine in the land." (Ruth 1: 1.)

This famine came during the time only while one judge judged Israel: but it was limited to the time of the judges. It was not after that time. So this kingdom was not set up after the existence of the Roman empire or before the Babylonian empire came into existence.

Hence it is not yet to be set up—that is at the second coming of Christ. The stone did not strike the image in the legs nor yet in the toes: but in the feet. (Verse 34.) Then it was not to be set up after the Roman empire had fallen and been divided up into what some call "the ten toe state." Let us notice "set up." It does not mean to conceive the idea and to form the purpose of building a kingdom, or to prepare the material for building one. God's purpose to do this, his promises to do this and his prophecies concerning this existed and unfolded from at least, the fall of man. To "set up" does not mean to end a kingdom. To "set up" means "(a) To erect; to raise; to elevate; as to set up a building, or a machine; to set up a post, a wall, a pillar. (b) Hence, to exalt to power; to put in power." "I will . . . set up the throne of David over Israel" 2 Sam. 3: 10. (c) To begin, as a new institution; to institute; to establish; found; as to set up a manufactory; to set up a school; (d) to enable to commence a new business, as to set up a son in trade;" etc. (Websters New International Dictionary.)

Moses "set up" the tabernacle after all material had been made ready. Preparing the material was not setting it up. (See Ex. 39: 40.) When it was "set up" God filled it with his glory. This is true of this kingdom of heaven. It existed in the purpose, promises, and prophecies of God before it was "set up." The material was made ready—a people was prepared for the Lord before it was "set up". John the Baptist, Jesus, and his disciples, during Jesus' personal ministry, prepared the material or people. Then God "set up this



kingdom"—placed Jesus over it as king, filled it with the Holy Spirit, and put it in operation. This was done on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2.) James quotes Amos. 9: 11, 12, which states that God would "build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen;" and would "build again the ruins thereof," and would "set it up, that the residue of men" might seek after the Lord, "and all Gentiles, upon whom" his name is called. (Acts 15: 16, 17.)

James then showed that at the time he spoke this prophecy had been fulfilled. The kingdom then had been "set up" when James made this quotation. In Rom. 14: 17 Paul says "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." This kingdom was then in existence. Where there are "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit," there is the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost. This kingdom was not to be "set up" at the second coming of Christ, because it was to be "set up in the days of those kings," and it has been more than fourteen hundred years since the last one passed away.

The stone smote the image in the feet and the feet existed before the "toe state" of the Roman empire began, but it is claimed that "the toe state" has not begun. So this kingdom already has been "set up." This stone was small to begin with and it grew until it became a great mountain. If this kingdom is to be "set up" at the second coming of Christ it will be a very small one; and also not till then will it begin to grow. There is only one way for this kingdom to grow and that is to add new members or to make new citizens; hence if it is not to be "set up" until Christ comes, then there will be a chance after death. Isa. 2: 1-4 and Micah 4: 1-4 also show when it was to be "set up"—namely, when the law went forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Then all nations began to flow into it. Then it began to grow into "the mountain of Jehovah's house." On pentecost after Jesus' ascension the law went forth from Zion and the word of the God from Jerusalem. (See Acts 2 again.) The apostles were to preach repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus among all nations beginning from Jerusalem. (Luke 24: 46, 47.) This kingdom will continue to grow into a huge mountain and to fill "the whole earth." When Christ comes he will have put all enemies under his feet and the last enemy to be destroyed is death. All the growing and all the breaking in pieces must be before the resurrection of the dead, for then comes the end. When Christ comes he will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father (1 Cor. 15: 24), not set it up.

"The sovereignty" of this kingdom will not be "left to another people." One earthly kingdom succeeds as in this dream, another earthly kingdom; but not so with this kingdom. Gabriel said to Mary that God would give to Jesus "the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1: 32, 33.)

The government of Christ's church or kingdom is not left to any religious head, ecclesiasticism, or council on earth. He is the sovereign head and he alone. "But it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms." These four universal empires were not co-existent, but they all had the same spirit of "might makes right," of worldly ambition, pride, human wisdom, war, conquest, etc. All these the gospel of Christ will destroy when accepted.

The kingdom of God does not advance and break in pieces and destroy with the sword and other worldly influences; but by the cross of Christ. Every one who becomes a Christian turns his sword into a



## LESSON III—JULY 16

## THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL—TEMPERANCE

## LESSON—Daniel 5: 1-31. Print 5: 17-28

DANIEL 5. 17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; nevertheless I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

18 O thou king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father the kingdom, and greatness, and glory, and majesty.

19 and because of the greatness that he gave him, all the peoples, nations and languages trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he raised up and whom he would he put down.

20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:

21 and he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses; he was fed with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; until he knew that the Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men, and that he setteth up over it whomsoever he will.

22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this,

23 but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives and thy concubines, have drunk wine from them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.

24 Then was the part of the hand sent from before him, and this writing was inscribed.

25 And this is the writing, that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end.

27 TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

28 PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Ecclesiastes 12: 14.

*Time*—B.C. 539.

*Place*—Babylon.

*Persons*—Daniel and Belshazzar.

*Memory Verse*—Romans 12: 9.

*Devotional Reading*—Isaiah 35.

*Reference Material*—Genesis 19: 1-28; Exodus 14: 21-31; Ezekiel 31: 1-14; Acts 12: 20-23.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., July 10.—The drunken feast.—Dan. 5: 1-4. Tu.—The handwriting on the wall.—Dan. 5: 5-9. Wed.—The explanation.—Dan. 5: 25-31. Th.—Temperance for self.—Prov. 23: 29-35. Fr.—Temperance for others.—1 Cor. 8: 1-13. Sat.—Temperance for God.—1 Cor. 3: 16-23. Su.—A redeemed world.—Isa. 35: 1-10.

## INTRODUCTION

## I. The Rulers of Babylon

At the time of this lesson Daniel was an old man, for the seventy years' captivity foretold by Jeremiah (25: 12-14) was drawing to a close. As we shall learn, Babylon was taken by Cyrus, king of Persia; and in his first year, "that the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished," God stirred up his spirit to make the proclamation throughout his kingdom that the Jews might return to Jerusalem "and build the house of Jehovah" and should receive help from his subjects. (2 Chron. 36: 22, 23; Ezra 1: 1-4.)



kingdom"—placed Jesus over it as king, filled it with the Holy Spirit, and put it in operation. This was done on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2.) James quotes Amos. 9: 11, 12, which states that God would "build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen;" and would "build again the ruins thereof," and would "set it up, that the residue of men" might seek after the Lord, "and all Gentiles, upon whom" his name is called. (Acts 15: 16, 17.)

James then showed that at the time he spoke this prophecy had been fulfilled. The kingdom then had been "set up" when James made this quotation. In Rom. 14: 17 Paul says "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." This kingdom was then in existence. Where there are "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit," there is the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost. This kingdom was not to be "set up" at the second coming of Christ, because it was to be "set up in the days of those kings," and it has been more than fourteen hundred years since the last one passed away.

The stone smote the image in the feet and the feet existed before the "toe state" of the Roman empire began, but it is claimed that "the toe state" has not begun. So this kingdom already has been "set up." This stone was small to begin with and it grew until it became a great mountain. If this kingdom is to be "set up" at the second coming of Christ it will be a very small one; and also not till then will it begin to grow. There is only one way for this kingdom to grow and that is to add new members or to make new citizens; hence if it is not to be "set up" until Christ comes, then there will be a chance after death. Isa. 2: 1-4 and Micah 4: 1-4 also show when it was to be "set up"—namely, when the law went forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Then all nations began to flow into it. Then it began to grow into "the mountain of Jehovah's house." On pentecost after Jesus' ascension the law went forth from Zion and the word of the God from Jerusalem. (See Acts 2 again.) The apostles were to preach repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus among all nations beginning from Jerusalem. (Luke 24: 46, 47.) This kingdom will continue to grow into a huge mountain and to fill "the whole earth." When Christ comes he will have put all enemies under his feet and the last enemy to be destroyed is death. All the growing and all the breaking in pieces must be before the resurrection of the dead, for then comes the end. When Christ comes he will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father (1 Cor. 15: 24), not set it up.

"The sovereignty" of this kingdom will not be "left to another people." One earthly kingdom succeeds as in this dream, another earthly kingdom; but not so with this kingdom. Gabriel said to Mary that God would give to Jesus "the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1: 32, 33.)

The government of Christ's church or kingdom is not left to any religious head, ecclesiasticism, or council on earth. He is the sovereign head and he alone. "But it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms." These four universal empires were not co-existent, but they all had the same spirit of "might makes right," of worldly ambition, pride, human wisdom, war, conquest, etc. All these the gospel of Christ will destroy when accepted.

The kingdom of God does not advance and break in pieces and destroy with the sword and other worldly influences; but by the cross of Christ. Every one who becomes a Christian turns his sword into a



plowshare and his spear into a pruning hook and learns war no more. "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." (Heb. 2: 14; Isa. 11: 9.) "It shall stand forever." All other governments and all things earthly, and the heavens above shall pass away; but this kingdom shall never pass away (See Heb. 12: 26-28.) In this dream "the great God" made known to Nebuchadnezzar that which was to come to pass hereafter. The dream was certain and the interpretation was sure. Then the kingdom was "set up" when God said it would be.

47. This made a profound impression upon Nebuchadnezzar, and he acknowledged that Daniel's God was above all gods and the Lord of all kings. But he never denied the existence of other gods. He exalted Daniel and his companions to high positions and bestowed upon them great honor.



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Memory Verses.  
What was the condition of God's people at the time of this lesson?  
Give character of the literature of the book of Daniel.  
What do the visions of the book show?  
What powers are represented in the book?  
Give the characters of Daniel and his companions.  
In what was Daniel remarkable?  
Through whose reigns did he serve?  
How were Daniel and his companions trained at the beginning for service?  
What names were given them?
- 36 Who was Nebuchadnezzar?  
What did he call upon the magicians, enchanters, soothsayers, and Chaldeans to do?  
What was their reply?  
What did he order to be done with all the wise men of Babylon?  
What request did Daniel make before going before the king?  
What did he and his companions do?  
What was his prayer?  
What did he state to the king?  
Describe this image.  
Relate the facts concerning the stone.  
Why can there be no mistake about the meaning of the dream?  
What did this image represent?  
What the stone?  
What is the difference between the kingdoms of the image and that of the stone?
- 37, 38 What had God given to Nebuchadnezzar?  
What part of the image represented him?  
When and by whom was this kingdom begun?  
When did it end?  
How long was it a universal empire?  
Does this image represent any but universal empires?  
What is Babylon called?
- 39 What empire was represented by the chest and arms?  
In what was it inferior to the Babylonian kingdom?  
How long did it continue?  
By whom was it overthrown?  
What kingdom was represented by the brazen part of the image?  
What did Alexander wish to be called?  
At the death of Alexander between whom was his kingdom divided?  
When was the last one of these reduced by the Romans?
- 40-42 What empire was represented by the legs, feet and toes?  
What conditions of this empire do the iron and clay represent?
- 43 What weakened the Roman empire?  
State fact 1 which we should note Fact 2. Fact 3. Fact 4. Fact 5. Fact 6.
- 44, 45 State all that is said of Jesus as a stone—every different comparison.  
What does the stone of this lesson represent?  
What does cut out without hands mean?  
What in Christ's life show a small beginning?  
When would God set up a kingdom?  
Did he do that?  
What is the kingdom called in the New Testament?  
Between what years did "the days of those kings" come?  
What point is made on the famine which came when the judges judged?  
State when this kingdom was not set up.  
What is meant by "set up?"  
In what did this kingdom exist first?  
Who prepared the people for it?  
Then, when was it "set up?"  
What facts show it was set up on the day of Pentecost?  
What did James prove by Amos 9: 11, 12?  
What does Paul say the kingdom of God is?  
What again shows the kingdom was set up on Pentecost?  
What proves that the kingdom is not to be set up at the second coming of Christ, giving all that is said?  
How do Isaiah and Micah show it was set up on Pentecost?  
Into what was this kingdom to grow?  
Can it grow after Christ comes?  
Why not?  
What will Christ do with the kingdom when he comes?  
To whom is the government of this kingdom not left?  
What did the stone do for the image when it struck it?  
What then is this kingdom to do?  
How will it break in pieces and destroy all earthly kingdoms?  
What do all who come to this kingdom do with carnal weapons?  
What do they learn no more?  
What will become of governments of earth?  
What of the duration of God's kingdom?
- 47 What then did Nebuchadnezzar say?  
What did he do for Daniel and his companions?



## LESSON III—JULY 16

## THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL—TEMPERANCE

## LESSON—Daniel 5: 1-31. Print 5: 17-28

DANIEL 5. 17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; nevertheless I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

18 O thou king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father the kingdom, and greatness, and glory, and majesty.

19 and because of the greatness that he gave him, all the peoples, nations and languages trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he raised up and whom he would he put down.

20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:

21 and he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses; he was fed with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; until he knew that the Most High God ruleth in the kingdom of men, and that he setteth up over it whomsoever he will.

22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this,

23 but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives and thy concubines, have drunk wine from them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.

24 Then was the part of the hand sent from before him, and this writing was inscribed.

25 And this is the writing, that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end.

27 TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

28 PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Ecclesiastes 12: 14.

*Time*—B.C. 539.

*Place*—Babylon.

*Persons*—Daniel and Belshazzar.

*Memory Verse*—Romans 12: 9.

*Devotional Reading*—Isaiah 35.

*Reference Material*—Genesis 19: 1-28; Exodus 14: 21-31; Ezekiel 31: 1-14; Acts 12: 20-23.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., July 10.—The drunken feast.—Dan. 5: 1-4. Tu.—The handwriting on the wall.—Dan. 5: 5-9. Wed.—The explanation.—Dan. 5: 25-31. Th.—Temperance for self.—Prov. 23: 29-35. Fr.—Temperance for others.—1 Cor. 8: 1-13. Sat.—Temperance for God.—1 Cor. 3: 16-23. Su.—A redeemed world.—Isa. 35: 1-10.

## INTRODUCTION

## I. The Rulers of Babylon

At the time of this lesson Daniel was an old man, for the seventy years' captivity foretold by Jeremiah (25: 12-14) was drawing to a close. As we shall learn, Babylon was taken by Cyrus, king of Persia; and in his first year, "that the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished," God stirred up his spirit to make the proclamation throughout his kingdom that the Jews might return to Jerusalem "and build the house of Jehovah" and should receive help from his subjects. (2 Chron. 36: 22, 23; Ezra 1: 1-4.)



Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by his son, Evil-merodach who reigned two years, and was murdered by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar. Neriglissar reigned four years, and was succeeded by his son, Laborosoarchod, who reigned only nine months, and was murdered. Some state that Nabonidus succeeded Laborosoarchod and reigned until Babylon was taken by Cyrus, and that Belshazzar was his son and temporary or real ruler of Babylon at the time of its downfall; others say that Belshazzar was the son of Evil-merodach, and, hence, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. It is also a conjecture of some that Nabonidus married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, and that Belshazzar, through his mother, was Nebuchadnezzar's grandson. The Bible mentions Evil-merodach (2 Kings 25: 27) and Belshazzar, and our lesson states that Nebuchadnezzar was Belshazzar's father (verses 11, 18); but that may signify only that Nebuchadnezzar was Belshazzar's ancestor—father, grandfather, or great-grandfather, etc.—as the kings of Judah are called sons of David (2 Chron. 29: 2; 34: 2).

## II. Babylon—Its Beauty and Downfall

Any history of Babylon makes the beauty, greatness, and grandeur of that city most apparent. The Bible speaks of its magnificence and glory. It was at the time of our lesson, in commerce, wealth, and learning, the greatest city of the world. It is said to have been about fourteen miles square. Surrounded by two walls, the outer of which, according to the most authentic estimates, was nearly eighty-five feet thick and about three hundred and fifty feet high, strengthened with two hundred and fifty towers, and entered by one hundred gates of brass with brazen lintels and side posts, it was the strongest fortress in the world. The Bible speaks of "the broad walls of Babylon" and "her high gates." (Jer. 51: 58; see also 51: 53.)

We are familiar with the fact that the city was built on both sides of the Euphrates and connected by a great bridge, and that Cyrus entered it by the channel of the river, having turned the water out of its course. The Bible foretold the sudden capture of the city by the Medes and Persians (see Isa. 21: 1-9; Jer. 51: 27-32); also the downfall and utter destruction of the city and empire were minutely foretold. "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah."

"It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall shepherds make their flocks to lie down there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and ostriches shall dwell there, and wild goats shall dance there."

"And wolves shall cry in their castles, and jackals in the pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." (Isa. 13: 19-22; read the entire chapter; see also Jer. 50, 51.) This is literally true to-day. The walls of Babylon have fallen, the drought is upon her, her land is a wilderness, her cities are a desolation, wild beasts inhabit the place, the natives regard it as haunted, the wandering Arab will not pitch his tent there, and there the shepherd will not fold his flock.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. The Impious Feast

17. Study the entire chapter. The very night when Babylon was taken Belshazzar had "made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand." The king's wives and concubines were present.

This feast was in the king's palace, and, in the eyes of the world, was a most brilliant affair. Feeling secure within the impregnable walls of his unrivaled fortress, Belshazzar gave this feast in the face of Cyrus' approaching army. He not only felt secure from any attacks from without, but he defied the living God. "While he tasted the wine," or felt its influence and was inflamed by it, he commanded to be brought "the golden and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar, his father, had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king and his lords, his wives and his concubines, might drink therefrom."

These revelers and idolaters drank wine in this impious feast from vessels of the house of God, and, in defiance of God, "praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone," (Verses 1-4.) This was an exaltation of the idols of the heathens above Jehovah and a boast that they were greater than the only true and living God.

During this blasphemous conduct, to the great consternation of the king, "the fingers of a man's hand" appeared writing "over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote."

This astounded and terrified him. The ruddy glow of the wine instantly faded from his cheeks into the pallor of fear. "his thoughts troubled him," his frame shook in terror, "the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against the other." In this condition he "cried aloud" for the well-known enchanters, Chaldeans, and soothsayers, and offered the following reward to the one who should read and interpret the writing on the wall: "Whoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

The "wise men" of Babylon could neither "read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation." They were unable to read it because it was not written in Chaldean letters. This increased the king's fear and perplexed his lords. (Verses 5-9.) It is impossible to depict the scene. The queen, supposed to be the king's mother, because his wives and concubines sat with him at the feast, heard of the distress of the king and his lords and told the king of Daniel and his gifts and powers and what he had done in the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel, it seems, at this time was not well known by the king and his lords, or in their defiance of the living God they ignored God's faithful servant. This shows the weakness and wickedness of the king.

### II. Daniel Spurns the King's Gifts

Daniel was then sent for, the case stated before him, and the reward offered him if he could interpret the writing. (Verses 10-16.) Daniel spurned the king's gifts, saying: "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; nevertheless I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation." This is one of the most heroic deeds in all history. Before the king on his



throne, surrounded by a thousand of his lords and courtly ladies in this festive hall in a nightly carousal, suddenly changed into forebodings of evil and cries of consternation, Daniel was like Paul before Agrippa in the court of Festus, John the Baptist reproving Herod, and Elijah confronting Ahab.

### III. God Overrules All

18-21. Daniel reminded Belshazzar of what "the Most High God" had done for his father, Nebuchadnezzar; and because of this greatness "all the peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him." If Belshazzar and his lords were drinking and praising their idols and blaspheming the God of Israel, it was the God of Israel who had given Nebuchadnezzar the victory over the Jews and over all nations and had made his empire universal. "Whom Nebuchadnezzar would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive," etc. (See Dan. 2: 12, 13; 3: 1-7.) Then, by the course stated here and in Dan. 4, God taught Nebuchadnezzar that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the lowest of men." (Dan. 4: 17.) "For his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doeth thou? . . . For all his works are truth, and his ways justice; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." (Dan. 4: 34-37.)

22-24. Daniel charged Belshazzar (1) with not humbling himself, though he knew all this; (2) with lifting himself up in blasphemy and defiance "against the Lord of heaven" in using the vessels of his house in a drunken feast held in worship and honor of "the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know;" and (3) with not glorifying God, in whose hand was his very breath and the guidance of all his ways. Belshazzar had shut his eyes against these apparent truths and had refused to learn from the facts enumerated the lessons God would teach. Shall we in self-exaltation refuse to learn the same lessons? Because of these sins God put forth the part of the hand which Belshazzar saw, "and this writing was inscribed."

### IV. The Writing and the Interpretation

25. "And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN." "Mene" is repeated for the sake of emphasis. Joseph told Pharaoh his "dream was doubled," because the thing was "established by God" and would soon come to pass. (Gen. 40: 32.) Each word stands for a short sentence. "Mene" means "numbered;" "Tekel," "weighed;" and "Upharsin," "divisions." Those who understand the language say that "Upharsin" is the plural form of "Peres" in verse 28, the prefix "u" meaning "and." The writer of these lessons knows nothing of this language.

26-28. That "this is the interpretation" of the writing we know: "MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end. TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." Men are compared to "refuse silver" (Jer. 6: 30) and "the dross of silver" (Ezek. 22: 18), which are too light for genuine money when weighed. So Belshazzar in character was but dross and refuse when weighed in the balances of God's justice. How is it with us? In the



same balances our characters are being tested, and we must all appear at last before God's judgment throne.

God's scales are just and accurate. He judges the world in righteousness, and will do right. Every one will be weighed separately and judged accordingly. "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but Jehovah weigheth the spirits" (Prov. 16: 2) and "weigheth the hearts" (Prov. 24: 12). Our days are numbered. Life is the time to serve God. "Now is the accepted time," and "to-day is the day of salvation." "To-day if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation." (Heb. 3: 7, 8, 14, 15.) We have abundant opportunities now in which to repent, obey God, and do good. There is a hand now writing on the wall of time a solemn warning to us all. Shall we heed it? God is willing and ready to save. If we are lost at last, it will be because, like Belshazzar, we have shut our eyes to the truth.

29. Beshazzar felt called upon to honor his promise, although the words of the true and brave Daniel declared his certain doom; hence he commanded that Daniel be clothed with the royal purple, the chain of gold placed around his neck, and the proclamation made that he should be "the third ruler in the kingdom." Although his doom was certain and he knew of the advance of Cyrus and his army, doubtless Belshazzar never dreamed of the sudden and fearful end so imminent.

30. As stated in the Introduction, by turning the water of the Euphrates out of its course, Cyrus and his numerous and triumphant army entered Babylon by the channel of the river and came unawares upon Belshazzar and his lords. God foretold that Babylon should be taken while her mighty men were in a drunken feast. (Jer. 51: 39, 57.) "In that night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain." This was the end of that empire.

31. "And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about three score and two years old." "This is supposed to be the same as Cyaxares, son of Astyages and maternal uncle of Cyrus, to whom he gave the throne of Babylon after he himself had had the honor of taking the city. . . . The Medes and Persians were confederates in the war—the former, under Darius; the latter, under Cyrus. Both princes are supposed to have been present at the taking of the city." (Clarke's "Commentary.") This is not the Darius of Ezra 4: 5, 24; 6: 1. While this war is not mentioned by Daniel, yet it is especially referred to by Isaiah (chapter 13, 14, 45-47), and also by Jeremiah, as we have seen (chapters 50, 51). Daniel came through this overthrow of Babylon and this change of government unhurt, although the king and his nobles were slain.



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
 Did you read all the references?  
 Repeat the Golden Text.  
 Give the time, place, and persons.  
 Repeat the Memory Verses.  
 Are you reading the book of Daniel through?  
 Give the history of Daniel up to this lesson?  
 How do we know he was at this time an old man?  
 Name the kings of Babylon mentioned in the Bible.  
 What relation was Belshazzar to Nebuchadnezzar?  
 What was the importance of Babylon at the time of our lesson?  
 Give its size, the thickness and height of its walls, and the number of its towers and gates.  
 How was it captured?  
 What did the Bible foretell concerning it?  
 What is its present condition?  
 17 Describe Belshazzar's feast.  
 What indicates that he was a great drinker?  
 How did he blaspheme and defy God?  
 What did he praise?  
 What struck him and his lords with consternation and horror?  
 How was he affected?  
 For whom did he call?  
 What reward did he offer for an interpretation of the writing?  
 How were the king and his lords affected when the wise men could not interpret the writing?  
 Who was the queen?  
 Why did she suggest Daniel as able to interpret the writing?  
 Why did Belshazzar not have Daniel at the first?  
 What statement did he make to Daniel?  
 What reply did Daniel make?  
 Why was this a brave, heroic act?  
 Like whom in this was Daniel?  
 18-21 Of what facts did Daniel remind Belshazzar?  
 What lessons had God taught through Nebuchadnezzar which Belshazzar had refused to learn?  
 22-24 With what did Daniel charge Belshazzar?  
 Why had God sent this hand to inscribe this writing?  
 Shall we refuse to learn these lessons?  
 25 What was written on the walls?  
 Why was "mene" repeated?  
 What is the meaning of each of these words?  
 26-28 Give their interpretations as applied to Belshazzar.  
 What is their application to us?  
 29 What did Belshazzar do for Daniel?  
 30 Who took Babylon?  
 What befell Belshazzar and his lords?  
 How had God foretold Babylon would be taken?  
 31 Who received the kingdoms?  
 Who was Darius, and why did he receive the kingdom?  
 What prophet made special mention of this war?  
 What became of Daniel in this struggle and change of government?



## LESSON IV—JULY 23

**DANIEL AND THE LIONS—Daniel 6: 1-28. Print 6: 16-23**

**DANIEL 6. 16** Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.

**17** And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel.

**18** Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting; neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep fled from him.

**19** Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

**20** And when he came near unto the den to Daniel, he cried with a lamentable voice; the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

**21** Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

**22** My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

**23** Then was the king exceeding glad, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he had trusted in his God.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. (Hebrews 11: 33.)

*Time*—Probably B.C. 538.

*Place*—Babylon.

*Persons*—Daniel, Darius, the presidents, and satraps.

*Memory Verse*—Psalms 56: 3.

*Devotional Reading*—Romans 8: 31-39.

*Reference Material*—Jeremiah 38; Daniel 3; Acts 12: 1-19; 23: 12-35; Hebrews 11: 32-40.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., July 17.—Daniel and the king's decree.—Dan. 6: 4-10. Tu.—Daniel and the lions.—Dan. 6: 16-23. Wed.—Daniel's first test.—Dan. 1: 8-21. Th.—Abraham's trial.—Gen. 22: 1-3, 16-19. Fr.—Elijah on Mount Carmel.—1 Kings 18: 30-40. Sat.—Faith triumphant.—Heb. 11: 32-40. Su.—Conquerors through Christ.—Rom. 8: 31-39.

**INTRODUCTION**

Study the entire chapter. The subject of this lesson should be "Daniel in The Lions' Den." The events of this lesson occurred not long after Darius became king. A satrapy was a province, and a satrap was the governor of it. Darius divided his kingdom into one hundred and twenty satrapies, set a governor over each one of them, and set over the governors three presidents. Daniel was one of these presidents and chief of the three.

**I. The Work of Envy**

"Daniel was distinguished above the presidents and the satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm." (Verse 1-3.) This excited the jealousy of the other presidents and all the satraps, and they conspired against Daniel to destroy him. He was a foreigner—a Jew, whose race was in captivity—and they could not bear the thought of having him over them.

Envy is a child of Satan and leads to diabolical deeds. "For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and vile deed." Note the great difference between earthly wisdom with its jealousy and fac-



tion and the wisdom from above (Jas. 3: 13-18). Through envy Jesus was crucified (Matt. 27: 18) and Paul and others were persecuted.

These presidents and satraps sought first an occasion of complaint against Daniel in his administration of public affairs, but failed, because "he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him." It is most wicked to hunt for mistakes and faults in others for the sake of accusing and injuring them.

This wicked scheme served only to place Daniel's virtues in a clearer and stronger light. They sought next an occasion "against him concerning the law of his God." Unwittingly they paid him here the greatest compliment possible. By this continual service of God he had impressed them with his faithfulness and loyalty to God, and they knew nothing could cause him to swerve. The greatest thing that can be done now is to serve God patiently and faithfully. (See Rom. 2: 7.) Daniel's enemies then held a convention, passed unanimously a resolution, and presented it to the king for adoption. It was as follows: "That whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions."

They then besought him to sign it, saying: "Now, O king, establish the interdict, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not." This flattered the king, appealed to his vanity, and caught him unawares. Besides, the king was supposed to be the image of the supreme god and an object of worship.

The heathen at Lystra thought the gods had come down to them in the form of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14: 11-13), and others called Herod a god (Acts 12: 20-23); hence these rulers said that no petition should be made to "any god or man," save the king. Darius signed this interdict, not suspecting its wicked plot against Daniel. (Verses 4-9.)

## II. Daniel Prayed

10. "And when Daniel knew the writing was signed" without hesitation he went straight forward in the service of God. "His windows were open in his chamber toward Jerusalem." This was his custom. He did not open them simply on this occasion. In the place where God put his name he promised to meet with and bless his people. (Ex. 20: 24; Deut. 12: 5.) God chose to put his name in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 6: 6), and the temple was called by his name (1 Kings 8: 43; 2 Chron. 6: 10). God promised to hear the prayers offered toward that place. Should a foreigner hear of God's mighty works and for his name's sake should come from a far country and pray toward the temple, God would answer; should God's people be taken as captives by their enemies into a far country and should there repent and pray toward the temple, God would hear and forgive them. (1 Kings 8: 29, 41-43, 46-53.)

God's people "went up into the temple to pray." (Luke 18: 10; 3: 1.) "In thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple." (Ps. 5: 7.) For this reason Daniel's windows were always open toward Jerusalem when he prayed. He did not open them to be seen of men or to flaunt his disregard of this interdict in the face of his enemies; neither did he close them to conceal himself after the passage of this interdict. Two other things worthy of note are: (1) "He kneeled upon his knees," and (2) he did this "three times a day." Kneeling shows a spirit of humility and devotion. One may pray without



kneeling, as did Jesus on the cross and Paul and Silas in the jail at Philippi; but when he assumes an attitude of prayer, kneeling is the proper one.

In Gethsemane, Jesus first kneeled (Luke 22: 41) and "fell on his face" (Matt. 26: 39), "on the ground" (Mark 14: 35). Like Daniel, when we pray in our chambers, we kneel; we do not stand. The true and devout servant of God prays regularly and often. The best and greatest men of the Bible were prayerful men. The Psalmist called upon God morning, noon, and evening. (Ps. 55: 17; see also Ps. 141: 2.) We are taught to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5: 17), to continue "steadfastly in prayer" (Rom. 12: 12), and to pray always and not to faint (Luke 18: 1). Daniel could have offered a better excuse for failing, had he sought one, than many do now. He could have said his life was in danger.

## II. The Work of His Enemies (Verses 11-15)

11. "Then these men assembled together" in order to watch Daniel and to have personal knowledge of his disobedience to the interdict; and, sure enough, they found Daniel "making petition and supplication before his God."

12. Then they approached the king, reminded him of the interdict, and recommitted him to it. He assured them it was true and should stand, "according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not." The law once made, all were bound by it; no man could reverse it. This fact is referred to in Esth. 1: 19; 8: 8.

13. This point established, they next informed the king that Daniel, a Jew of the captivity, neither regarded the king nor the interdict, but made his petitions to God three times a day.

14. When the king realized the murderous conspiracy of this interdict, enacted, as he thought, in his honor, he was greatly displeased with himself for allowing himself to be caught in such a trap; and he set his heart to devise some way to deliver Daniel, and labored earnestly at it until sundown—the time, it seems, for executing Daniel.

15. Learning of the king's distress and his effort to devise some way of delivering Daniel, these men assembled again before him and held him to the established rule that "no interdict nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed."

## III. The Anxiety of Darius—Daniel Delivered—The King's Joy

16. Bound by this, the king commanded that Daniel be brought and cast "into the den of lions." It is most probable that while these lions were in the king's park as a part of his menagerie, they were kept for the purpose of devouring criminals who might be judged worthy of such punishment. The den was probably a cave or covered inclosure surrounded by a wall. Daniel had impressed the king, as he had his enemies, that he served God "continually," not occasionally. To continue "steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2: 42), and to always abound in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15: 58), is the way to serve God now. For two reasons the king hoped God would deliver Daniel—because (1) Daniel served God continually, and (2) he knew so much of what God had done for Daniel. Therefore he said in encouragement to Daniel: "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee."



17. "A stone was . . . laid upon the mouth of the den" to prevent Daniel's escape; and it was sealed both with the king's signet and the signet of his lords, that none should tamper with it. All this precaution made the miracle of Daniel's preservation the more apparent.

18. The king appreciated Daniel's integrity, faithfulness, and proficiency, and was greatly troubled and deeply sincere in his concern for him. He spent the night fasting and without sleep. "Neither were instruments of music brought before him"—"or," the margin says, "dancing girls." He indulged in no pleasure.

19. Deeply solicitous, "the king arose very early in the morning [as soon as light began to appear], and went in haste unto the den of lions." This shows that he had some hope that God would preserve Daniel.

20. Coming near the den, "he cried with a lamentable voice." His voice was affected by grief and anxiety. "O Daniel, servant of the living God." God is called "the living God" in contrast with the gods of gold, silver, iron, stone, and wood, which see not, hear not, and know not. God abides forever, and is the source of life. "Whom thou servest continually." This shows that Daniel was not a spasmodic servant of God, but a regular or continual one, and that the king and all his acquaintances knew this. By steadfast continuance in well-doing let us impress the world that we likewise serve God continually. "Is thy God . . . able to deliver thee from the lions?" The king knew that unless Daniel's God had delivered him, his destruction was inevitable; but he had some hope that God had delivered Daniel.

21. "O king, live forever." This was the ordinary salutation. (Verse 6; Dan. 5: 10.) Thus Daniel answered, to the great relief and joy of the king.

22. "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me." The angel of God's presence (Isa. 63: 9) delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage (Num. 20: 16) and from all their afflictions so long as they served him faithfully; an angel delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace (Dan. 3: 23); an angel strengthened Jesus in Gethsemane for his trial and crucifixion (Luke. 22: 43) and rolled the stone from the sepulcher that he might be delivered from the tomb; and an angel delivered Peter from prison (Acts 12: 11). While Darius fasted, was troubled, and spent a sleepless night, an angel was with Daniel in the den of lions. Daniel gives two reasons, corresponding to the two efforts made by his enemies to find him guilty, why God did not allow the lions to hurt him: (1) "Forasmuch as before him my innocence was found in me;" (2) "and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt." By preserving him God approved Daniel's loyalty to him and integrity as an officer.

23. The king was greatly grieved when he found that he was unable to rescue Daniel from this wicked plot, and now he was just as "exceeding glad" to find him alive. "No manner of hurt [not a wound or a scratch] was found upon him, because he had trusted in his God." Daniel trusted in God not only the night he was in the den of lions and in danger, but through life and when in no danger; his trust was manifested in his continual service to God and his praying in the face of the king's interdict. We cannot rely upon God in danger and death unless we serve him in life before these critical moments come. The king then commanded that the men who formed this wicked plot against Daniel should themselves, with their wives



and children, be cast into the den of lions and destroyed. (Verse 24.) Then Darius made a decree that all nations and languages in all his dominion should "tremble and fear before the God of Daniel," for the following reasons: (1) "He is the living God." (2) He is "steadfast forever [unchangeable]." (3) His kingdom shall never be destroyed. (4) His dominion is without end. Human kingdoms are destroyed and human dominion ends; but God's never. (5) He delivers and rescues. (6) He works signs in heaven and earth, and has demonstrated this in delivering "Daniel from the power of the lions." (Verses 25-27.)

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Memory Verses.  
Have you read the book of Daniel?
- Into what did Darius divide his kingdom?  
Whom did he place over these governors?  
Why did the business of the different kingdoms prosper in Daniel's hands?  
What excited the envy of the other two presidents and the hundred and twenty satraps?  
What will envy lead people to do?  
How did Daniel's enemies seek occasion of complaint against him?  
Why did they fail?  
In what next did they seek cause of complaint against him?  
Why did they hope to succeed this time?  
Why was this the greatest compliment they could pay him?  
What is the greatest thing that can be done?  
Relate in detail the scheme planned and executed by Daniel's enemies to destroy him?  
Why did the king sign the interdict?
- 10 What did Daniel do when he knew the writing had been signed?  
Why were his windows open toward Jerusalem?  
Why, after the enactment of this interdict, did he not close them when he prayed?  
What two things should here be noted?  
What is said about the position taken when praying?  
What does the Bible teach in regard to regular, daily prayer?  
Would it have been justifiable in Daniel to stop praying because in doing so he endangered his life?
- 11 What did Daniel's enemies find him doing?  
12 What did they then do?  
What was the character of the laws of the Medes and Persians?  
13 Of what did they then inform the king?  
14 Why was the king distressed?  
What did he try to do?  
15 What did Daniel's enemies do when they learned of the king's effort to rescue Daniel?  
16 What then was done?  
Why were the lions kept there?  
What was the den?  
What impression had Daniel made upon the king in regard to serving God?  
What must we do in that regard now?  
For what two reasons did the king hope God would deliver Daniel?
- 17 How was Daniel's escape from the den made impossible?  
What made Daniel's miraculous escape more apparent?  
Of what are we here reminded?
- 18 Why did the king so appreciate Daniel?  
How did the king spend the night?
- 19, 20 What did he do and say early the next morning?  
Why was his cry lamentable?  
Why is God called the "living God?"
- 21, 22 What reply did Daniel make?  
What is said of angels delivering others?  
Why did God deliver Daniel?  
Why did Daniel give these two reasons?
- 23 What effect did Daniel's deliverance have upon the king?  
Why was Daniel not hurt?  
How did he manifest his trust in God?  
What was then done with Daniel's enemies?  
What decree did Darius then make?



## LESSON V—JULY 30

**THE FIRST RETURN FROM EXILE—Jeremiah 29: 10-14;****Ezra 1: 1-11. Print Jeremiah 29: 10; Ezra 1: 1-8, 11**

**JEREMIAH 29. 10** For thus saith Jehovah, After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

**EZRA 1. 1** Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

3 Whosoever there is among you of all his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the go up to build the house of Jehovah which is in Jerusalem.

4 And whosoever is left, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill-offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.

5 Then rose up the heads of fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, even all whose spirit God had stirred to go up to build the house of Jehovah which is in Jerusalem.

6 And all they that were round about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered.

7 Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of Jehovah, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put in the house of his gods;

8 even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.

11 All the vessels of gold and silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up, when they of the captivity were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—We know that to them that love God all things work together for good. (Romans 8: 28.)

*Time*—B. C. 536.

*Places*—Babylon and Jerusalem.

*Persons*—Cyrus and Zerubbabel.

*Memory Verse*—Psalms 126: 3.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 85: 1-9.

*Reference Material*—Psalms 85; 86; 122; 123; 124; 130; 131; Jeremiah 29.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., July 24.—The first return from exile.—Ezra 1: 1-11. Tu.—The captivity foretold.—Lev. 26: 27-36. Wed.—The captivity a judgment.—Jer. 29: 15-19. Th.—Captives of sin.—Rom. 7: 16-25. Fr.—Freedom through Christ.—Rom. 8: 1-10. Sat.—The captives' cry.—Psa. 137: 1-9. Su.—The king's response.—Psa. 85: 1-9.

**INTRODUCTION****I. Ezra and His Book**

In the last four chapters of this book Ezra refers to himself as its author. It gives an account of the return of the Jews from Babylon, their rebuilding the temple, their hindrances by their enemies, and the reformation produced by Ezra's teaching. Ezra was a descendant of Aaron, and was, therefore, of the priestly family; "and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which Jehovah, the God of Israel, had given." (Ezra 7: 1-10.)

**II. Why This Captivity?**

God punished the Israelites by captivity and servitude, according to his solemn warnings in Deut. 28 (which read). The book of Judges



gives an account of the lapses and restorations of the Israelites; while Kings and Chronicles give the downfall and captivity, first, of the kingdom of Israel, and, next, of the kingdom of Judah. The subjects of the kingdom of Judah were carried into captivity at different times (2 Kings 24: 1, 2; 2 Chron. 36: 5-8; Jer. 52: 28-30; Dan. 1: 1); but the two principal deportations were (1) when Jehoiachin, his mother, princes, soldiers, and artificers were carried away (2 Kings 24: 10-19), and (2) when Jerusalem was destroyed (2 Kings 25: 1-21; 2 Chron. 36: 17-21.)

Sin weakened the Jews and made them easy victims of their enemies. In captivity they were in God's school of correction. Here they passed through the furnace of trial until the dross of idolatry and other sins was consumed. (See Heb. 12: 4-12.) God's discipline and correction are not signs of his displeasure, but of his love. The chastisement of his love has served its purpose when it produces in his children the fruits of righteousness. The Jews were cured of idolatry, repented of their sins, and returned unto God. "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I observe thy word." (Ps. 119: 67, 71.) They never could have returned to Jerusalem before learning these lessons. The ten tribes in a body never returned, but many of them returned with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. We read of those of other tribes serving God in the temple. (Luke 2: 36.) Many of the Levites returned to Judah soon after the establishment of the kingdom of Israel, and many were in this return from Babylon. (Ezra 2: 36-42.)

The Jews were encouraged to repent and were prepared for this return through the prophets of God. (Ezek. 20: 33-39.) They were not carried all at once into captivity and did not all return at the same time, but from the beginning of the captivity unto the beginning of the return and from the destruction of the temple unto its completion when rebuilt was seventy years.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. The Return Foretold

God not only foretold this captivity in his solemn warnings against sin, but foretold that it would last for seventy years. (Jer. 25: 12; 29: 10.) According to Jeremiah's instruction (29: 1-8), the Jews in captivity built houses, planted gardens, reared families, and sought the peace of their captors; hence they increased in wealth and numbers, and some, as Daniel and Nehemiah, rose to places of the highest positions of trust and honor. God commands all Christians to make supplications, to offer prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings for all their rulers that they [Christians] may "lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity." (1 Tim. 2: 1-4)

Such a life in any government God requires his people to live, and they must pray God to so overrule the law-making powers of these earthly governments that they will enact such laws as will allow Christians to lead such a life. Paul requested the Thessalonians to pray that he "may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men; for all men have not faith." (1 Thess. 3: 1-2.) God then could overrule "unreasonable and evil men" so as to bring about Paul's deliverance. Are all endeavoring and praying to live this life? Christians can engage in nothing which interferes with their living this life. From the threatenings, solemn warnings, and persecution of God through his prophets, and especially Jeremiah, we know that this captivity was the result of sin.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Cyrus and His Proclamation

1. Compare 2 Chron. 36: 22, 23 and Ezra 1: 1-3. Cyrus, as stated in this verse, was king of Persia. His father was Cambyeses, and his mother was Mandane, the daughter of Astyages, king of the Medes. We have learned how he captured Babylon. "In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia." This was not his first year as king of Persia, and probably not his first year as conqueror of Babylon, for we have learned that Darius reigned awhile as king of Babylon, for Cyrus conquered it (Dan. 5: 30; 6: 1.); but it was his first year as the actual ruler of Babylon (Dan. 6: 28.) "That the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished," Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem. Jeremiah had foretold that the captivity would continue seventy years (Jer. 25: 12; 29: 10), and this time had been fulfilled. The purpose, too, of the captivity in correcting the Jews and leading them back to trust in God and to his true worship had been accomplished.

"Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus." Nebuchadnezzar, who destroyed Jerusalem and led the Jews into this captivity, was overruled by Jehovah to do this, and was called God's servant." (Jer. 25: 9; 27: 6.) So when God had accomplished his purpose upon the Jews by captivity, he overruled Cyrus, calling him his "shepherd" and "anointed," to send them back to Jerusalem. God called Cyrus by name about one hundred and seventy-five years before this. It is stated also that Cyrus had not known God. In his overruling power God gave the nations to Nebuchadnezzar and led Nebuchadnezzar to acknowledge his might, glory, and everlasting dominion. (Dan. 4: 2, 3, 37.) So he gave "all the kingdoms of the earth" to Cyrus, and led him to make the proclamation of this lesson.

It is more than probable that to Cyrus were pointed out the above quotation from Isaiah and the passages in Jeremiah stating that the Jews would return to Jerusalem in seventy years. In this way God "stirred up the spirit of Cyrus" to make this proclamation. Cyrus made the proclamation first orally and then made it a matter of record that it might stand.

2. "All the kingdoms of the earth." Cyrus' dominion was universal. He acknowledged that God had given him this rule and had charged him to build the temple in Jerusalem. Cyrus, doubtless, received this charge through Isaiah, as quoted above, which he acknowledged was from God.

3. "Whosoever there is among you of all his people." This was a voluntary act; none were compelled to go. In this way all were tested, and all who longed for the restoration of God's worship in Jerusalem went.

### II. Cyrus' Gifts to the Work

4. "Whosoever is left, in any place where he sojourneth"—that is, whoever of the Israelites had survived the captivity. "Let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts"—that is, let their heathen neighbors give such things to the Jews for their journey and for their work in Jerusalem. When the Israelites left Egypt, they received help from the Egyptians. (Ex. 12: 35, 36.) These gifts from the people among whom the Jews lived were in addition to the "freewill offering" which the Jews themselves made. (Ezra 2: 68.) The proclamation of Cyrus ordered



the people in all parts of his dominion to assist the Jews in this way.

5. "Then"—after this proclamation had been made—the chief men of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and Levites, "even all whose spirit God had stirred" to do so, went "to build the house of Jehovah . . . in Jerusalem." God "stirred up" their spirit to go and do this work by his teaching—warnings, encouragement, and hope—through his prophets.

6. As the proclamation directed, "all they that were round about" the Jews "strengthened their hands" with the gifts mentioned. Again, it is stated that these gifts were in addition to the freewill offerings of the Jews themselves. The full number of those who went was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, besides seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven servants and two hundred singers. (Ezra 2: 64, 65.) The gifts which they received and their own freewill offerings are given in Ezra 2: 66-70. The beasts of burden carried the women, children, vessels of the temple, and personal property. If the number given refers to heads of families, which is probable the women and children would greatly increase the number. This number, then, must be small compared to those who did not go.

7-8. In addition to all other gifts, Cyrus gave the Jews "the vessels of the house of Jehovah, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem and had put in the house of his gods." An account of this act of Nebuchadnezzar is given in 2 Kings 24: 13; 2 Chron. 36: 7. Nebuchadnezzar little thought that he was preserving these vessels to be returned after seventy years to Jerusalem. Some of them were, doubtless, the ones Belshazzar used in his impious feat. "Mithredath the treasurer" had these in charge, and numbered them to "Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah." "Sheshbazzar" was another name of "Zerubbabel."

In Ezra 5: 16 Sheshbazzar is said to have laid the foundation of the house of God, and this work is ascribed also to Zerubbabel. (Ezra 3: 8; 4: 1-3.) Sheshbazzar, or Zerubbabel, was made governor by Cyrus. (Ezra 5: 14.)

9-10. These verses give only two thousand four hundred and ninety-nine vessels.

11. This verse gives the number of vessels as five thousand four hundred. It is probable that the full number of all the vessels of every sort was five thousand four hundred, and only the chief ones were specified in verses 9, 10. Isaiah (55: 12, 13) depicts the joyful return of the Jew and the return of their prosperity.



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Memory Verses  
Who is the author of the book of Ezra?  
State the contents of this book  
Of what family was Ezra?  
How and why did God chastise his people?  
State the principal times when the Jews were carried into captivity?  
By whom was this captivity predicted?  
How long did it continue?  
What did the Jews do in captivity?  
For what and whom are Christians commanded to pray?  
Why pray to God when unreasonable and evil men rule?  
What life must Christians live?  
What does sin do for any people?  
Whom does God chastise and correct?  
What became of the ten tribes?  
Between what periods was the seventy years of captivity?  
1 Who was Cyrus?  
To what time does the "first year of Cyrus" in this verse refer?  
What had God foretold by Jeremiah?  
How was this fulfilled?  
What had God foretold of Cyrus?  
How did God stir up Cyrus' spirit to do this?  
In what way did God give all kingdoms to Cyrus?  
What did Cyrus reduce to writing?  
2 What charge did Cyrus say God had given him?  
How did God give this charge to Cyrus?  
3 What proclamation did Cyrus make?  
In what way was this a test to the Jews?  
4 Who were commanded to help the Jews?  
Who made the freewill offerings spoken of?  
5 Who arose to go?  
How did God stir their spirits to go?  
6 What assistance did the Jews receive from their heathen neighbors?  
How many went to Jerusalem?  
7, 8 What did Cyrus restore to the Jews?  
Where were these vessels kept in Babylon?  
To whom were these vessels numbered?  
By what other name is Sheshbazzar called, and what was his office?  
9 10 Give the number of each kind of vessel  
11 How many vessels were there in all?  
How do you account for the difference between the number given in this verse and the numbers of verses 9 and 10?  
How does Isaiah depict the departure of the Jews, their joy and prosperity?



## LESSON VI—AUGUST 6

# THE TEMPLE REBUILT AND DEDICATED—Ezra 3: 1-6: 22. Print 3: 10-13; 6: 14-16

EZRA 3. 10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Jehovah, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise Jehovah, after the order of David king of Israel.

11 And they sang one to another in praising and giving thanks unto Jehovah, saying, For he is good, for his loving kindness endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised Jehovah, because the foundation of the house of Jehovah was laid.

12 But many of the priests and Levites and heads of father's houses, the old men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:

13 so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

6. 14 And the elders of the Jews builded and prospered, through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the decree of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

16 And the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of Jehovah. (Psalm 84: 2.)

*Time*—B. C. 535 to B. C. 515—a period of twenty years.

*Place*—Jerusalem.

*Persons*—Zerubbabel, the governor; Joshua, the high priest; Haggai and Zechariah, prophets; Cyrus, Ahasuerus (Cambyses, Cyrus' son), Artaxerxes (a usurper), and Darius Hystaspes—Medro-Persian kings.

*Memory Verse*—Psalms 100: 4.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 100.

*Reference Material*—Haggai 1: 1 to 2: 23; Isaiah 62; Revelation 21: 1 to 22: 5.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., July 31.—Rebuilding the temple.—Ezra 3: 8-13. Tu.—Dedicating the temple.—Ezra 6: 13-22. Wed.—The greatness of the temple.—2 Chron. 2: 1-10. Th.—God's dwelling place.—1 Kings 8: 5-11. Fr.—Solomon's prayer.—1 Kings 8: 22-30. Sat.—The temple destroyed.—2 Kings 25: 8-17. Su.—Praise in the temple.—Psa. 100.

## INTRODUCTION

### I. Preparing Lodging Places

It is not stated at what time of the year the Jews began their journey of about eight hundred miles from Babylon to Jerusalem on their return from captivity; but since they reached their destination some time before the seventh month (corresponding to the last of September and first of October), and since it required several months to make the journey, they must have left Babylon in the spring. It required Ezra and those with him four months to make this journey. (Ezra 7: 9.) Upon their arrival in their own country, the Jews went to the cities which belonged to their respective families before the captivity. (Ezra 2: 70; 3: 1.) They found the cities, like Jerusalem, in ruins and the country desolate. Their first work was to prepare some sort of lodging places for themselves and families. This was



done by repairing the old houses, constructing huts, and, perhaps, stretching tents. This done, in the seventh month "the people gathered themselves together as one man in Jerusalem."

## II. Worshiping God "As It Is Written"

The people went to Jerusalem in obedience to God. (See Num. 29.) They did not wait until the temple was rebuilt before they began to worship God, but it was necessary to worship God during the time they would be employed in rebuilding the temple. They built on its original foundation the altar of burnt offering, and began "from the first day of the seventh month" to offer the daily burnt offerings. At the appointed time they kept the feast of tabernacles and offered the burnt offerings by number during the feast as "every day required." After this they offered the burnt offerings of the new moons and "of all the set feasts." Although "fear was upon them because of the peoples of the countries," they began and continued the worship of God.

We will learn more of these bitter enemies of the Jews as we proceed in our lessons. There was but one way to restore the true worship of God, and that was to do all things according to his directions; hence these Jews assembled at Jerusalem (Deut. 12: 5, 6), made their burnt offerings, kept their set feasts, and did all things "as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God." (Verses 1-6.) Hezekiah reformed the people by persuading them to worship God "as it is written" (2 Chron. 30: 5; 31: 3); Josiah did the same (2 Kings 22: 13; 23: 3, 21); as our lesson shows, after the captivity the Jews restored the true worship of God by worshipping "as it is written;" and later, Ezra reformed them by insisting on doing "as it is written" (Neh. 8: 1, 4, 9, 14). To restore the worship of God under Christ, as revealed in the New Testament, it is necessary to worship God "as it is written" in that book. (On this point, see Mark 7: 1-13; 1 Cor. 4: 6; 2 John 9.) The worship of God inaugurated as described above, the Jews then began to make preparation to rebuild the temple. Imitating Solomon (1 Kings 5: 1-11), they purchased from the people of Sidon and Tyre timbers for this purpose. The grant also which they had from Cyrus allowed them to do this. (Verse 7; chapter 1: 2; 6: 3-6.)

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Celebrating the Laying of the Foundation of the Temple

10. In the second month (corresponding to the last of April and first of May) of the second year of their return the Jews were ready to lay the foundation of the temple. The Levites were appointed to have the oversight of the work. (Vs. 8: 9.)

When the builders had laid the foundation of the house, it was made an occasion of a great celebration. The apparel of the priests is described in Ex. 39. "With trumpets." The use of the two silver trumpets made according to God's command is given in Num. 10: 1-10 (which see). In Solomon's time these trumpets were increased to one hundred and twenty (1 Chron. 5: 12), and were employed as an accompaniment to songs of thanksgiving and praise. They were so employed on this occasion. "The Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals. This was a class of musicians named for Asaph. (1 Chron. 15: 16-24) "After the order of David king of Israel—that is, as David had directed, or ordained. (1 Chron. 6: 31; 16: 7; 25: 1, 5, 6.)



11. "And they sang one to another"—that is, by courses and responding one to another. They sang thus "in praising and giving thanks unto Jehovah." They said: "For he is good, for his loving-kindness endureth forever." (See 1 Chron 16: 34, 41; Ps. 106.) All praised God "because the foundation of the house of Jehovah was laid." This is no precedent for celebrating the laying of the corner stones of houses of worship and of dedicating such houses, because this temple at Jerusalem was not a type of houses of worship, but of the spiritual temple, or building, of God. (See 1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; 6: 19, 20; Heb. 3: 6; 8: 2; 1 Pet. 2: 5.)

## II. The Old Men Weep

12-13. "But" contrasts what the old men did with the joy of the preceding verse. "Many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, the old men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice." Their grief was very great. Why did they weep? Not because this house was smaller than the one which had been destroyed, for it was larger. This house was sixty cubits high and sixty cubits broad, and the first one was only twenty cubits broad and thirty cubits high. (See 1 Kings 6: 2; 2 Chron. 3: 3, 4; Ezra 6: 3.) The contrast between the plainness and poverty of this one and the richness, beauty, and magnificence of the first one; the absence of the ark of the covenant and its contents, the mercy seat and the fire from heaven; and old associations, made them weep. They felt that the glory of Israel had departed. To them the glory of this building, compared to the glory of the former one, was nothing. (Hag. 2: 3.) Some of these men must have been old indeed. In this way God was leading his people away from material splendor and glory to the greatness and glory of his spiritual kingdom. Fifteen years after this Haggai encouraged the people to proceed with this building, making the following promise: "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith Jehovah of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah of hosts." It was greater than the former because Jesus Christ would come to it and fill it with his glory. (Hag. 2: 1-9.) While these old men "wept with a loud voice," others "shouted aloud for joy," so that the people could not distinguish between the shouts of joy and cries of sorrow. This was, doubtless, a most affecting scene.

## III. The Good Work Hindered

Chapter 4 shows how the Jew's adversaries tried to hinder the work of building the temple. These adversaries were the people the kings of Assyria had transported from other countries into Samaria after the captivity of the ten tribes. (2 Kings 17: 24-26; verses 2, 9, 10.) From these sprang the Samaritans. When these adversaries "heard that the children of the captivity were building a temple unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, . . . they drew near to Zerubbabel, and to the heads of fathers' houses, and said unto them, Let us build with you; for we seek your God, as ye do; and we sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assyria, who brought us up hither." Esar-haddon was the son of Sennacherib. (2 Kings 19: 37.) These Samaritans did not worship God; they were idolaters. An account of their worship is given in 2 Kings 17: 24-41. "But Zerubbabel [the governor] and Joshua [the high priest], and the rest of the heads of fathers' houses of Israel [the wise men and leaders], said unto them,



Ye have nothing to do with us in building a house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us."

The Jews would receive no assistance from such a source, and dismissed these adversaries in this summary manner. The Jews could not acknowledge these idolatrous people as true worshipers of God, and could join them in nothing which pertained to the worship of God. They declined to place themselves under any obligations whatever to the enemies of the true worship of God; neither would they make any compromise which would adulterate this worship by a mixture with heathenism. There was a way in which these adversaries could have joined the Jews in this work, and that was by renouncing all idolatrous worship and heathen practices and worshiping God "as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God." This they were unwilling to do. This action of the Jews so intensified the hatred of their enemies that they "weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building"—that is, opposed and terrified them in every way. They "hired counselors against them, to frustrate their purpose." They succeeded in greatly checking this work even during the rest of Cyrus' reign, who granted the Jews the privilege of carrying it on and assisted them in doing so. They wrote letters to Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes, accusing the Jews of sedition and rebellion, and succeeded in getting an order from Artaxerxes to stop the work "by force and power." A copy of these letters is given in chapter 4. "Then ceased the work of the house of God until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia."

#### IV. The Encouragement of Haggai and Zechariah

6: 14-16 Chapters 5 and 6 relate that the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, taught and encouraged the Jews to return to the work of building the temple until it was completed. Cyrus reigned until B.C. 529—six years after the work of rebuilding the temple began. Cyrus was succeeded by his son, Cambyses (Ahasuerus of chapter 4: 6), who reigned until B.C. 522. Artaxerxes, the usurper, succeeded Cambyses, and reigned only eight months, and was succeeded B.C. 521 by Darius Hystaspes. It is thought by some that "Xerxes" and "Artaxerxes" were titles assumed by Persian kings, and not their real names. In the second year of the reign of Darius, Haggai and Zechariah prophesied to encourage the Jews to resume work on the house of God. This was B.C. 519. Read the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. Haggai showed that (1) the time had come to build the house of God; (2) it was wrong to dwell in ceiled houses while the house of God was waste; (3) God had sent the drought because his house had not been completed; (4) God would be with them, since they had resolved to resume work; (5) while this house seemed to some as nothing, it should be more glorious than the former one; and (6) God, who rules over all, would crown their work with success.

The result was that the Jews went to work in the face of all opposition. Tattenai was governor of the country at this time. He, Shethar-bozenai (some officer of rank), and his companions first asked the elders, who were working by the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, and under God's care, therefore, who gave them a decree to build the temple and finish the wall around the city.

These elders made a courteous, humble, and straightforward answer and confession of the sins of their people, stating that Cyrus had made the decree to build the house of God and to place in it the vessels Nebuchadnezzar had carried out of the temple of Solomon to



Babylon; that upon that decree Sheshbazzar had come and laid the foundation of the house of God, but that since that time until the time of this inquiry the house had "been in building" and was not yet complete.

Without prejudice or malice, Tattenai and Shethar-bozenai wrote these facts to Darius, asking if Cyrus had made such a decree and requesting the king's pleasure concerning the matter. Upon investigation, Darius found that Cyrus had made this decree, giving the dimensions of the house and ordering that the expenses be paid out of the king's treasury and the vessels mentioned above be returned.

Therefore, Darius returned answer, favoring the work of the Jews and ordering Tattenai, Shethar-bozenai, and his companions not only not to hinder them, but assist them financially in the work; also that such things as they should need for sacrifices and offerings be given them, and that they be requested to "pray for the life of the king and his sons." Tattenai and those with him joined heartily in carrying out these directions of King Darius. Therefore in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the house of God was finished, seventy years after it had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and twenty years after the return of the first Jews from Babylon.

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Memory Verses.  
How long do you suppose it required the Jews to make the journey from Babylon to Jerusalem?  
What was their first work after their return?  
When and why did they assemble at Jerusalem?  
Why did they first erect the altar?  
Where did they erect it?  
How only could they restore the worship of God?  
What have all true reformers endeavored to persuade people to do?  
How can the pure worship of God, as revealed in the New Testament, be restored?  
Having inaugurated the worship of God, what did the Jews proceed to do?
- 8, 9 When was the foundation laid?
  - 10 How was this occasion celebrated?
  - 11 What is meant by singing to one another?  
What did they say of the goodness of God?  
Why is this action not a precedent for celebrating the laying of corner stones and dedicating houses of worship?
  - 12, 13 Why did the old men weep?  
Why was not this house as rich and splendid as the former one?  
In what was it more glorious?
- What did others do while the old men wept?  
Who were the adversaries of the Jews?  
What people sprang from them?  
What proposition did they make to the Jews?  
What is said of their worship?  
What reply did the Jews make to this proposition?  
Why would they not accept the service of these people?  
What lesson does this teach us?  
What effect did this rejection of their proposition have upon the Jew's enemies?  
How did they succeed in causing the work of the Jews to cease?  
14-16 Who succeeded Cyrus, and when?  
Who succeeded Cambyses, and when?  
Who succeeded Artaxerxes, and when?  
What do you suppose "Xerxes" and "Artaxerxes" were?  
Who encouraged the Jews to resume work?  
When?  
Did you ever read the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah?  
State, in order, what Haggai showed.  
Give the inquiry Tattenai made and the Jews' answer.  
What did Tattenai write to Darius?  
What is the character of Tattenai's letter?  
What reply did Darius return?  
When was the temple completed?



## LESSON VII—AUGUST 13

**ESTHER SAVES HER PEOPLE—Esther 1: 1-10; 5: 1-3****Print 4: 10-17; 5: 1-3**

**ESTHER 4. 10** Then Esther spake unto Hathach, and gave him a message unto Mordecai, *saying,*

11 All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law for him, that he be put to death, except those to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

12 And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

13 Then Mordecai bade them return answer unto Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the **Jews**.

14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house will perish: and who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

15 Then Esther bade them return answer unto Mordecai,

16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Susa, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast in like manner; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.

17 So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

5. 1 Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the entrance of the house.

2 And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favor in his sight; and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

3 Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be given thee even to the half of the kingdom.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

**Golden Text**—The righteous cried, and Jehovah heard, and delivered them out of all their troubles. (Psalm 34:17.)

**Time**.—B.C. 473.

**Place**.—Shushan.

**Persons**—Ahasuerus and his princes, Vashti and Esther, Haman and Mordecai.

**Memory verses**.—Psalms 54:4.

**Devotional reading**.—Psalm 34:1-8.

**Reference material**.—Matthew 20:20-28; Romans 5:6-10; 12:1, 2

**Home Readings**.—Mon., Aug. 7.—The feast of Ahasuerus.—Esther 1: 1-8. Tu.—Vashti, the queen.—Esther 1: 9-12. Wed.—Esther chosen queen.—Esther 2: 15-20. Th.—Haman's plot.—Esther 3: 8-15. Fr.—Esther's courage.—Esther 4: 10-5: 3. Sat.—Esther's triumph.—Esther 8: 3-8. Su.—Guardian angels.—Psa. 34: 1-8.

**INTRODUCTION**

Read the entire book of Esther. This lesson is in this book because the facts in it come in order after the completion of the temple at Jerusalem. After the return of Zerubbabel with the first company of Jews to Jerusalem to the completion of the temple was twenty years; from the completion of the temple to the time Esther saved her people was forty-three years; from the time Esther saved her people to Ezra's journey to Jerusalem was fifteen years (Ezra 7: 1, 6, 9: 8); and from Ezra's journey to the time Nehemiah went to Jerusalem was thirteen years. The purpose of the book of Esther is to give the account of the salvation of the Jews by Esther.

The author of the book is not certainly known. Some suppose the author to be Ezra; some, Mordecai. Mordecai was a Benjamin-



ite, and was carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar with Jehoiachin. (2 Kings 24: 10-17; Esth. 2: 6.) He was an officer of some kind of Ahasuerus. (Esth. 2: 19, 21.) Mordecai and Esther were cousins. Esther's parents were dead, and Mordecai had adopted her and reared her as his own daughter. (Esth. 2: 7.) "Esther" means "star"; and her other name, "Hadassah," means "myrtle." She was "fair and beautiful." Besides being "fair and beautiful," she was prudent, wise, and had becoming manners.

There are three different kings by the name of "Ahasuerus" mentioned in the Bible—(1) Dan. 9: 1; (2) Ezra 4: 6; (3) the one of our lesson. The Ahasuerus of our lesson is identified with Xerxes. (See margin at Esth. 1: 1.) "We are, therefore, reduced to the belief that Ahasuerus is Xerxes (the names being identical); and this conclusion is fortified by the resemblance of character and by certain chronological indications. As Xerxes scourged the sea and put to death the engineers of his bridge because their work was injured by a storm, so Ahasuerus repudiated his queen, Vashti, because she would not violate the decorum of her sex, and ordered the massacre of the whole Jewish people to gratify the malice of Haman.

"In the third year of Xerxes was held an assembly to arrange the Grecian war. (Herod. VII. ff.) In the third year of Ahasuerus was held a great feast and assembly in Shushan, the palace. (Esth. 1: 3.) In the seventh year of his reign Xerxes returned, defeated, from Greece, and consoled himself by the pleasures of his harem. (Herod. IX. 108.) In the seventh year of his reign 'fair young virgins were sought' for Ahasuerus, and he replaced Vashti by marrying Esther. "The tribute he laid upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea" (Esth. 10: 1), may well have been the result of the expenditure and ruin of the Grecian expedition." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

Shushan was the capital of Persia, and was about two hundred miles east of Babylon. Upon making Esther queen, the king made a great feast, called "Esther's feast." (Esth. 2: 15-18.) As yet Esther had not made her kindred and people known, as Mordecai had charged her; for she still obeyed Mordecai, as she did before becoming queen. (Esth. 2: 19, 20.) "In those days" Mordecai made known to Esther the wicked plot of two of the king's chamberlains to lay hands upon the king, and she made it known to the king in Mordecai's name. A record was made of this, and served to promote Mordecai to great honor, as well as to help save his life and his people.

Haman was an Agagite—that is, a probable descendant of Agag, the king of the Amalekites, whom God sent Saul to utterly destroy. Haman was a great favorite with Ahasuerus, who advanced him above all princes. Mordecai refused to bow down before Haman, because doing so was most probably a species of idolatry. This refusal of Mordecai to bow before Haman so enraged Haman that he sought the extermination of all the Jews. He scorned the idea of slaying Mordecai only. In the twelfth year of the king's reign "they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, which is the month Adar" (Esth. 3: 7), in order to see, it seems, which would be the best month for exterminating the Jews. Haman offered to reimburse the king for the loss of the Jews with an immense sum of money.

The king granted his request, and ordered the massacre of the Jews. The thirteenth day of the twelfth month was set for this bloody business. When Mordecai learned of this, it greatly dis-



tressed him; and he rent his clothes, put on sackcloth with ashes, and "cried with a loud and bitter cry" in the midst of the city. In Shushan and in every province of all the king's realm "there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes." (Est. 4: 1-3.) Esther at first, not knowing the cause of this grief, sent clothes to Mordecai; but he refused them. Then she sent Hathach, the chamberlain appointed to attend to her, to Mordecai "to know what this was, and why it was." Mordecai explained it all to Hathach, and told him of "the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them". Mordecai also sent Esther a copy of the decree, and charged her to "go in to the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him, for her people". (Verses 4-8.)

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

10. Hathach carried Mordecai's message to Esther and returned her message to him.

11. Read the verse. Esther's reply to Mordecai was that whoever went into the inner court to the king without being called would be put to death, unless perchance the king should hold out to him the golden scepter; that the law applied to all alike; and that she had not been called by the king in thirty days. It seems from this that the king's love for Esther was becoming cool. While there was a possible chance for Esther to thus reach the king, it was a most hazardous venture; for in so doing she would probably lose her life. She belonged to a despised race, and this would reveal her nationality; also she would have to risk her life against the influence of Haman, the most popular man with the king.

12-14. These verses give Mordecai's reply. He placed before Esther these facts: (1) Being a Jew, she must not think she would escape the massacre; (2) should she hold her peace and decline to undertake this deliverance, deliverance would arise from some other source, but she and her father's house would perish; and (3) who knew but that for this purpose she had come to the kingdom. While the name of God does not appear in this book, yet this shows Mordecai's belief in God and his providence.

15, 16. Upon considering Mordecai's argument, Esther decided to take this dangerous step; but she was unwilling to take it without proper preparation. She requested Mordecai to gather together all the Jews who were in Shushan and to fast with her, neither eating nor drinking for three days and nights, saying that she and her maidens would likewise fast. Being Jews, it seems certain that with this fasting was earnest prayer and an acknowledgment of dependence upon God. "And so will I go in unto the king"—that is, with this preparation. "And if I perish, I perish." This was a heroic act on Esther's part; she risked her life for the salvation of others by going in to the king contrary to the law. This is to us a most cruel and brutal law, but Xerxes and other despots then were cruel and brutal.

17. Mordecai recognized the propriety of making this preparation, and did as Esther requested.

1. "Now it came to pass on the third day." This shows how time was counted then. Verse 16 says "three days, night or day," and this verse says "on the third day." "On the third day" means, according to our more accurate way of counting time, after two days and nights, and not three days and nights. "Esther put on her



royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house," while the king sat upon his throne, which was opposite the entrance of his house. Esther was a wise and practical woman, and used all the means of success in her power—namely, the religious preparation of the previous verses; her appearance in the presence of the king in a dignified, respectful, and courteous way; her personal beauty and gracious manners.

2. When the king saw Esther in the court, he was moved by her appearance, and extended to her the golden scepter, because she had obtained favor in his sight. Having gained the favor of the king, Esther "drew near, and touched the top of the scepter."

3. The king asked Esther's wish, and promised to grant it, even to the half of his kingdom. Esther proceeded in a wise way to further gain the favor of the king. Haman was elated with the idea of being invited to the queen's banquet with the king, but Mordecai's conduct filled him with wrath. At the suggestion of his wife, Zerash, Haman prepared to hang Mordecai. This reminds us of the destruction of Naboth by that most wicked woman, Jezebel, in order that her husband might take Naboth's vineyard. (1 Kings 21: 1-16.) God's providence was helping in the matter; and through restlessness the king learned that Mordecai had never been rewarded for informing the king of the plot against him, and he determined to do so. The result of Esther's heroic action was the tragic death of Haman, the promotion of Mordecai to Haman's place, the enactment of a law allowing the Jews to defend themselves on the day set for their extermination; great numbers of their enemies were slain, and fear of the Jews fell upon the people. The Jews declined to lay hands upon the spoil. This gave origin to the feast of Purim, which the Jews have celebrated on the thirteenth and fourteenth of their month Adar—the last of February and first of March—annually ever since.



## QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Did you read all the references?

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons.

Repeat the Memory Verses.

Did you read the book of Esther?

Why is this lesson in this book?

State the order of events and number of years between them from Zerubbabel's return to Nehemiah's visit to Jerusalem.

What is the purpose of the book of Esther?

Who was Mordecai?

Who was Esther?

What was her other name?

What does that name mean?

What does "Esther" mean?

Who was Ahasuerus?

What was Shushan, and where was it?

Why was Vashti discarded?

How did Esther become queen?

What plot did Mordecai make known to the king?

Who was Haman?

Why would not Mordecai bow to Haman?

What did Mordecai's refusal to bow to Haman cause Haman to seek to do to the Jews?

How did he plan to have this done?

How did he promise to reimburse the king for the destruction of the Jews?

How was the day for the extermination of the Jews determined?

What effect did this have upon Mordecai and the Jews everywhere?

What did Esther send to Mordecai to know?

What reply did Mordecai make?

What did he charge Esther to do?

10, 11 What was Esther's reply to Mordecai's charge?

What was against Esther's gaining favor with the king?

12-14 State, in order, Mordecai's reply to Esther.

15, 16 What then did Esther decide to do?

What preparation was made?

Why do we suppose the Jews prayed to God?

Why was this so heroic on Esther's part?

17 What did Mordecai consent to do? How long did Esther say all should fast?

How did Esther prepare herself to appear before the king?

On what day did she go in before the king?

2 What did the king do?

3 What promise did the king make?

How did Esther proceed to gain the further favor of the king?

Give Haman's course and end.

In what did Esther's heroic action result?

What is the feast of Purim?



## LESSON VIII—AUGUST 20

# THE SECOND RETURN FROM EXILE—Ezra 7: 1-8: 36.

## Print 7: 10; 8: 21-23, 31, 32

EZRA 7. 10 For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances.

8. 21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek of him a straight way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

22 For I was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way, because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.

23 So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us.

31 Then we departed from the river Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the lie-in-wait by the way.

32 And we came to Jerusalem and abode there three days.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good. Ezra 8:22.

*Time*.—B.C. 458.

*Place*.—By the river Ahava.

*Persons*.—Artaxerxes, the king of Persia; Ezra and his company.

*Memory verse*.—Joshua 1:9.

*Devotional reading*.—Psalm 107:1-9.

*Reference material*.—Ezra 9;1 to 10:17.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Aug. 14.—Ezra.—Ezra 7: 6-10. Tu.—Ezra's commission.—Ezra 7: 11-13, 25, 28. Wed.—The second return from exile.—Ezra 8: 21-32. Th.—Moses called to leadership.—Exod. 3: 1-10. Fr. Isaiah's call.—Isa. 6: 1-12. Sat.—The call of Saul.—Acts 9: 1-9. Su.—Praise for deliverance.—Psa. 107: 1-9.

## INTRODUCTION

Read Ezra 7-10; study chapter 8:15-36.

### I. The Order of These Lessons

These lessons from the return of the Jews from captivity to the teaching of the law are in chronological order, although they are in different books. Attention is called to this to show why these lessons should thus be in different books. The books in the Bible are not placed in it according to the time when they were written. The events of the book of Esther occurred between chapters 6 and 7 of the book of Ezra. Zerubbabel's return was B.C. 536; laying the foundation of the temple, B.C. 535; the beginning of the revival of the work under the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, B.C. 519; the completion of the temple, B.C. 515; the events of the book of Esther, B.C. 483-473; Ezra's journey to Jerusalem, B.C. 458; Nehemiah's prayer and visit to Jerusalem, B.C. 445-444; rebuilding the walls and reading and obeying the law, B.C. 444. These dates are approximately correct.

### II. Ezra and the Condition of the Jews

We have learned that Ezra was a priest. (Ezra 7: 1-5.) "He was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which Jehovah, the God of Israel, had given." (Ezra 7: 6, 11, 12, 21.) This means not only that he transcribed the law, but that he studied it, understood it, and taught it. Ezra desired to lead a caravan to Jerusalem, to reform the people there, and to restore the worship of God; and Artaxerxes, king of Persia, granted him the privilege and authority to do so. Artaxerxes is the king known in history as Artaxerxes Longimanus. He was



the son of Xerxes, and reigned over the Persian empire B.C. 464-425. In the seventh year of his reign Ezra went to Jerusalem. The king furnished Ezra with the necessary means "to beautify the house of Jehovah." Ezra 7: 11-26 gives the letter of authority from the king to Ezra to prosecute this work.

### III. Whosoever Will

"All they of the people of Israel, and their priests and the Levites," in the king's realm, who were "minded of their own free will to go to Jerusalem," were permitted to do so. Only those now who are willing of themselves can serve God. He is constantly calling for volunteers. None can be coerced into the service of God. "He that will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22: 17.) For the means, authority, and privileges granted by Artaxerxes, Ezra was grateful and thankful to God, because he realized God had brought all this to pass. "And I was strengthened according to the hand of Jehovah my God upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me." (Ezra 7: 27, 28.) Ezra 8: 1-20 gives the number of males who were willing to go—over nineteen hundred. To these must be added the number of women and children. All these encamped and made preparation for the journey at the river Ahava, a river which emptied into the Euphrates from the west some distance north of Babylon.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. The Heart Set to Seek God

Ezra 7: 10. "For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances." Ezra was sorely distressed, and wept over the condition of his people. The scribes mentioned in the New Testament were teachers of the law; but they had perverted it, and were classed with hypocrites. (Matt. 23: 13.) The king gave Ezra authority to have the laws of God taught at Jerusalem and to punish all who would not obey them. (Ezra 7: 25, 26.) Josiah set his heart to seek God (2 Chron. 34: 3), and David said to Solomon: "If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever." (1 Chron. 28: 9.) To seek God is to study to know and to do his will, and all who thus seek him find him. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5: 6.) "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself." (John 7: 17.)

Like Ezra, every true reformer is greatly grieved over the sins of people, seeks first to know and do the will of God himself, then to teach it to others, and is willing to make the sacrifices necessary to do this. Ezra is an example, too, of the power of one man who loves the truth and teaches it to others. After the encouragement received from the teaching of Haggai and Zechariah and the completion of the temple, the Jews at Jerusalem declined in morals and the worship of God. They allowed in the assembly the foreigners God had forbidden, withheld the tithes, forsook the house of God, desecrated the Sabbath (Neh. 13: 1-17), intermarried among the heathen nations of the land, and defiled themselves with idolatry (Ezra 9: 1-3).

### II. Prayer for Guidance

8:21. "At the river Ahava." Here the Jews assembled preparatory to starting on their long journey. They were three days in



becoming settled so that Ezra could know who were there. When he found none of the sons of Levi, he sent to invite them to come to the camp on the Ahava and go to Jerusalem. (Verses 15-20.) "Then proclaimed a fast." This was done in sorrow for sin and sincere repentance, and was preparatory for prayer in seeking God's protecting care. The Ninevites fasted and sat in sackcloth and ashes in their distress over their condition and impending overthrow. (Jonah 3.) "And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek unto Jehovah; and he proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah." (2 Chron. 20: 3.) Fasting takes the mind from oneself and one's fleshly desires and better fits the heart to commune with God. Fasting must not be a mere religious performance. (See Matt. 6: 16-18.)

The object of Ezra's fasting is stated as follows: "That we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek of him a straight way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance." To humble themselves before God was to put away their sins, to obey him, and to acknowledge their dependence upon him. With their fasting they prayed. (Verse 23.) They prayed for God's guidance and protection in their journey of over eight hundred miles. There were many dangers on a journey of almost four months, especially from robbers; and Ezra and his company had many treasures. With their wives and children and household goods, they traveled only eight or nine miles a day. Ezra gives one reason for this prayer in the next verse.

### III. Ashamed to Ask for a Guard

22. "For I was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way, because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good; but his power and his wrath is against all them that seek him, for good;" but to seek him is to learn and obey it would seem both distrustful and contradictory to ask the protection of soldiers. This is a grand example of trust in God. Ezra went to Jerusalem "according to the good hand of his God upon him." (Ezra 7: 6, 9, 28.) "The hand of our God" stands for God's guidance, protection, and power. Today "the hand of our God is upon them that seek him, for good;" but to seek him is to learn and obey his will. "To them that love God all things work together for good" (Rom. 8: 28), but to love him is to obey him. Nehemiah, when he went to Jerusalem, accepted the protection of soldiers (Neh. 2: 9), and this was not distrust in God. Nehemiah did not request but only accepted this.

### IV. Preparation to Start

24. Ezra then began to set things in order to start. He placed the treasurers in the hands of "twelve of the chiefs of the priests," for which they became responsible. This, too, would relieve Ezra of any suspicion, and was, like Paul, "taking thought for things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." (2 Cor. 8: 21.)

25. Ezra weighed to these priests the silver, the gold, and the vessels.

26, 27. By the tables of weights given in Oxford Bibles the reader can estimate the amount in our money of this gold and silver and the value of these vessels. These tables approximate the value of the gold and silver talents.

28. These priests were holy, and these vessels were holy, because they were set apart to the service of God. The silver and gold were



freewill offerings to God, and should be kept safe for his service.

29. So Ezra charged these priests to keep the money and the vessels. "Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chiefs of the priests and the Levites, and the princes of the fathers' houses of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of Jehovah." These chambers were on the sides of the main building of the temple (1 Kings 6: 5), some of which were storerooms (Neh. 13: 5).

30. The twelve priests accepted the charge of these treasures.

31. "Then we departed from the river Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go to Jerusalem." This month corresponds to the last of March and first of April. The Jews left their homes and began to assemble for this journey on the first day of this month (Ezra 7: 9—margin—says: "That was the foundation of the going up"), but they started on their journey on the twelfth day of the month. "And the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the lie-in-wait by the way." This verse and verse 22 show the dangers which they encountered, but God led them in safety through all. We cannot fail to be impressed with Ezra's repeated acknowledgment of God's goodness and providence. For God's continual goodness and salvation from dangers, both seen and unseen, we should continually thank and praise him.

32. "And we came to Jerusalem"—that is, after a journey of almost four months; for they reached there on the first day of the fifth month. (Ezra 7: 9.) "And abode there three days"—that is, resting before anything further was done. On the fourth day the silver, gold, and vessels were weighed into the hands of the priests there. (Verses 33, 34.) Next, burnt offerings were offered to God, and the king's commission was delivered to his rulers in that country. (Verses 35, 36.) The work of Ezra in causing all who had married among the heathen nations of the land to put away their strange wives and the children born of them is given in chapters 9 and 10. Ezra revived the study of the word of God, deepened the conviction of the people, led them to repentance and true worship of God. Ezra was a great and good man.



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
 Did you read all the references?  
 Repeat the Golden Text.  
 Give the time, place, and persons.  
 Repeat the Memory Verses.  
 Did you read Ezra 7-10?  
 Give the order and time of the events of these lessons from Zerubbabel's return to the reading and obeying the law.  
 Why then are these lessons in different books?  
 Who was Ezra?  
 What was his character?  
 Who are the "scribes" of the New Testament?  
 What is it to set one's heart to seek God?  
 Who has the promise of being able to understand God's will?  
 In what are all reformers alike?  
 Of what is Ezra an example?  
 State the condition and sins of the Jews at Jerusalem in Ezra's time.  
 Who was king of the Persian empire?  
 What authority and means did he grant Ezra?  
 Who of the Jews were permitted to go to Jerusalem?  
 Who only can now serve God acceptably?  
 To whom was Ezra grateful?  
 What did he say about this?  
 How many men volunteered to go?  
 Who else were along?  
 Where did all these assemble preparatory to starting?  
 Where was this river?  
 21 Who did Ezra discover were not there?
- How were they enlisted in this movement?  
 What did Ezra then proclaim?  
 What does fasting truly show?  
 Give examples of fasting.  
 How does Jesus say it must be done?  
 Why did Ezra and the Jews fast?  
 What is it to humble oneself before God?  
 For what did the Jews pray?  
 What were the dangers of the journey?  
 How long was it?  
 22 Why did they pray for a safe journey?  
 Of what is this an example?  
 What does "the hand of our God" represent?  
 Upon whom is God's hand now for good?  
 Whom did the soldiers accompany to Jerusalem?  
 23 Did God answer their prayer?  
 24 What did Ezra do with all the treasures?  
 25 Why did Ezra weigh these treasures to these priests?  
 26, 27 Have you estimated the value of them?  
 28 Why were the priests and the treasures holy?  
 29 What charge did Ezra give to these priests?  
 What were the chambers of the temple?  
 30 What did these priests do?  
 31 On what day did they start?  
 Who protected them?  
 32 When did they reach Jerusalem?  
 How long did they rest?  
 What then was done?  
 Give an account of Ezra's work.



## LESSON IX—AUGUST 27

## NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER—Nehemiah 1: 1-11

NEHEMIAH 1. 1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah.

Now it came to pass in the month of Chislew, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

2 that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men out of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, that were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days; and I fasted and prayed before the God of heaven,

5 and said, I beseech thee, O Jehovah, the God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and lovingkindness with them that love him and keep his commandments:

6 let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee at this time, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, while I confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee. Yea, I and my father's house have sinned:

7 we have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.

8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye trespass, I will scatter you abroad among the peoples:

9 but if ye return unto me, and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts were in the uttermost part of the heavens, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen, to cause my name to dwell there.

10 Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.

11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who delight to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.

Now I was cupbearer to the king.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working. James 5:16.

*Time*—B. C. 445.

*Place*—Shushan.

*Persons*—Nehemiah, Artaxerxes, and queen.

*Memory Verse*—Luke 11:1.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 42:1-8.

*Reference Material*—Exodus 32:20-32; I Samuel 7:5-11; I Kings 8: 22-55; Jeremiah 14: 19-22; Matthew 9: 37, 38; Luke 6: 12-16; Acts 1: 12-14; Ephesians 3: 14-21.

*Home Readings*—Mon., Aug. 21.—Nehemiah's prayer.—Neh. 1: 1-11. Tu.—Ezra's prayer.—Ezra 9: 5-15. Wed.—Abraham's prayer.—Gen. 18: 23-32. Th.—Gideon's prayer.—Judges 6: 22-24, 36-40. Fr.—Paul's prayer.—Eph. 3: 14-21. Sat.—The Lord's prayer.—Matt. 6: 9-15. Su.—Encouragement to pray.—Psa. 42: 1-8.

## INTRODUCTION

## I. Nehemiah

This lesson is in the book of Nehemiah, which is the latest historical book of the Old Testament. Its author was Nehemiah himself. Nehemiah was the "son of Hachaliah, and apparently of the tribe of Judah, since his fathers were buried at Jerusalem; and Hanani, his kinsman, seems to have been of that tribe. (Neh. 1: 1; 2: 3; 7:2.) All that we know certainly concerning this eminent man is contained in the book which bears his name. His autobiography first



finds him at Shushan, the winter residence of the kings of Persia, in high office as the cupbearer of King Artaxerxes Longimanus. In the twentieth year of the king's reign—that is, B. C. 445—certain Jews, one of whom was a near kinsman of Nehemiah's, arrived from Judea, and gave Nehemiah a deplorable account of the state of Jerusalem and of the residents in Judea. After three or four months [from Chislev to Nisan], an opportunity presented itself of obtaining the king's consent to his mission.

"Having received his appointment as governor of Judea, a troop of cavalry, and letters from the king to the different satraps through whose provinces he was to pass, as well as to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forests, to supply him with timber, he started on his journey, being under promise to return to Persia within a given time. Nehemiah's great work was rebuilding . . . the walls of Jerusalem and restoring that city to its former state and dignity as a fortified town." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

Nehemiah was just and generous, righteous and good. He had the nobles and rich to restore to their poor brethren the exactions and usury extorted from them, and he himself refused his legal allowance as governor from the people because of their poverty; he arranged for the proper support of the priests, and ejected from the priest's office all who could not lawfully serve; he joined Ezra in rebuking all who had contracted heathen marriages; and he restored the observance of the Sabbath. After the thirty-second year of the reign of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah returned to the king of Persia. Then, "after certain days," he went again to Jerusalem. (Neh. 5: 14; 13: 6.) We do not know how much time was embraced in doing that which followed this return to Jerusalem.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Historical Facts

1. "The words of Nehemiah." The margin says "history." This is the history he wrote. "The month Chislev" was the ninth month of the Jewish year (Zech. 7: 1), and corresponds to the last of November and the first of December. "In the twentieth year" of Artaxerxes' reign. This shows that these events occurred thirteen years after Ezra's journey to Jerusalem. (Ezra 7: 8.) The twentieth year of Artaxerxes' reign embraced parts of two of our years—the last of B. C. 445 and the first of B. C. 444. (See Neh. 2: 1.) Nisan was the first month of the Jewish year, and corresponds to the last of March and first of April. In counting time then the recorders were not as accurate as we are now. "Shushan the palace." The margin says "castle." This place was more than two hundred miles east of Babylon, and was the winter residence of the king. It was one of the capitals of the Persian empire.

2. "Hanani, one of my brethren." Hanani seems to have been Nehemiah's real brother. (Neh. 7: 2.) Hanani and others came to Shushan from Jerusalem, and of them Nehemiah inquired "concerning the Jews that had escaped, that were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem." Those "that had escaped, that were left of the captivity," were the Jews in Judea—descendants of the poorest people who were left when the Jews were taken captive and those who had returned under Zerubbabel and Ezra.

### II. Bad News from Jerusalem

3. Hanani and those who had returned with him from Jerusalem reported that "the remnant that" were "left of the captivity



there in the province" were "in great affliction and reproach." "The province" means Judea. (Neh. 7: 6.) The Jews since their return had made some progress. They had built and dedicated the temple, had at least partially rebuilt the walls about the city, had established themselves in their trades (Neh. 3: 8, 31, 32), and were planting and raising crops. But they were "in great affliction and reproach." They were poor, few, and weak; and their enemies were strong, fierce, and relentless. They were in reproach because the walls of Jerusalem were broken down and the gates had been burned with fire. (Neh. 2: 11-17.) By reference to Ezra 4: 12; 5: 3, 9, it will be seen that the Jews after their return rebuilt the walls of the city. Their enemies, then, had broken down these walls and burned the gates. There was more in this than the temporal comfort and peace of the Jews. Through these Jews and the restoration of God's worship were to come the Messiah and the spiritual worship of God. The purposes and honor of God were involved.

### III. The Prayer

4. When Nehemiah heard this sad news, he "sat down and wept, and mourned certain days"—four months—from Chisleu (verse 1) to Nisan (Neh. 2: 1). He also "fasted and prayed before the God of heaven." His deep concern for his people caused him to fast. He wept, fasted, and prayed, waiting for an opportunity in the providence of God to aid his people. In four months the king noticed Nehemiah's "sorrow of heart," and he explained the cause to the king. Then the king asked for what did he make request. Before making any request of the king he again prayed to God. Then he requested the king to send him to Jerusalem with letters of authority for a safe passage through the provinces between there and Jerusalem and for help after reaching there, and he set a time when he would return; and the king granted his request. The queen probably favored his request. For this he gave God thanks. (Neh. 2: 1-8.)

5. For these four months, "day and night," and before he found the opportunity to make his requests to the king, Nehemiah offered up the prayer which follows. He addressed God as "Jehovah," the self-existing God (Ex. 3: 14, 15); "the God of heaven," the invisible and eternal One, in contrast with idols; "the great and terrible God," able to do great things and to terrify his enemies (Neh. 4: 14; 9: 32). "that keepeth covenant and loving-kindness with them that love him and keep his commandments." A covenant is an agreement, and God never failed to keep his part of any covenant he has ever made with man. His agreement was to guide, protect, and bless in every way those who love and obey him. (Ex. 19: 5-8.) When they continued not in this covenant, God forsook them and cast them off. (Heb. 8: 9.) The condition of the Jews in captivity and at Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day was the result of their disobedience and the fulfillment of God's fearful warnings and punishment in Deut. 28-30.

6. Nehemiah then besought God to hear the prayer which he offered "day and night" for the children of Israel. Certain conditions or elements are essential to acceptable prayer—namely, faith (Heb. 11: 6; James 1: 5-8), reverence and awe (Heb. 12: 28), humility (Luke 18: 9-14), repentance (Acts 8: 22), confession of sins (James 5: 16; 1 John 1: 8, 9), and submission to God (1 John 3: 22; 5: 14). Nehemiah complied with these conditions, or



his prayer embraced these elements. In faith, humility, reverence, awe, and repentance he confessed "the sins of the children of Israel" and his own and the sins of his father's house. (See 2 Chron. 6: 40; 7: 14-16.)

7. In this verse Nehemiah specifies the sins of which Israel was guilty. Some of these sins are given in Neh. 5: 1-13; Ezra 9: 1-4; 2 Chron. 36: 14-16. "Commandments . . statutes, . . ordinances"—all God's moral precepts, all laws he had enacted, and all religious rites and ceremonies.

8. God was not blamed with the condition of the Jews. Nehemiah confessed they had trespassed and were suffering the "recompense of reward" (Heb. 2: 2), as we have seen above in comment on verse 5. This is not so much a direct quotation as it is the reference to many passages stating the same truth. (Lev. 26: 27-39; Deut. 28.)

9. To Nehemiah there was a bright side, for God had made also the promise: "If ye return unto me, and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts were in the uttermost part of the heavens, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen, to cause my name to dwell there." This is a quotation from Deut. 30: 1-5; see also Lev. 26: 40-45.

10. Nehemiah pleaded the fact that he was praying for God's people embraced in the promise quoted in verse 9. "Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand." God had redeemed them from Egypt, from their enemies in the days of the judges, and from their enemies in the days of the kings; and he could restore them still. It is not wrong to claim the promise when we have complied with the conditions upon which it is made; in fact, we know that we will receive the promise because we have by faith complied with the conditions.

11. Again Nehemiah besought God to hear him and grant him mercy in the sight of Artaxerxes, because he and other servants of God delighted to fear God's name. God answered Nehemiah's prayer; and, as we have seen, he found favor in the eyes of the king and obtained his request to visit Jerusalem and aid his people. God answered Nehemiah's prayer at the time when it was best to do so. Nehemiah prayed and waited. Let us serve on, pray on, hope on, and God will bless in mercy and love as he sees fit.



## QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Memory Verse.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons.

Who was the author of the book of Nehemiah?

To what tribe is Nehemiah supposed to have belonged?

What kinsman of his is mentioned?

What office did he fill?

Under what king did he serve?

To what office was he appointed in Judea?

How did he succeed in obtaining this appointment?

What authority did the king grant him?

What did he do showing his justice and generosity?

1 What is meant by "the words of Nehemiah?"

What month is Chislew?

In what year of Artaxerxes?

How long was this after Ezra's return to Jerusalem?

What month was Nisan?

What was Shushan, and where was it?

2 Who was Hanani?

What inquiry did Nehemiah make of him and others with him?

Who were those who "had escaped that were left of the captivity?"

3 What report did Hanani give?

What progress had the Jews at Jerusalem made?

In what were they afflicted?

In what were they a reproach?

What more was there in this great work than the temporal comfort and peace of the Jews?

4 What did Nehemiah do when he heard this report?

How long did he continue to do this?

What did the king notice in him?

What did the king ask him?

What did he do before he made known his request to the king?

What was his request?

5 How continuously did he pray?

How did he address God?

What is a "covenant?"

What does God always do concerning his part of a covenant?

What had God covenanted to do for Israel?

Why had he cast them off?

6 For whom did Nehemiah pray?

What are some of the elements or conditions of acceptable prayer?

What confession did Nehemiah make?

7 What sins did Nehemiah specify?

What is the difference between commandments, statutes, and ordinances?

8 According to what were the Israelites suffering?

9 What promise had God made?

10 What fact did Nehemiah plead? When had God redeemed his people?

When can we claim a promise?

11 What did Nehemiah beseech God to grant him?

What should we do?



## LESSON X—SEPTEMBER 3

## NEHEMIAH REBUILDS THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM

—Neh. 3: 1-7: 4. Print 4: 7-16

NEHEMIAH 4. 7 But it came to pass that, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem went forward, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth;

8 and they conspired all of them together to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to cause confusion therein.

9 But we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

10 And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.

11 And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come into the midst of them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.

12 And it came to pass that, when the Jews that dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times from all places, Ye must return unto us.

13 Therefore set I in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in the open places, I set there the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows.

14 And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.

15 And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.

16 And it came to pass from that time forth, that half of my servants wrought in the work, and half of them held the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the coats of mail; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Our God will fight for us. Nehemiah 4: 20.

*Time*—B. C. 444.

*Place*—Jerusalem.

*Persons*—Nehemiah and the Jews and their enemies.

*Memory Verse*—Nehemiah 4: 9.

*Devotional Readings*—Psalm 48: 1, 2, 9-14.

*Reference Material*—Nehemiah 2: 9-20; I Corinthians 3: 9-17.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Aug. 28.—Plotting enemies.—Neh. 4: 7-12. Tu. Nehemiah rebuilds the walls of Jerusalem.—Neh. 4: 13-21. Wed.—Bashan's walls.—Deut. 3: 1-8. Th.—Jericho's walls.—Josh. 6: 12-20. Fr.—The song of the watchmen.—Isa. 52: 1-10. Sat.—Watchmen of Zion.—Isa. 62: 1-9. Su.—The glory of Zion.—Psa. 48: 1, 2, 9-14.

## INTRODUCTION

## A Mind to Work

The conclusion of Lesson VII. is, the elders of the Jews said, "Let us rise up and build;" and "they strengthened their hands for the good work." The details of the work on the walls and gates are given in chapter 3. This work was divided between forty-four working parties, composed of priests, merchants, mechanics, countrymen, and women. (Verse 12.) The order of the work was for every one to "repair over against his own house." (Verse 28.) This was practical and wise. Every one was working for his own defense as well as for the defense of the city, and every one's work stood for itself and represented his skill and earnestness.

In teaching Christianity and extending the church of Christ, every member should instruct and influence those next to him. This is God's order of work now. "So we built the wall." This is a victorious conclusion. The following declaration states the progress: "And all the wall was joined together unto half the height thereof." Al-



though the Jews were few and poor and their enemies fierce and powerful, yet the work progressed wonderfully, "for the people had a mind to work." (Neh. 4: 6.) This is a great and most necessary lesson to learn. "A mind to work" makes opportunities, surmounts difficulties, overcomes opposition, and removes mountains. In the midst of good opportunities and with no great hindrances many with no mind to work have accomplished nothing and have gone to destruction. In energy, work, generosity, zeal and prayer Nehemiah took the lead.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. The Jews' Enemies

7. Sanballat was a Moabite, designated as "the Horonite" (Neh. 2: 10, 19), probably from Horonaim, a town of Moab (Isa. 15: 5; Jer. 48: 3, 5, 34). He had, it seems, some civil or military command under Artaxerxes. (Neh. 4: 2.) He was a fierce adversary of Nehemiah, and from the very beginning of his work opposed every measure for the good of Jerusalem. Sanballat's daughter married a grandson of the high priest. (Neh. 13: 28.) Tobiah was an Ammonite (Neh. 2: 10), but a son-in-law of Shecaniah. His son also was a son-in-law of Meshullam. (Neh. 6: 17, 18.) These marriages show why there was a strong faction among the Jews in favor of these men. The "Ammonites" were a tribe east of the Jordan. The "Arabians" were the Arabs of the desert. The "Ashdodites" were of the city of Ashdod, near the Mediterranean Sea. These were all enemies of the Jews; and when they heard of Nehemiah's work, "they were very wroth." It grieved them to learn that Nehemiah had come "to seek the welfare of the children of Israel." (Neh. 2: 10.)

### II. The Ridicule

The first attack these enemies made upon the Jews in their effort to rebuild the wall was that of ridicule. "They laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king" Nehemiah informed them that the Jews' strength was in God, and that they had "no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem." (Neh. 2: 19-20.) As the work progressed, Sanballat "took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.

"What are these feeble Jews doing? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, seeing they are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they are building, if a fox go up, he shall break down their stone wall." (Neh. 4: 1-3.) Nehemiah prayed and worked on. "So we built the wall; and the wall was joined together unto half the height thereof" (Neh. 4: 4-6)—that is, the breaches in the wall were all stopped, and the wall was built up all around the city to half its height.

Ridicule is a most powerful weapon, before which some cannot stand. When the good king Hezekiah sent men throughout both Judah and Israel teaching and exhorting the people to come to Jerusalem and worship God "as it is written," while many repented and came, others "laughed" these men "to scorn" and "mocked them." (2 Chron. 3: 10-12.) Satan laughs to scorn, mocks and ridicules to-day all who worship God "as it is written" in the New Testament, and who seek to teach others to do the same.



Such teachers and worshipers are called by ridiculous names, are told that they cannot accomplish much, and that foxes can leap any walls, figuratively speaking, that they may attempt to build. Satan does this through human agencies and through many who claim to be the people of God. Sad and strange it is that some who seem desirous of working after the New Testament order of things cannot stand this ridicule and mockery; they seem to wither under it, and turn to follow the popular current.

Nehemiah and his coworkers, instead, prayed and worked on. Let us be impressed with the fact that Nehemiah was a praying man. Let us make a note of all that is stated in regard to his praying and when he prayed. Then, instead of wilting under ridicule and mockery and running after the fashionable and popular ways, let us pray, rely upon God, and work on. Ridicule and mockery should make us only the stronger; and they do strengthen many now as they strengthened Nehemiah and the Jews. He who cannot endure ridicule and the contradiction of sinners against himself is unworthy of Christ.

### III. A Conspiracy to Resort to Arms

8. "They conspired all of them together to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to cause confusion therein." Ridicule and mockery would not accomplish their purpose, and they resorted to arms. The second attack planned against the Jews by their enemies was to come upon Nehemiah and his men unawares, capture them, and stop the work. (Verse 11.)

9. Nehemiah learned of this conspiracy from the Jews who lived near their enemies, (verse 12), and prayed to God, and "set a watch against them day and night, because of them." The fact that Nehemiah prayed and watched should impress us. We should work now as well as pray. Nehemiah not only watched literally, but he made every possible arrangement for defense against his enemies. We should diligently use all the means God has placed in our hands.

10. "And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall." This was one of the discouragements at home which came with the conspiracy of the enemy. Clearing away the rubbish and carrying the material for the wall and up the wall as it became higher was no little work. There were "heaps of rubbish," and to remove it was an arduous task. (Neh. 4: 2.) The work was hard, and had exhausted the strength and courage of many; hence they made this complaint.

11. This verse shows the scheme of the Jews' adversaries. "They shall not know, neither see, till we come into the midst of them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease." These adversaries did not intend for Nehemiah and his coworkers to know of their plan.

12. "The Jews that dwelt by them"—that is, by the adversaries—warned Nehemiah against this intended sudden attack. "They said unto us ten times from all places, Ye must return unto us." It is difficult to get the meaning of this expression. The margin of the version used in preparing these lessons says: "From all places whence ye shall return they will be upon us." It may mean that the scattered Jews among the enemies besought the ones at work in Jerusalem ten times to return from the city to them, because they were the most exposed to the enemy and would be the first to suffer from this expected attack.



13. Nehemiah prepared at once for the attack. Where the wall was lowest and the city most exposed to the enemy he set "the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows." He wisely placed all where they could defend their own families and could know the welfare of their own families.

#### IV. Our God Will Fight for Us

14. He then addressed all saying: "Be not ye afraid of them; remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses." No stronger motive to defend themselves could have been placed before them, and no stronger appeal to action could have been made. They must rely upon God and use all possible means. They could easily recall what God had done to the enemies of his people in the past.

15. The enemies learned that their scheme was known by the Jews and the Jews were prepared for them, and did not make the attack. "God had brought their counsel to naught" in the manner described above. The work on the walls was then resumed.

16. "Half of my servants." Nehemiah's servants were his retainers, trained men, and guards. A guard went with him from Shushan. Half of them held the weapons of war ready for action should an attack be made, while the other half worked. Also "they that builded the wall and they that bare burdens laded themselves"—that is, laded themselves with weapons of war. "Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other held his weapon." (Verse 17.)

Every builder had his sword by his side as he worked. Those who laid the stones in the wall needed both hands for this work; but they kept their swords girded by their sides, ready for use at a moment's warning. Nehemiah superintended the entire work, and kept a keen watch for the enemy. The work was extensive and the workmen scattered; therefore the enemy might attack and destroy one party at a time. Nehemiah kept a trumpeter with him, and instructed all, should the trumpet sound the alarm, to rush to the defense of those attacked. "Our God will fight with us." With all the vigilance and diligent use of means on their part, Nehemiah knew that God must fight for them and give them the victory. (Verses 18-20.)

Verses 22 and 23 show how diligently all worked and held themselves ready to fight "from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared." The Jews who lived in the country near Jerusalem would work through the day and return home for the night, but Nehemiah ordered all to remain in the city at night for a guard. "So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard that followed me, none of us put off our clothes, every one went with his weapon to the water."

#### V. Other Efforts of the Enemy

In order to see to what other tricks the enemy resorted and what other efforts were made read chapter 6. Their first attack, as we have seen, was mockery and ridicule: their second, conspiracy and arms. When these failed they resorted to treachery. Under the guise of friendship they invited Nehemiah to a conference "in one of the villages in the plain of Ono," a town about twenty-six miles north of Jerusalem. Nehemiah was on the alert in regard to any



movement or strategy of his enemy. He knew, and said: "They thought to do me mischief." He declined this invitation for two reasons: (1) He saw into its treachery; (2) he was too busy doing the Lord's work. He said: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down to you." Four times his enemies invited him to a conference and four times he declined "after the same manner." While they were persistent, he was steadfast.

## VI. An Application

God's work today in preaching the gospel throughout the world, restoring his worship "as it is written" in the New Testament, and building up the church after the Bible order, is also "a great work," and, like Nehemiah, his people must go steadily on with it. There is no time for conferences with the enemy—all who teach for doctrines the precepts of men and worship otherwise than is written in the New Testament. For Nehemiah to have a conference with his enemies would be to acknowledge their authority and to place God's word on an equality with theirs. His was a different work; his authority was from God, and he needed not their advice. For God's people to hold conferences today with those who teach for doctrines the commandments of men and worship after the ways of men is to place the wisdom of God and God's ways on a level with the wisdom and ways of men. To do this is to surrender the truth.

The fourth effort Nehemiah's enemies made was to attack him with false accusations and threats. The fifth one was a plan to frighten him into transgression of God's law and thereby bring him into reproach, if not a plan to assassinate him.

In chapter 5 we learn that Nehemiah's work was hindered by the oppression of the poor Jews by their rich brethren. In the fear of God, Nehemiah had this oppression stopped and proper restoration made. Nehemiah was a splendid example to his brethren. For the twelve years he had been governor he had not collected and used the governor's salary, as other governors had done. He had served for the good of the people at his own charges. Besides this, he had sustained his own servants and a hundred and fifty men of the Jews and rulers. He gave an account of the daily fare to show that it cost much to sustain so many. This must be the spirit of all today who would move the people to penitence from the love of money and the oppression of the poor.



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text  
Repeat the Memory Verses.  
What did the leaders determine to do?  
How was the work parceled out?  
Why should everyone work over against his own house?  
Why did the work progress so rapidly?
- 7 Who was Sanballat?  
How was he allied to the Jews?  
Who was Tobiah?  
Why was there a strong faction among the Jews in favor of these men?  
Who were the Ammonites, the Arabians, and the Ashdodites?  
What effect did Nehemiah's work have upon all these?  
How did they first attack him and what did they say?  
What was Nehemiah's reply?  
What progress had been made in the work up to this time?
- 8 What was the plan for the second attack upon Nehemiah and the Jews?
- 9 How did Nehemiah learn of this?  
How did he prepare to meet it?  
What lesson does this teach us?
- 10 What complaint did the men of Judah make?  
What made the work so hard?
- 11, 12 Who warned Nehemiah of this intended attack?  
What was meant by what these Jews said?
- 13 How did Nehemiah proceed to prepare for the defense?
- 14 Repeat the address he made to all.  
After all, upon what must they rely?
- 15 Why did not the enemies execute their plan?  
How did God bring their counsel to naught?
- 16 Who were Nehemiah's servants?  
How were they prepared for an attack while they worked?
- 17 How were others prepared?
- 18, 20 How did the builders go prepared?  
What did Nehemiah do?  
Who was kept with him?  
What instruction did he give to all?  
What was the necessity for all to rally to the place attacked?
- 21 State how diligently and arduously all worked.  
What was the third effort made against Nehemiah by his enemies?  
How many times was this invitation given?  
Why did Nehemiah not accept it?  
What great work have we to do?  
Of what is it an acknowledgement for God's people now to hold conferences with teachers of error and false systems of worship?
- What was the fourth attack of Nehemiah's enemies?  
What was the fifth attack?  
What is stated (in chapter 5) as a hindrance to Nehemiah's work?  
How was this settled?  
State in what Nehemiah was a great example.  
What is the true spirit of all who love the truth and would turn men to God?



## LESSON XI—SEPTEMBER 10.

**TEACHING THE LAW OF GOD—Nehemiah 8: 1-18. Print  
8: 1-3, 5, 6, 8-12**

NEHEMIAH 8. 1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the broad gate that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded to Israel.

2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3 And he read therein before the broad place that was before the water gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women, and of those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.

5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people); and when he opened it, all the people stood up.

6 And Ezra blessed Jehovah, the great God; and all the people answered Amen, Amen, with the lifting up of their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshiped Jehovah with their faces to the ground.

8 And they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading.

9 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto Jehovah your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye grieved; for the joy of Jehovah is your strength.

11 So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved.

12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Teach me, O Jehovah, the way of thy statutes; And I shall keep it unto the end. (Psalm 119: 33.)

*Time*—B. C. 444.

*Place*—Jerusalem.

*Persons*—Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Jews.

*Memory Verse*—Psalms 119: 11.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 119: 97-105.

*Reference Material*—Deuteronomy 6: 4-9; 2 Chronicles 15: 8-15; 30; Acts 17: 1-9, 10-15, 16-34; 19: 8-20; Colossians 1: 9-11.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Sept. 4.—Teaching the law of God.—Neh. 8: 1-12. Tu.—The law of God.—Psa. 19: 7-14. Wed.—The law inspired.—2 Tim. 3: 14-4: 4. Th.—Keeping the law.—Psa. 119: 1-8. Fr.—Teaching the children.—Psa. 78: 1-8. Sat.—The great Teacher at work.—Luke 4: 16-21. Su.—Love for the law.—Psa. 119: 97-105.

**INTRODUCTION**

The subject of this lesson should impress one most seriously. The wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the Jewish month Elul, the sixth month of the Jewish year, or about the middle or last of our September. (Neh. 6: 15.) When this work was completed, Nehemiah made his brother, Hanani, and Hananiah rulers over Jerusalem. He also instituted the examination into the genealogies recorded in chapter 7. Every one's city was determined by the register; and priests, Levites, and all Israel were settled, each in his own city. (Neh. 7: 73.) The wall having been finished, the temple having been put in order, all things were now ready for the restoration of the true worship of God. Ezra was joined by Nehemiah in this great work. The time was favorable, for the people desired to hear the word of God. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. The Law Read and Explained

1. On the first day of the Jewish year "all the people [men, women, and children old enough to understand the law of God] gathered themselves together as one man . . . before the water gate" and requested Ezra to read to them the law of God. "The water gate" was on the eastern side of the city and led to the brook Kidron, and "the broad place" before this gate was a public square south of the temple.

2. According to the requests of the people, "Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly." This, as stated, was on "the first day of the seventh month." This was the first day of the civil year and the day of the feast of trumpets. The new year was ushered in by the blowing of trumpets, as described in Lev. 23: 23-25; Num. 19: 1. This day was one of solemn rest and "a holy convocation."

3. Ezra read from the law "from early morning ["from the light" —margin] until midday, in the presence of the men and the women, and of those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law." This was a most impressive sight. Suppose people now were sufficiently anxious to learn God's will as to do this; all would soon come to the knowledge of the truth. It is thought by some that the people stood while the law was read and sat while it was explained.

4-7. "A pulpit of wood," or elevated platform, was prepared for Ezra to stand upon; and beside him stood six prominent men on his right hand and seven on his left hand to assist him. When "Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people)," they stood, out of respect for the word of God. Many people now show no respect at all for the word of God when it is read and give it no attention whatever. When the people stood, "Ezra blessed Jehovah, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with the lifting of their hands." They stood to thank and praise God. "And they bowed their heads, and worshiped Jehovah with their faces to the ground."

8. "And they read in the book, in the law of God." "Distinctly" means not only so the people could hear the words read, but, as the margin says, "with an interpretation." This is explained as follows: "And they gave the sense, so that they [the people] understood the reading." "The Israelites, having been lately brought out of Babylonish captivity, in which they had continued seventy years, according to the prediction of Jeremiah (chapter 25: 11), were not only extremely corrupt, but it appears that they had in general lost the knowledge of the ancient Hebrew to such a degree that when the book of the law was read, they did not understand it; but certain Levites stood by and gave the sense—that is, translated it into the Chaldee dialect." (Clarke's "Commentary.") This was, doubtless, true of those born in the captivity. Many had also forgotten the commandments and ordinances of God and the manner of observing these ordinances; hence the meaning of such had to be explained. This does not show by any means that people cannot now read for themselves and understand the word of God. It has already been translated into our own language, that we may read it and understand and obey it.

### II. The Effect Upon the People of Reading the Law

9. Nehemiah, as we have learned, received from Artaxerxes the appointment of governor. (Neh. 5: 14.) Ezra, as we have learned



also, was "a ready scribe in the law of Moses." (Ezra 7: 6.) The Levites mentioned in verse 7 "caused the people to understand the law;" hence they "taught the people." Nehemiah, Ezra, and these Levites said to the people: "This day is holy unto Jehovah your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law." The people were so impressed with the truth and mercy of God, their sin and its retribution, that they wept and mourned. When Josiah heard the word of God from the book which Hilkiyah, the priest, found, he rent his clothes and wept and said: "For great is the wrath of Jehovah that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us." (2 Kings 22: 11, 13, 18, 19.) So the people on this occasion saw from the word of God how far they had gone from God, how terrible were their sins, and how fearful were the consequences; but in their penitence and return to God and the restoration of his pure worship he would forgive and bless them. Hence this was not a day of sorrow and mourning, but of joy and gladness. God had appointed this day as one of general rejoicing. (See Deut. 12: 7, 12.) The Jews should rejoice on this occasion because of their return from captivity, the completion of the wall around Jerusalem, their establishment in their own cities and homes, the restoration of the worship of God, and the mercy of God in pardoning their sins.

10. Ezra told the people at the conclusion of the reading of the law on the first day, instead of mourning and weeping, to go their way, "eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions" unto the poor for whom nothing had been prepared. Our greatest and most lasting joy is in carrying joy and gladness to others. God commanded the Israelites to rejoice in all the good things he did for them. (Deut. 26: 11-13.) So are we commanded to rejoice always. (Phil. 4: 4.) "For the joy of Jehovah is your strength." "The joy of Jehovah" is the joy which Jehovah gives. God had given these Jews at this time the joy of safety from their enemies, the joy of his temple and restored worship, and the joy of pardon and salvation. To rejoice in the Lord is strength, or the joy of Jehovah is indeed the stronghold of his people.

### III. Must Do "As It Is Written"

11, 12. The people obeyed the instructions given, and rejoiced, "because they had understood the words that were declared unto them." They saw and appreciated the mercy and goodness of God, which they more than ever realized was upon them. The word of God is a source of great comfort and joy. While all the men and the women and the children did not return "on the second day," the heads of fathers' houses" (leaders of the people), the priests and Levites, came on that day also to Ezra," to give attention to the words of the law." These probably did this of their own accord. Above all men, these should know the word of God, that they might teach and guide the people aright. "And they found written in the law" that God had commanded the children of Israel to keep the feast of tabernacles in the seventh month and how it should be kept. (Verses 13-15.)

They "found" all this "written in the law," which shows that they did not know God had commanded it. Especially those who were born in the captivity and since then were ignorant of the word of God. The only way to restore the worship of God was to study his word and do what was written therein as fast as they learned it. It is most worthy of note that every one in any age who ever reformed those



who had wandered from God's way did so by studying God's word and persuading the people to do "as it is written" therein. Hezekiah did all in his power to persuade all Israel to worship God "as it is written." He sent out teachers for this purpose, and he wrought a great reform. (2 Chron. 30: 5; 31: 3.) Later on Hezekiah's great-grandson, Josiah, wrought another great reformation by persuading the people to study the word of God and worship him "as it is written." (2 Kings 22: 13; 23: 3, 21; 2 Chron. 34: 29, 30.) Ezra and Nehemiah restored the worship of God after the long captivity by reading the word of God to the people and inducing them to do "as it is written." The only way to worship God acceptably today is to turn away from all the doctrines and commandments of men and worship him "as it is written" in the New Testament. We cannot "go beyond the things which are written" in the New Testament and remain pleasing and acceptable to God. (1 Cor. 4: 6.) "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9.)

Every faithful and true disciple of Christ is afraid of everything in the worship of God that is not found written in the New Testament. All should study the word of God now and do what it requires of them as fast as they learn it. "So"—when the people had learned that God required them to keep the feast of tabernacles and how to keep it, they proceeded at once to prepare to obey God. Since this feast began on the fifteenth day of the month, they had several days in which to prepare for it. (Verse 16.) Verse 17 states that in gladness this feast was kept, and verse 18 states that "day by day" during the feast, "from the first day until the last day," Ezra "read the book of the law of God" to the people.

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Repeat the Memory Verses.  
When was the wall finished?  
Who were made rulers in Jerusalem?  
What examination did Nehemiah institute?  
For what were the people now ready?  
How had they been made ready?  
Who were leaders in this work?
- 1 What did the people request Ezra to do?  
Where were the people assembled?
  - 2 What was the "water gate"?
  - 3 What was the feast of trumpets?
  - 3 Who were present?  
For what length of time did Ezra read to the people?
  - 4-7 What preparation was made for Ezra to be seen and heard?  
How did the people show their respect for the word of God?  
What was the first thing that Ezra did when the people stood?  
What was their position when they worshipped?  
How long did this meeting continue?
  - 8 Who assisted Ezra?  
Why was it necessary to give the sense, that the people might understand the law?
  - Can the people now understand the Bible for themselves?
  - 9 What assistance did these Levites render?  
What did the people do when they heard the law?  
Why did they weep?  
Why should the people not weep?  
Why should they rejoice?
  - 10 What did Ezra tell them to do?  
What affords lasting joy?  
What joy is our strength?
  - 11, 12 Why did the people rejoice?  
Who returned to Ezra on the next day to hear the law?  
Why should these be familiar with the law?  
What did they find written in the law?  
What was this feast called?  
What did it celebrate?  
Where and how was it observed?  
In what way alone can the true worship of God be restored?  
How did Hezekiah, Josiah, Ezra, and all reformers proceed, and to what did they appeal as the standard in order to reform the people?
  - How alone can the worship of the New Testament be restored?  
Of what is every true and faithful disciple of Jesus afraid?
  - 12 What did the people do when they learned God had commanded this feast?



## LESSON XII—SEPTEMBER 17

# THE MESSAGE OF MALACHI—Malachi 3: 1-4: 3. Print 3: 7-18

MALACHI 3. 7 From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. But ye say, Wherein shall we return?

8 Will a man rob God? yet ye rob me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with the curse; for ye rob me, even this whole nation.

10 Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before the time in the field, saith Jehovah of hosts.

12 And all nations shall call you happy; for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith Jehovah of hosts.

13 Your words have been stout against me, saith Jehovah. Yet ye say, What have we spoken against thee?

14 Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his charge, and that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts?

15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are built up; yea, they tempt God, and escape.

16 Then they that feared Jehovah spake one with another; and Jehovah hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon his name.

17 And they shall be mine, saith Jehovah of hosts, even mine own possession, in the day that I make; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

18 Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

**Golden Text**—Return unto me, and I will return unto you, said Jehovah of hosts. (Malachi 3: 7.)

**Time**—Not certain—about or after B. C. 433.

**Place**—Jerusalem.

**Persons**—Malachi and the Jews.

**Memory Verse**—1 John 4: 10.

**Devotional Reading**—Psalm 32: 1-7.

**Reference Material**—2 Kings 17: 7-23; Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1: 7-10; Ezekiel 2: 1-7; Acts 20: 35; 1 Corinthians 16: 1, 2; 2 Corinthians 8: 1 to 9: 15.

**Home Readings**.—Mon., Sept. 11.—Israel's sin.—Mal. 3: 1-9. Tu.—God's promise.—Mal. 3: 10-18. Wed.—God's judgment and blessing.—Mal. 4: 1-6. Th.—The righteous and the wicked contrasted.—Psa. 1: 1-6. Fr.—The wicked punished.—Matt. 25: 41-46. Sat.—The righteous blessed.—Matt. 5: 1-12. Su.—The blessedness of forgiveness.—Psa. 32: 1-7.

## INTRODUCTION

### I. Malachi

"Malachi" means "my messenger." Malachi was the last of the prophets of the Old Testament. We know nothing of his personal history. He prophesied after Haggai and Zechariah, for he speaks of the temple as in existence and of the temple service. (Mal. 1: 10; 3: 10.) The nation still had its chief ruler, called by the same title as was Nehemiah; and it is thought that Malachi was contemporary with Nehemiah. By comparing the latter part of the book of Nehemiah with that of Malachi, it will be seen easily that the evils which Nehemiah endeavored to reform and the evils rebuked by Malachi are the same, which leads us to think that it is probable they were contemporary.



## II. The Book of Malachi

The book of Malachi is the next one in point of time to Nehemiah. Study chapters 3 and 4. Malachi's "whole prophecy naturally divides itself into three sections, in the first of which Jehovah is represented as the loving Father and Ruler of his people (Mal. 1: 2; 2: 9); in the second, as the supreme God and Father of all (Mal. 2: 10-16); and) in the third, as their righteous and final Judge (Mal. 2: 17 to end). These may again be subdivided into smaller sections, each of which follows a certain order—first, a short sentence; then, the skeptical questions which might be raised by the people; and, finally, their full and triumphant refutation." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.) God said to the people, "I have loved you;" and their skeptical question was: "Wherein hast thou loved us?"

God said the people had not honored him as a son honors his father or as a slave honors his master, but had despised his name. They asked: "Wherein have we despised thy name?" God showed that they had offered polluted bread upon his altar, and, for sacrifices, the blind, lame, and sick—such as the governor of their land would not receive of them. (Chapter 1.) These are examples of the presumptuous way the people contended against the Lord. Malachi is frequently quoted in the New Testament. (Matt. 11: 10; Mark 1: 2; 9: 11, 12; Luke 1: 17; Rom. 9: 13.)

## III. John the Baptist

This lesson would be incomplete without studying verse 1 and learning the promise of God to send John the Baptist. God spoke through Malachi. "The burden of the word of Jehovah to Israel by Malachi." (Mal. 1: 1.) "Behold, I send my messenger." God promised to do this. John the Baptist was this messenger, and this scripture is applied in the New Testament to him. (Matt. 11: 10; Mark 1: 2; Luke 7: 27.) A fuller prophecy of John's work is given in Isa. 40: 3-5. Malachi (4: 5, 6) further says: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." Jesus applies this also to John the Baptist. John came "in the spirit and power of Elijah." (Matt. 11: 14; Mark 9: 11-13; Luke 1: 17.)

Many prophecies have a double significance—for instance, referring to the deliverance and blessings of the Jews and to the deliverance and blessings in Christ. While this promise and prophecy refers to John the Baptist, some think it refers to a reformation among the Jews wrought by Nehemiah. If Malachi prophesied during Nehemiah's absence from Jerusalem, his prophecy may refer to the sudden return and work of Nehemiah as well as to the work of John the Baptist. "He shall prepare the way before me." Nehemiah prepared the way for the pure worship of God, and John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ. In Christ's day the Jews knew the prophecy to send Elijah had not been fulfilled until Jesus showed its fulfillment in John the Baptist. "The Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple." The Jews looked for the Messiah to restore the kingdom of Israel. Jesus came as the Messiah suddenly, and not as the Jews expected him to come.

Jesus cleansed the material temple (Matt. 21: 12-14; John 2: 13-17) and established the spiritual building, or temple, of God. "The messenger of the covenant. . . behold, he cometh." God's covenant with Abraham was that in his seed should "all the families of



the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12: 3), and Jesus is the fulfillment of this (Acts 3: 25, 26; Gal. 3: 8). Through Jesus and by his blood was made and sealed that blessed covenant, which, in contrast with the law of Moses, is called "the new covenant," or "new Testament." (Heb. 8: 8-13; see also Jer. 31: 31-35.) "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." (1 Cor. 11: 25.) God's covenant with Levi is given in Mal. 2: 4-8, and he came in his power and blessings to the Jews in his restored worship at that time to keep his covenant with Levi, but the fuller meaning of this promise was the coming of Christ.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Mercy and Vengeance of God

This subject begins with verse 2 and is concluded with verse 7; hence these verses are noted and comments made upon them in order.

2. "But who can abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?" Who will be ready and able to stand the test? Christ came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not" (John 1: 11); and on one occasion many of his disciples turned back from following him (John 6: 66; see also verses 67-69). "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John 1: 12.) "For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap." As the refiner's fire purifies the metal from the dross and soap cleanses garments of dirt, so Jesus purifies and cleanses from error and sin by his tests of faith and trials of true service. John the Baptist said of him: "Who's fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire." (Matt. 3: 12.) "The fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is." (1 Cor. 3: 12-15.)

3. "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." As the refiner sits and watches the metal in the furnace, that it may not become too hot and be destroyed or too cold and not be purified, so Christ watches his servants, that the trials and tests may not be too severe, but just sufficient to purify and save. "The sons of Levi" were the servants of God and in the temple service then, and now all Christians are priests unto God. (1 Pet. 2: 5, 9.) God purified the Levites then, and he now purifies Christians through Christ, that they may "offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness." Notice the spiritual sacrifices Christians are called upon to offer. (Rom. 12: 1, 2; Phil. 4: 18; Heb. 13: 15, 16; 1 Pet. 2: 5.)

4. "Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasing unto Jehovah"—that is, when God, as a refiner and fuller, had purified and cleansed his worshipers. "As in the days of old"—before the worship was corrupted. (See 2 Chron. 7: 1-3, 12.)

5. "And I will come near to you in judgment." God would judge them and be "a swift witness" against them for their sins herein mentioned—sorcery; adultery; false swearing; oppression of the hireling, widows, and orphans; turning the stranger from his way; and not fearing God. All these sins are condemned by the word of God. On sorcery, see Ex. 22: 18; Lev. 19: 26, 31; 20: 6; Jer. 27: 9, 10.

6. "For I, Jehovah, change not." Jehovah is the self-existing, eternal, unchangeable One. (See Ex. 3: 14, 15.) God deals with his people as follows: "I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing loving-kindness unto thousands [a thousand generations] of them that love



me and keep my commandments." (Ex. 20: 5, 6.) "Therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed." Because of God's unfailing and unchangeable mercy and his covenant with the children of Israel he had not utterly consumed them. There were always some who would repent and serve God. Then the covenant of grace to be established through Jesus Christ—a change of the priesthood and of the law (Heb. 7: 12)—was no sign that God had changed his purpose and plan.

7. "From the days of your fathers ye have turned aside from mine ordinances, and have not kept them." The Jews were repeating their history of disobedience. (See Jer. 7: 25, 26; 16: 11-13.) "Return unto me"—by turning away from the sins enumerated by Malachi and by worshiping God according to his ordinances and doing his will toward others. "And I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts." This is a manifestation of God's unchangeable mercy and love. (See Isa. 55: 6, 7; Ezek. 33: 11.) But the people said to this: "Wherein shall we return?" They were so blinded and their consciences were so hardened by their sins that they could not see how far they were from God and that their worship was not acceptable to him. We are reminded here of the sad fact that some who claim to be the Israel of God who would not think of robbing their fellow men. Study what indignant when asked to return to the pure and simple worship "as it is written" in the New Testament.

## II. "Will a Man Rob God?"

8. "Will a man rob God?" God shows that, as in other things, the Jews were guilty in withholding the tithes and offerings, and that in so doing they had forsaken his temple and had robbed him. The Levites had not received enough to sustain themselves and families. (Neh. 13: 11, 12.) In self-justification they asked: "Wherein have we robbed thee?" Some may ask in ignorance and astonishment today: "How can God be robbed?" They have heard the prayer that "giving does not impoverish God, and withholding does not enrich him," and wonder, therefore, how God can be robbed. God answered: "In tithes and offerings." The tithe was a tenth of the crops, fruits, etc., and of the increase of the flocks and herds. (Lev. 27: 30-33; Num. 18: 21-32; Deut. 14: 28, 39.)

In withholding the tithes and offerings due to God, the Jews had robbed him. In withholding that which is due him today, many rob him still. God teaches Christians in the New Testament to give cheerfully and liberally to the poor, to the support of true preachers of the gospel, and to the upbuilding of his cause in every scriptural way; and those who do not do so rob him. God calls for the service of all men, and those who do not render this service rob him. It is due God that all men honor him with their time, talents, and means; and when they do not, they rob him. Robbing God is a fearful sin. Men rob God who would not think of robbing their fellow men. Study what God says on being rich toward him, rich in good works, and laying up treasures in heaven. (Matt. 6: 19-21; Luke 12: 21; 1 Tim. 6: 17-19.) Study the equality with which all should give. (Acts 11: 29; 1 Cor. 16: 1, 2; 2 Cor. 8: 12.)

9. "Ye are cursed with the curse." (See the curse in Deut. 28.) The Jews then were cursed with drought and devouring insects. (Verses 10, 11.) They were thus cursed because the whole nation had robbed God. They had made the mistake that many make today—namely, that by withholding the tithes and offerings they would enrich themselves. "There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more;



and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to want. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." (Prov. 11: 24, 25.)

10. So God said the Jews then might put him to the test; that if they would bring "the whole tithe into the storehouse," he would open the windows of heaven and pour them out such a blessing that they would not have room to store it away. "The storehouse" was chambers about the temple prepared for the reception of the tithes, and they were empty, and an enemy had been quartered in one of them. (Neh. 13: 4-9.)

11. God also promised to "rebuke," or prevent the coming of the locusts, worms, and other insects which devoured their crops, and that the crops should come to the fruitage.

12. Also, all nations should see their prosperity and pronounce them blessed, and they should "be a delightsome land." God blesses in different ways the free and cheerful giver today. (See Acts 20: 35; 2 Cor. 9: 8-11.)

### III. Hard Speeches Against God

13. "Your words have been stout against me, saith Jehovah." Jude (15) speaks of "all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." They did this, not once or twice, but habitually. To murmur and complain and to say hard things against God is blasphemy. Yet when charged with this sin, as when charged with robbing God, they denied it, saying, "What have we spoken against thee?" Else, they attempted to defend what they had said against God.

14. One hard and untrue thing they had said was, it was "vain to serve God," and there was no profit in keeping his charge, and in walking "mournfully"—that is, in repentance. Others had said the same. In Job's day some had said to God,

"Depart from us;

For we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?

And what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?"

(Job. 21: 14, 15.)

Again:

"Who said unto God, Depart from us;

And what can the Almighty do for us?" (Job 22: 17.)

Psalms 73: 1-14 shows how some in forgetfulness of God's watch care over the righteous might say the scoffers, the proud, and the wicked flourish and the righteous have trouble and suffer; but the latter part of the Psalm shows that God's people see how the wicked finally perish and that God is continually with his people. Read the entire Psalm. It is very wrong and sinful to make the service of God a mercenary matter, and if it brings no visible worldly gain and prosperity, or self-aggrandizement, to say there is no "profit" in it. The Jews of this lesson committed this sin. The service of God to them was not an inward spiritual service, but one of outward forms productive of material prosperity.

How vain indeed it is to judge the worship of God by this standard. Godliness is not a way of gain, yet with contentment it is great gain. (1 Tim. 6: 5, 6.)

Isaiah 58: 1-9 shows the great difference between formal, outward, false fasting and that which was true and from the heart.

15. These sinful Jews called "the proud happy." They were not



prospering; the wicked people about them, it seemed, were prospering, and such were happy. It seemed that they who "worked wickedness" were built up, and those who tempted God by their sins escaped—that is, the ones who insulted and despised God and worked wickedness prospered, while the righteous and holy suffered and were overcome by the wicked.

#### IV. The Difference Between the Righteous and the Wicked

16, 17. "They that feared Jehovah" were the few or remnant who in the midst of the skeptical, unfaithful, and wicked ones just described, clung to God and relied upon his promises. They knew it would be well with all who feared God. "Then," when these wicked ones were saying all these hard things and acting so wickedly, those "who feared Jehovah spake one with another," to encourage one another. Mutual exhortation is most necessary and is commanded by the Lord. (See Heb. 3: 13; 10: 25; Deut. 6: 4-9.) They also thought upon the name of Jehovah, which means upon his great goodness and mercy, truth and justice. This gave them courage and strength. God gave heed to their conversations and heard the very thoughts of their hearts. All this was so pleasing to him that "a book of remembrance was written before him."

Kings kept a record of men who performed heroic deeds or deeds of treachery and shame. (Esther 6: 1, 2; 2: 23; Ezra 4: 15.) So God has a book. (See Ps. 56: 8; Isa. 65: 6; Dan. 7: 10; 12: 1.) This book is called "the book of life" and "the Lamb's book of life." (See Phil. 4: 3; Rev. 3: 5; 13: 8; 20: 12, 15; 21: 27; and Luke 10: 20.) "And they shall be mine, saith Jehovah." He will claim them as his own—"even mine own possession"—not "jewels," as in the Authorized Version, but God's peculiar or "own possession." (See the following passages: Ex. 19: 5; Deut. 7: 6; 14: 2; 26: 18; Ps. 135: 4; Titus 2: 14; 1 Pet. 2: 9.) "In that day" when God shall punish the wicked and reward the righteous, he will spare all who fear him, and do these things, "as a father spareth his own son that serveth him." How tender is a father's love toward an obedient and affectionate son! "Like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear him." (Ps. 103: 13.) God will take care of his own. (See 1 Pet. 5: 7.) How encouraging is all this to earnest and faithful, righteous and godly men and women today, who, in distress and tears, toil and prayers, talk together in the fear of God over the bitter strife, devouring contentions, and destructive divisions among the Israel of God! Be encouraged; God gives heed to your conversations, hears your prayers, and will in the proper time claim his own. How encouraging to parents as they sit together in the home with their children teaching them diligently the word of God! How encouraging to the poor widow, who, in her humble hut, with her children clinging to her knees, teaching them of God and Christ and heaven!

18. "Then shall ye return"—to what? to better judgment or in sight into the justice of God than to say that there is no "profit" in serving God and to calumniate him as stated above. "And discern," or see clearly and forever "the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." The "profit" there is in serving God will be seen then, when, perhaps, it will be too late.



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Memory Verses.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Who was Malachi?  
What does "Malachi" mean?  
When did he prophesy?  
How is the book divided?  
How is Malachi indorsed by the New Testament?
- 1 Whom would God send before his face?  
Who was this messenger?  
What would this messenger do?  
In whose "spirit and power" did he come?  
Why is it supposed that this prophesy referred also to the work of Nehemiah?  
Whom did the Jews seek?  
In what way did Jesus come to God's temple?  
How was he "the messenger of the covenant?"  
How did God come in Malachi's time to his temple?
  - 2 Who were prepared for God's coming then?  
Who were the sons of Levi?  
Christ when he came?  
To what is Christ here compared?  
How does he refine and purify?
  - 3 To what extent and degree are God's children tried as metal in the fire?  
Who were the sons of Levi?  
Who are the priests in God's spiritual temple?  
Why did God purify the Levites, and why does he purify Christians now?  
What sacrifices do Christians offer today?
  - 4 When are offerings pleasant unto God?
  - 5 For what would God judge the people?
  - 6 Why were not the Jews consumed?  
What has God changed, while he is unchangeable?
  - 7 What had the Jews done continually?  
When would God return unto them?  
In what way could they return unto him?  
What manifests God's mercy?  
What reply did the Jews make to this?  
Why did they make this foolish reply?  
To what should all return today?
  - 8 In what did God show that the Jews were guilty?
- What reply did they make to this?  
Why did they make such a reply?  
In what had they robbed God?  
What were the tithes?  
In what ways may God be robbed today?
- 9 What had befallen the Jews?  
Why?  
What mistake had they made in their calculations?  
Repeat Prov. 11: 24, 25.
  - 10 How did God invite the Jews to test him?  
What was the "storehouse?"  
What was the condition of these chambers?
  - 11, 12 What would God do for them?  
How does God bless the liberal giver now?
  - 13 How had unbelieving ones spoken against God?  
What does Jude say about such?  
When charged with it, what did they do?
  - 14 What was one hard thing they had said?  
Repeat the quotations from Job.  
What does the first part and the last part of Ps. 73 show?  
From what viewpoint were these complainers and murmurers looking at the service of God?  
Into what are people forbidden to turn godliness?  
What is great gain, on the other hand?  
What is the difference between living of the gospel and turning it into a way of gain?  
Between what does Isa. 58: 1-9 show the difference?
  - 15 Who were considered happy?  
Who seemed to prosper?
  - 16, 17 What did those who feared Jehovah do?  
What did they know in the midst of all wickedness and among all sinners?  
What is said in the Bible about mutual exhortation?  
What is it to think upon the name of Jehovah?  
What did God do?  
In what was all this written?  
What did kings record?  
What is said about God's book?  
What does God say such people shall be?  
What day is "that day?"  
What will God do for such people?  
Whom does this passage encourage?
  - 18 What does "return" here mean?  
What will all be able to discern?  
What will be the difference?



## LESSON XIII—SEPTEMBER 24

## THE EXILE AND THE RESTORATION—REVIEW

## —Psalm 137: 1-6; Psalm 126

These lessons begin with Ezekiel's call and commission in captivity and continue, not only to the restoration of the Jews from Babylonian captivity, but to Malachi's message. The Golden Text is appropriate.

*Golden Text*—Jehovah hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. (Psalm 126: 3.)

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 66: 1-5, 16-20.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Sept. 18.—Ezekiel the watchman.—Ezek. 3: 16-21. Tu.—Daniel the courageous.—Dan. 6: 4-10. Wed.—Esther the noblehearted.—Esther 4: 10-5: 3. Th.—Ezra the scribe.—Ezra 7: 6-10. Fr.—Nehemiah the builder.—Neh. 4: 7-20. Sat.—The law of the Lord.—Psa. 19: 7-14. Su.—The goodness of God.—Psa. 66: 1-5, 16-20.

## QUESTIONS

*Lesson I.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give the nature of Ezekiel's call and commission.

*Lesson II.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Did you learn when the kingdom of verse 44 was set up?

*Lesson III.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Relate the facts of Belshazzar's feast.

*Lesson IV.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. What lessons helpful to us do we learn from Daniel in the lions' den?

*Lesson V.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give the facts and persons of this return from exile.

*Lesson VI.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Who led in the building of the temple? Why did the old men weep? When was it finished and dedicated?

*Lesson VII.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Relate the story of Esther's saving her people.

*Lesson VIII.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. What had Ezra set his heart to do? What was done before starting on the journey? Why would Ezra not ask for a guard?

*Lesson IX.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. For what did Nehemiah pray.

*Lesson X.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. In what ways was the building of the walls of Jerusalem hindered by the enemies of the Jews? In what ways were the Jews encouraged?

*Lesson XI.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. How was the law taught? What effect did it have upon the people?

*Lesson XII.*—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. What was the message of Malachi?



## FOURTH QUARTER

## JESUS THE WORLD'S SAVIOUR: STUDIES IN LUKE

## (First Half of a Six Months' Course)

## LESSON I—OCTOBER 1

## THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—Luke 1: 1-80.

## Print 1: 8-22

LUKE 1. 8 Now it came to pass, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9 according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the hour of incense.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God.

17 And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him.

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto thee, and to bring thee these good tidings.

20 And behold, thou shalt be silent and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall come to pass, because thou believedst not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21 And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and they marvelled while he tarried in the temple.

22 And when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: and he continued making signs unto them, and remained dumb.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

**Golden Text**—He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink. (Luke 1: 15.)

**Time**—Reckoning time from the birth of Jesus did not begin until several hundred years after his birth, and it has been agreed by those who have studied the question that a mistake of four years was made, which places the birth of Jesus in the year B.C. 4. "According to the received chronology, Jesus was born in the last year of Herod; and he was, therefore, less than a year old when Herod died. His birth occurred four years previous to our common era, the era having been erroneously fixed by Dionysius Exiguus in the sixth century." (McGarvey.) John was born six months before Jesus.

**Place**—Jerusalem.

**Persons**—The angel Gabriel, Zacharias, Elizabeth, Herod, and the people.

**Devotional Reading**—Luke 1: 68-79.

**Memory Verse**—Luke 1: 76, 77.

**Reference Material**—Isaiah 40: 3-5; Malachi 4: 4-6.



*Home Readings.*—Mon., Sept. 25.—The prophet's message.—Isa. 40: 3-5. Tu.—The angel's message.—Luke 1: 5-17. Wed.—The birth of John the Baptist.—Luke 1: 57-66. Th.—Hannah's prayer.—1 Sam. 1: 9-18. Fr.—Hannah's thanksgiving.—1 Sam. 2: 1-10. Sat.—A Christian home.—Col. 3: 17-25. Su.—Zacharias' prophecy.—Luke 1: 68-79.

## INTRODUCTION

### I. Luke

Luke, the author of the book of Luke and of Acts of the Apostles, was born, it is supposed, in Antioch of Syria, and was educated for a physician. (Col. 4: 14.) It is thought also that he was a Gentile. From his use of the pronoun "we" in Acts of the Apostles we learn where he joined Paul (Acts 16: 10, 11), where he remained when separated from Paul, when and where he joined Paul again (Acts 20: 5, 6), and where he accompanied Paul (Acts 20: 7; 21: 15-18; 2 Tim. 4: 11). He was not an apostle, and not, therefore, an eyewitness of what he wrote concerning Jesus, but learned it from others. He was a scholar, and "traced the course of all things accurately from the first," seeking information and facts, until he knew "the certainty concerning the things" whereof he wrote. (Luke 1: 1-4.) It is thought he wrote his Gospel under Paul's influence at Cesarea, and Acts of the Apostles under the same influence at Rome.

### II. The Herods

"There was in the days of Herod, king of Judea." Let us learn now something of this Herod and the other Herods mentioned in the New Testament. There are seven Herods mentioned in the New Testament: "Herod the king"—the Great (Matt. 2: 1); Archelaus, his son and successor (Matt. 2: 22); Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee (Matt. 14: 3; Mark 6: 16, 17; Luke 3: 1), son of Herod the Great; Herod Philip 1., another son of Herod the Great, lawful husband of Herodias, who was his half niece (Luke 3: 19); Herod Philip II. (Luke 3: 1), son of Herod the Great, built Cesarea Philippi, married Salome, his brother Philip's daughter, the girl who danced before Herod Antipas; Herod Agrippa I., son of Aristobulus and grandson of Herod the Great, who beheaded James, who seized Peter with the purpose of killing him also, and who was eaten of worms (Acts 12: 1-3, 23); Herod Agrippa II., before whom Paul made his famous defense (Acts 25: 13, 23; 26: 2, 27). "Herod the king" is so called to distinguish him from the other Herods and because he was made king of Judea by the Romans. Josephus calls him "Herod the Great." He was the son of Antipater, an Idumean, and Cypros, an Arabian of noble descent. Antipater was made procurator of Judea by Julius Cæsar in B.C. 47.

Any authentic Bible dictionary gives the life of Herod and how he became king. The Herods were aliens by race, but Jews in faith. This Herod was a bloodthirsty, corrupt, and cruel wretch. It is said that "household murders stained his own hearth again and again. His nearest relatives, friends, companions, aged men, unoffending women, were slain—one, in one way; another, in another way." Before the slaughter of the children mentioned in connection with this lesson, moved by jealousy, he slew two high priests, an uncle, his own favorite wife (Mariamne), three sons, and many others.

When at the point of death, he caused to be thrown into prison a number of his most illustrious subjects—one from every family—and ordered that they should be put to death the moment he expired in order that there might be tears shed when he died, for he knew his



death would be an occasion of rejoicing instead of mourning. This order, however, was not carried out. So many and so cruel were the murders of Herod that it is not surprising that Josephus fails to record the destruction of the babes at Bethlehem when he sought the life of Jesus. Besides, Josephus was an unbeliever, and would naturally avoid the mention of facts which would furnish evidence in favor of Jesus. The internal ulcers and putrid sores of which Herod died are but faint types of his moral turpitude.

### III. Zacharias and Elizabeth

Zacharias was a priest "of the course of Abijah." David divided "the sons of Aaron," the priests, into twenty-four courses to serve in the temple, each course in its turn and a week at a time. (See 1 Chron. 24: 1-19; 2 Chron. 23: 8; 2 Kings 11: 7.) Zacharias belonged to the eighth course. Elizabeth was "of the daughters of Aaron"—that is, her father was a priest. This statement was doubtless made to show that John was well born. Lev. 21: 1-7 and Ezek. 44: 22 state whom priests were to marry. Men and women now are blessed of God in marriage when they respect his will. This is a lifelong and sacred relationship, the first one ordained of God, and should be entered into solemnly and according to his will.

Zacharias and Elizabeth "were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." They were righteous because they obeyed God, and not because they were faultless and sinless. God's law was their rule of life, and they endeavored to conform to it. When they made mistakes or yielded to temptation, they complied with God's law of repentance and made such offerings for their sins as God required. Abraham was righteous, the friend of God and father of the faithful; yet he sinned and was reproved and chastened by the Lord. Noah and Lot were righteous, yet they sinned. Zacharias lacked faith and asked for a sign of assurance that what God had promised would be fulfilled, and, as we shall see later on, was made dumb.

Righteousness comes from right, and whatever God teaches is right. His word is the standard of right; it is right. Whoever through faith in God and in reverence for him obeys him from the heart is righteous, and that obedience embraces repentance of sins. To submit to God's ordinances and to live daily as he directs is to subject oneself to God's righteousness and to be "righteous before" him. To submit to man's righteousness and to live according to the doctrines and commandments of men is to be righteous before men. (See Rom. 10: 1-3; Mark 7: 6-9; Matt. 23: 15.) Zacharias and Elizabeth were "righteous before God." Noah was "righteous before God" because he "walked with God," or walked as God directed him, and he was "perfect ["blameless"—margin] in his generation." (Gen. 6: 9; 7: 1.) So Zacharias and Elizabeth walked.

The scribes and Pharisees were "ignorant of God's righteousness" and sought to "establish their own." They were not "righteous before God," although zealous, compassing "sea and land to make one proselyte." (Matt. 23: 15.) What is the difference in this verse between "commandments" and "ordinances?" Ordinances were the sacrificial and public services which God had appointed. "The first covenant had ordinances of divine service, and its sanctuary a sanctuary of this world." (Heb. 9: 1, 10.) "The law of commandments contained in ordinances," or "the bond written in ordinances"—the positive and typical appointments of the law of Moses—were fulfilled in Christ and nailed to the cross in his death. (Eph. 2: 15; Col. 2: 14) The



"commandments" were the Ten Commandments and all God's precepts based on them to control the daily life in all its duties and relationships. "Blameless" does not mean without imperfections, but not censurable. For no just cause could they be blamed. They lived an earnest, upright, religious life. All now are exhorted to so live. (See Phil. 2: 15; 1 Thess. 5: 23; 1 Tim. 3: 10; Tit. 1: 6, 7; 2 Pet. 3: 14.) We can so live as to be without reproach (1 Tim. 3: 2, 7) and "unreprovable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1: 8).

Zacharias and Elizabeth "had no child, because . . . Elizabeth was barren;" and now that they were both old, they could not, according to the course of nature, hope to have one. These facts are emphasized to show that John's birth was miraculous. To be without children was considered a misfortune and reproach. (Luke 1: 25.) Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Hannah, and Elizabeth were alike childless until God blessed them to make them fruitful.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Gabriel Appears to Zacharias

8-9. "According to the custom of the priest's office," it was Zacharias' lot "to enter into the temple [the holy place] of the Lord and burn incense." From this it is thought that the part each priest performed in this service was determined by lot, but not by chance. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah." (Prov. 16: 33.) Incense was burned twice a day—morning and evening—on the golden altar, or altar of incense, in the holy place. Ex. 30 gives the dimensions of the altar, its situation, and the ingredients of the incense. Zacharias "executed the priest's office before God." God had promised that where he recorded his name he would meet with and bless them (Ex. 20: 24), and he placed his name in the temple. The temple was called by his name. (2 Chron. 7: 15, 16; 1 Kings 8: 20, 29, 43.) "And thou shalt put it [the altar of incense] before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee." (Ex. 30: 6.) The blessings of this lesson came to Zacharias "while" he was discharging faithfully his duty. The faithful discharge of present duty prepares one for larger blessings and greater usefulness.

10. "The whole multitude of the people were praying without." The Jews connect prayer and the burning of incense. "Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee; the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." (Ps. 141: 2.) Incense then was a type of prayer and praise now offered by God's people in his spiritual temple, or church. (Rev. 5: 8; 8: 3.) We see from this that the Jews under the law of Moses were taught to pray at least twice a day, and certainly under the law of Christ we should do as well. Again, one under the law said: "Seven times a day do I praise thee." (Ps. 119: 164.) Under Christ we are commanded to "pray without ceasing," (1 Thess. 5: 17), and to offer up continually the sacrifice of praise to God (Heb. 13: 15).

11. While thus engaged in the service of God, an angel, "standing on the right side of the altar of incense," appeared to him. Four hundred years had elapsed since Malachi, the last of the prophets, had spoken. The earthly kingdom had been destroyed, the spiritual kingdom was approaching, and an angel was sent to foretell the birth of him who was to prepare the way of its King. Note the different appearances of angels from this time to the ascension of Jesus.

12. Zacharias was troubled and filled with fear. Such appearances always filled people with fear. "Angels have always met the



faithful servants of God to encourage and bless them. They have met the violators of God's will to warn and punish them. Yet good men in all ages have seemed to dread meeting angels. This was from a sense of unworthiness these men felt in the presence of the messengers of God. The best and truest of men feel their sinfulness before God. When Peter was impressed with the divine character of Jesus, 'he fell down at Jesus' knees saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' (Luke 5: 8.) Man's conscious weakness and infirmity make the best of men dread the presence and purity of God and his angels. There is not an example in all the Scriptures of a servant of God, not even of Jesus, addressing God in terms of familiar endearment, so much in vogue now with his children. Reverence and awe, commingled with love and godly fear, are becoming in our approach to God." (Lipscomb.)

13-14. To allay Zacharias' fears, the angel said: "Fear not," Jesus frequently said to his disciples, "Fear not," or, "Be not afraid." The angel had come with good news to Zacharias, and hence he should not fear. "Thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son," etc. If, since he and Elizabeth were old, Zacharias had ceased to pray for a son, it is more than likely that in his younger days he had so prayed, as Isaac besought God to remove the barrenness of Rebekah. With other Jews, Zacharias doubtless prayed for the deliverance of Israel. It is also true that because he was prayerful and dutiful God thus rewarded him. God gave him and Elizabeth strength in old age to become parents, as he had given to Abraham and Sarah; and John in this respect was born in the natural way. Zacharias was told that the child's name should be "John." "John" in Hebrew means "God had mercy," or "the mercy of God." The angel further said that the birth of this child should bring joy and gladness to his parents and to many people. His parents would rejoice at his birth; but this means that their joy would not end there, and that the work of the child when a man would cause many people to rejoice. Let us, then, as faithfully do our duty; let us serve on, pray on, wait on, hope on, and God will as surely bless us in the way which in his wisdom is best.

## II. "Great in the Sight of the Lord"

15. "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord." In whose sight do you prefer to be great? One may be great in the eyes of men or of the world and nothing before God. Before God "the inhabitants" of the earth "are as grasshoppers"; "Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the earth. . . . All the nations are as dust before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing, and vanity." (Read Isa. 40: 12-26.)

"All flesh is as grass,

And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass.

The grass withereth, and the flower falleth:

But the words of the Lord abide forever." (1 Pet. 1: 24, 25.)

To the Pharisees, "who were lovers of money," Jesus said: "for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16: 14, 15.) A meek and quiet spirit, a lowly and humble heart are of great price in the sight of God (1 Pet. 3: 4.) "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." (Isa. 66: 2, 5.) The one who is "poor in spirit is great in God's sight." "The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them, and they that have authority over them are called Benefactors."



These, today, are great in the sight of men. All school histories and other books set these forth as great in the eyes of men. But before God the servant of all is the greatest (Luke 22: 24-30.) John's mission and work made him great before God. He was to drink neither "wine nor strong drink." "Strong drink" is intoxicating liquor different from wine. John, when grown, drank neither of these and ate the simple food of locusts and wild honey. Priests were forbidden to drink wine or any strong drink while serving in the tabernacle or temple (Lev. 10: 9; Ezek. 44: 21), and the Nazarite, so long as his vow was upon him, was not only forbidden to drink wine and strong drink, but also "vinegar of wine," "vinegar of strong drink," or "grape juice," and was not to eat fresh or dried grapes or any thing made of grapes from kernel to husk. (Num. 6: 1-4.) Samson was a Nazarite from his birth. (Judg. 13.) John did no miracle (John 10: 41), but was "filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb." He was guided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit to prepare himself for his work and to fill his mission. He was inspired. Being filled with the Spirit did not release him from the necessity of self-denial, effort, struggle, obedience to God, and preparation for his great work.

## II. John's Mission

16-17. The angel in these verses states the mission of John. He was (1) to turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God; (2) he was to go before the face of the Lord "in the spirit and power of Elijah;" (3) he was "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just;" and (4) "to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him." John did all this. By his manner of life and preaching he convinced the people of sin, turned them to God, taught fathers and all classes of men their respective duties (Luke 3: 10-14), and made ready a people for the Lord. Matt. 3: 1-12; Mark 1: 1-8; Luke 3: 10-18 show how he did this. He was not Elijah in person, as he explains himself (John 1: 21) but came "in the spirit and power of Elijah;" so that he was the "Elijah to come" (Matt. 17: 10-13). In his zeal and manner of life and bold reproof of sin in the rulers of earth he resembled Elijah. Elijah reproved frequently Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 18: 17-46; 21), and John reproved Herod Antipas and Herodias (Matt 14: 1-5). John's work and character were foretold by the prophets. (Isa. 40: 3-5; Mal. 3: 1; 4: 4-6.)

18. Zacharias was slow to believe what the angel had said, giving as the reason that he and his wife were old people. Hence he asked for a sign. At the age of fifty the priests ceased to serve (Num. 8: 25), but Zacharias was past that age.

19-20. Here the angel declared his name and repeated his mission: "I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto thee, and to bring thee these good tidings." Gabriel appeared hundreds of years before this to Daniel (Dan. 8: 16; 9: 21), and six months later to the virgin Mary (Luke 1: 26). How much is signified by Gabriel's standing in the presence of God, we do not undertake to say; but that he with such power was sent to declare such things to Zacharias should be sufficient. The sign given was that Zacharias should be dumb until these things should come to pass, and the reason given was because he did not believe Gabriel's words. Still, Gabriel said they should be fulfilled in their season.

21. The people, waiting for Zacharias, marveled that he tarried so long within the temple. It did not require so long to burn incense.



22. When he did come out, he could not speak, but gave them to understand by the signs he continued to make that he "had seen a vision." During his further service in the temple, and until the appointed time to return home, Zacharias remained dumb.

23. When the week of his ministration was ended, he went to his home. Zacharias lived at Hebron, the priestly city, in "the hill country of Judea." (See Josh. 20: 7; 21: 11; Luke 1: 39.)

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Why do we say Jesus was born B.C. 4?  
Who is the author of the book of Luke?  
What other book did he write?  
Of what race is he supposed to have been?  
What was his vocation?  
Was he an apostle?  
How did he learn what he wrote?  
Under whose influence is it thought he wrote?  
Name the Herods mentioned in the New Testament.  
Who was Herod the Great?  
Of what race and of what faith were the Herods?  
Name the cruelties of Herod the Great.  
Who was Zacharias?  
Who was his wife?  
What is meant by the course of priests?  
Of what course was Zacharias?  
What shows that John was well born?  
Whom were priests not to marry?  
What should all now regard in marrying?  
What was the character of Zacharias and Elizabeth?  
What is meant by their being righteous before God?  
Show why being righteous before God does not mean sinless perfection.  
What is it to be righteous before men?  
What is the difference between God's righteousness and man's righteousness?  
Why were the scribes and Pharisees not righteous before God, while so zealous?  
What is the difference between ordinances and commandments?  
What is meant by being "blameless"?  
What shows that John's birth was miraculous?  
Whose birth was similar to John's?  
9 How was the part each priest was to perform determined?  
What was the "lot" of Zacharias?  
Where and when was incense burned?  
Where did God meet with and bless his people?  
When did this blessing come to Zacharias?  
For what does the discharge of present duty fit us?
- 10 What was the multitude doing while the incense was burning?  
Of what was incense a type?  
How often should Christians pray and praise God?  
11 Who appeared to Zacharias?  
12 How did this affect him?  
13, 14 What did the angel say to him?  
What did Jesus frequently say to his disciples?  
For what had Zacharias prayed?  
Why were Zacharias and Elizabeth so rewarded?  
What does this lesson teach us?  
What was the child to be named?  
What does "John" mean?  
What was the child to bring to his parents and the people?  
How?  
In whose sight do you prefer to be great?  
What and who are great in the eyes of men?  
What is said of all nations in God's sight?  
Who and what must pass away?  
What is great before God?  
Who are the greatest before him?  
15 What would make John great before God?  
What was he not to drink?  
What is "strong drink"?  
When grown, did John observe this?  
When were priests not to drink wine or "strong drink"?  
What was a Nazarite not to eat nor drink while under this vow?  
With what was John filled from birth?  
Did he work any miracle?  
From what did being filled with the Spirit not release him?  
What did it do for him?  
16, 17 State, in order and in full, John's mission.  
How did he accomplish this?  
In what was he like Elijah?  
What Elijah was he?  
18 Why was Zacharias slow to believe?  
19, 20 What reply did the angel make?  
To whom had Gabriel appeared before this?  
To whom did he appear afterwards?  
What sign was given Zacharias?  
21 At what did the people marvel?  
22 How did Zacharias show what had occurred?  
23 What did Zacharias do when his week's service was over?  
Where was his home?



## LESSON II—OCTOBER 8

## THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF JESUS—Luke 2: 1-52.

## Print 2: 40-52

LUKE 2. 40 And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41 And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover.

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast;

43 and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not;

44 but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45 and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him.

46 And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions:

47 and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all these saying in her heart.

52 And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (Luke 2: 52.)

*Time*—Birth of Jesus B.C. 4; Visited the temple A.D. 8.

*Places*—Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Nazareth.

*Persons*—Joseph, Mary, the child Jesus, the boy Jesus, the teachers of "doctors of the law." (Luke 5: 5; Acts 5: 34.)

*Memory Verse*—Luke 2: 40.

*Devotional Reading*—Isaiah 9: 1-7.

*Reference Material*—Matthew 1: 18 to 2: 23.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Oct. 2.—The birth of Jesus.—Luke 2: 1-7. Tu.—The shepherd's visit.—Luke 2: 8-20. Wed.—The Child in the temple.—Luke 2: 25-39. Th.—The boyhood of Jesus.—Luke 2: 40-52. Fr.—The boyhood of David.—1 Sam.—16: 4-18. Sat.—The boyhood of Timothy.—2 Tim. 3: 14-17. Su.—The king's birth and kingdom.—Isa. 9: 1-7.

## INTRODUCTION

## I. Why Jesus Must Be Born of Woman

We do not know just why Jesus did not appear immediately after the fall of man, but it seems that the race must be prepared for his coming. The law of Moses was "added because of transgressions, till the seed [Jesus] should come." (Gal. 3: 19.) It prepared the Jews for the reception of Christ. (Verse 24.) The law was full of types which pointed to Christ. (Heb. 10: 1.) Then, according to his own purpose and after the counsel of his own will, "when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4: 4, 5; see also Eph. 1: 9-14.) Before his birth on earth Jesus existed with God as "the Word." "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." (See John 1: 1-14; 1 Tim. 3: 16.) After his manifestation in the flesh, his name is "Jesus," and he is called "the Son of man."



He must be born of woman in order to become flesh, and he must become flesh in order to suffer and die for the race; he must suffer and weep and be tempted in order to "become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." (See Heb. 2: 14-17; 4: 14-16; 5: 7-9.) God prepared for him a body. (Heb. 10: 4-10.) He bore "our sins in his body upon the tree," and by his "stripes ye were [we are] healed." (1 Pet. 2: 24.) "When the fullness of the time came" for Jesus to be born. Gabriel, as we have learned, appeared to Mary at Nazareth and declared to her that she should become the mother of the Son of God.

## II. The Birth of Jesus

The Scripture relating the facts concerning the birth of Jesus are not embraced in this lesson; hence the subject should not embrace it. Matt. 1: 18 to 2: 15 and Luke 2: 1-39 give the facts concerning the birth of Jesus, the visit and song of the angels, the visit of the wise men, the presentation in the temple, the flight into Egypt, and the destruction by Herod of the babes of Bethlehem.

After the death of Herod, the angel directed Joseph to take the child and his mother back into the land of Israel, which he did. It seems that he intended to make his home in Judea, probably at Bethlehem; but learning that Archelaus ruled in that country instead of his father, and being warned of God not to go there, he withdrew and went to his own city, Nazareth. In the guidance and care of God, Jesus was protected in Egypt, and the prophecy was fulfilled: "Out of Egypt did I call my son." (Matt. 2: 15.) He was brought up at Nazareth, and the scripture was fulfilled which says: "He should be called a Nazarene." (Matt. 2: 23.)

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Jesus Grew

40. "And the child grew." He was first a babe, and he grew in "stature" (verse 52) and "waxed strong" physically "Filled with wisdom." The margin says "becoming full of wisdom," and verse 52 says "advanced in wisdom." He gained wisdom by application and the use of proper means. "The grace of God was upon him." God's favor was about him to protect him, as from Herod and other dangers, and to furnish him with such means of physical and mental development as were necessary. Jesus had to grow in every way.

### II. The Feast of the Passover

41. "The feast of the passover." "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before Jehovah thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles." (Deut. 16: 16; see also Lev. 23; Ex. 12.) The passover occurred in the spring. The women were not required to go, but were allowed to go, and frequently did go. Hannah went with Elkanah to Shiloh when the altar of God was there (1 Sam. 1; 2: 1-21), and there God heard her prayer and gave her Samuel. By reading the references we learn what the passover was and why it was observed.

42. At twelve years of age boys began to celebrate the passover, and were required to keep the law. Always obedient, Jesus attended this feast with Joseph and Mary.

43. There were eight days in all. The first day was the passover, and there were seven days of the feast. (Num. 28: 16, 17) It was



through no accident or misunderstanding or foolishness on his part that "Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem;" he knew when the feast ended and his company started for home; but it was on account of the great interest he felt in his Father's affairs. All that he saw and heard in the temple aroused the divinity within him and impressed him that he should be about his Father's business.

### III. Jesus Remained in the Temple

44 These companies were large. Starting from remote places, they increased in number until they reached Jerusalem. Families, kindred, and acquaintances were together. So in returning they were necessarily large. Jesus was old enough and large enough to care for himself; and easily he might not have been missed, therefore, until the end of the first day's journey, until each looked more carefully after his own at nightfall when all stopped to camp. It was not carelessness in Joseph and Mary that Jesus was not missed before; for they supposed he was somewhere in the company, and they sought him at the right time. It would have been a reflection on his superior judgment to have watched him as a mere child.

45-46 "When they found him not" among "kinsfolk and acquaintance," "they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him;" and "after three days [or on the third day] they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions." There were different apartments of the temple. In some of these probably one of the porches or the court of the women, there teachers, or rabbis, conducted their schools and regularly expounded the law.

Jesus was not detained by the beauty and outward show of the temple; he did not loiter behind with careless companions for the sake of frolic and amusement; but, intensely interested in grave and important matters, he remained in a school in the temple. "Hearing them, and asking them questions," means not only that Jesus answered the questions of the teachers, but also asked them such questions as would direct their minds to a clearer understanding of the law. The truth was frequently covered up with the numerous traditions of the fathers, and the questions and answers of Jesus were responses to these. "Hearing them, and asking them questions," gives us an idea as to how teaching was done at that time. This is yet one of the most impressive ways and one of the best ways to teach.

### IV. About His Father's Business

47-48. Jesus manifested such a clear insight into the meaning of the Scriptures and an understanding so far beyond one of his age that he astonished all. Joseph and Mary, no doubt, had noted with great interest his growth and development from the eventful night of his birth; but they themselves were astonished and gladly amazed to find him thus engaged. They had sought him elsewhere, "sorrowing." His mother reproved him, and informed him of the sorrow she and Joseph had experienced on his account. Mary spoke of Joseph as Jesus' "father" in an accommodated sense. (See Luke 3: 23.)

49. This reply is not reproachful. "How is it that ye sought me [looked elsewhere for me]?" He seems to think they should have known where to find him. "Knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house [or "about my Father's business"—Authorized Version]?" Thus early he realized God had a work for him to do and he must be about it. It was this deep conviction which enabled him to accomplish



so much in his eventful life and to say on the cross: "It is finished." What a beautiful example to all young people to enter the service of God early and to strive to accomplish much!

50. Joseph and Mary did not comprehend this reply; hence he had a clearer insight into his earthly mission than he received from them.

51. If his divine wisdom and consciousness of his earthly mission drew him into the temple and caused him to tarry behind, the same led him back to Nazareth, where he remained for eighteen years in the quiet affairs and daily routine of carpenter's life. The law of God required obedience to parents (Deut. 21: 18-21), and Jesus kept it. He is a beautiful and royal example to children in this respect. (Eph. 6: 1-3.) The noblest, purest, most royal child that ever lived on earth was most obedient to his parents. Jesus was just as much in the work of God at home in Nazareth, subject to his parents, as he was in his public ministry.

Disobedience to parents is a bad sign and a great sin. (2 Tim. 3: 1-7.) "His mother kept all these sayings in her heart." There were many things already in his life to fill her soul with thought and wonder. Nazareth was a small town in Galilee, "amid the round-topped hills which form the southern ridges of Lebanon just before they sink down into the plain of Esdraelon." It was twenty miles east of the Mediterranean Sea, sixteen miles west of the Sea of Galilee, and about seventy-five miles north of Jerusalem. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament. It had no history until Jesus immortalized it. It was held in disrepute even by the Galileans themselves. (John 1: 46.) Here Jesus was reared, and here he lived until he "was about thirty years of age." (Luke 3: 23.)

### V. The Means by Which Jesus Grew

"Jesus grew up among a people seldom (and only contemptuously) named by the ancient classics, and subject at the time to the yoke of foreign oppressors; in a remote and conquered province of the Roman empire; in the darkest district of Palestine; in a little country town of proverbial insignificance; in poverty and manual labor; in the obscurity of a carpenter's shop; far away from universities, academies, libraries, and literary and polished society; without any help, so far as we know, except the parental care, the daily wonders of nature, the Old Testament Scriptures, the weekly Sabbath service of the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4: 16), the annual festivals in the temple of Jerusalem (Luke 2: 42), and the secret intercourse of his soul with God, his heavenly Father." (Scaff, in "The People's New Testament with Notes by Johnson.")

52. "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature." This fact is stated also in verse 40. Jesus was not a man in a child's body. His mind developed as he grew larger and stronger. He grew in every way—in stature, in intellect, in wisdom, in heart, and "in favor with God and men." He grew by use of means—grew physically by taking proper exercise, wholesome food, and restful sleep; grew in wisdom and grace by asking questions, studying the Scriptures, and the exercise of mind and soul. These quiet years at Nazareth were spent in physical, mental, and spiritual development and preparation for his great public work. He resisted temptation, prayed, attended the feasts and public worship, and kept God's laws. Thus he grew in grace, in favor with God; and his sincerity, purity, generosity, humility, and kindness brought him into favor with men. Thus Christians should grow and do grow. (2 Pet. 3: 18.) They must so live "that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." (Tit. 2: 10.)



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
State why Jesus must be born of woman under the law.  
Relate the wonderful facts connected with Jesus' birth.  
Why did Jesus return from Egypt with Mary and Joseph?  
To what place did he go?  
Why?  
What scriptures did this fulfill?  
40 In what respect did Jesus grow? How was "the grace of God" upon him?  
41 Who were required to attend the feasts at Jerusalem? Why did the women go? Where and when was Hannah blessed? Name the feasts. State at what time of the year they were observed. What assembling and service does God require of Christians?  
42 How old was Jesus at this time? What was required of boys at this age?  
43 How long did the feast last? Why did Jesus tarry behind? How did Joseph and Mary discover that he was not along?
- 44 Where did they seek him?  
45, 46 What did they then do? Where did they find him? On what day? What was he doing?  
47, 48 What was the character of his questions and answers? Why were Joseph and Mary, with the rest, amazed? What reproof did Mary offer?  
49 What answer did Jesus make? What did he mean?  
50 Why did not Joseph and Mary understand him? From what source did Jesus receive this insight into his mission and work?  
51 Why, then, did he return to Nazareth? What was his trade? In this was he obedient to God? What impression did all of this make upon his mother? What "sayings" did she remember? Where was Nazareth? What is said of its obscurity and insignificance.  
52 In what did Jesus grow? How did he grow? In what and how must Christians grow?

## INTRODUCTION

## I. John's Manner of Life

One source tells us all we know of John's history from childhood until his public ministry began: "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert till the day of his showing unto Israel" (Luke 1:80). John grew in both mind and character in mind and spirit; and like Jesus, he was brought up in a quiet place, "in the desert," where he was distinguished by self-denial and prepared for baptism and an unusual communion with God for his great work. His habits, clothing, and diet were simple. His manner was "candid," his hair and a "hairy mane" (Matt. 3:4)—a loose garment made of a coarse laborer's woven out of the long, rough hair of the camel; and latter of about the waist with a "leathern girdle." This style was worn by many common laborers. The hairy garment was a recognized dress of the prophets. (2 Kings 1:8; Zach. 13:18) The food was locusts and wild honey. John was called to be a prophet (Luke 1:17), a voice in the wilderness (Isa. 40:3), and a witness to the Messiah (Matt. 11:10).



## LESSON III—OCTOBER 15

## THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—Luke 3: 1-38.

## Print 3: 7-17

LUKE 3. 7 He said therefore to the multitudes that went out to be baptized of him, Ye offsprings of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9 And even now the axe also lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

10 And the multitudes answered him, saying, What then must we do?

11 And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise.

12 And there came also publicans to be baptized, and they said unto him, Teacher, what must we do?

13 And he said unto them, Extort no more than that which is appointed you.

14 And soldiers also asked him, saying, And we, what must we do? And he said unto them, Extort from no man by violence, neither accuse any one wrongfully; and be content with your wages.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ;

16 John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire:

17 whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (Matthew 3: 2.)

*Time*—A.D. 26.

*Place*—Wilderness of Judea.

*Persons*—John the Baptist and the multitudes.

*Memory Verse*—Luke 3: 3.

*Devotional Reading*—Isaiah 40: 1-11.

*Reference Material*—Matthew 11: 2-19; Philippians 2: 5-11.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Oct. 9.—The preaching prophet.—Luke 3: 1-9. Tu.—John baptizing Jesus.—Matt. 3: 13-16. Wed.—John tells about himself.—John 1: 19-28. Th.—John testifies to Jesus.—John 1: 29-37. Fr.—John wonders about Jesus.—Luke 7: 18-23. Sat.—Jesus' testimony to John.—Luke 7: 24-35. Su.—Glad tidings from the wilderness.—Isa. 40: 1-11.

## INTRODUCTION

## I. John's Manner of Life

One verse tells us all we know of John's history from childhood until his public ministry began: "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." (Luke 1: 80.) Like Jesus, John grew in body and developed in mind and spirit; and, like Jesus, he was brought up in a quiet place, "in the deserts," where he was disciplined by self-denial and prepared by frequent and undisturbed communion with God for his great work. His habits, clothing, and diet were simple. His raiment was "camel's hair, and a leathern girdle" (Matt. 3: 4)—a loose garment made of a coarse fabric woven out of the long, rough hair of the camel; and fastened about the waist with a "leathern girdle." This girdle was worn by any common laborer. The hairy garment was a recognized dress of the prophets. (2 Kings 1: 8; Zach. 13: 4.) "His food was locusts and wild honey." Jews were allowed to eat locusts (Lev. 11: 22), a large insect resembling a grasshopper.



The poor of Arabia, Egypt, and Nubia use them still for food. Honey was deposited in the rocks by wild swarms of bees. (Ps. 81: 16.) He drank neither wine nor strong drink of any kind, and was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. Compare this with the law for Nazarites. (Num. 6.) His mission was declared by Gabriel as follows: "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him." (Luke 1: 16, 17.) God sent them to baptize. (John 1: 33.) He taught and baptized by the authority of God, and those who refused to be baptized rejected the counsel of God against themselves. (Luke 7: 29, 30.) Note that the Old Testament closes with a prophecy concerning John's work, and the New Testament virtually opens with its fulfillment.

Lesson XII of the last quarter contains Malachi's prophecy concerning John the Baptist, which see.

## II. When John Began to Preach

Tiberius Cæsar, stepson and successor of Augustus, was the second emperor of Rome. He was associate emperor with Augustus before Augustus' death. He began to reign A.D. 14, and reigned until his death—A.D. 37. After the banishment of Archelaus, A.D. 6, Judea was made a province under Roman governors with headquarters at Cesarea, on the sea. Pilate was the fifth of these. He was appointed A.D. 25 or 26, and was removed A.D. 36. "Wearied with misfortunes," he committed suicide. Guilty of other sins and a depraved coward, he played a prominent part in the basest crime the world has ever known—the crucifixion of Jesus. "Tetrarch" properly means the ruler of a fourth part of a country, but in a general sense any subordinate prince or ruler.

Lysanias was the Roman ruler, or tetrarch, of Abilene. Trachonitis was east: Ituræa, northeast; and Abilene, north of Galilee. (See the map.) Annas and Caiaphas were called "high priests"; there was really but one high priest at a time. Annas was father-in-law to Caiaphas (John 18: 13), and had been deposed by the Romans and Caiaphas appointed in his stead. (John 11: 49-52; 18: 13, 14, 24; Acts 4: 6.) During the rule of all these the word of God came unto John the Baptist while yet in the wilderness. It came by inspiration of the spirit which was in him, and he was called to begin his work. (See Jer. 1, 2.) The wilderness was not a barren waste, but a thinly inhabited country used for pasture. It lay west of the Jordan and Dead Sea and in the southeastern part of Judea. John was now about thirty years old. (Luke 3: 1, 2.)

## III. What John Preached

"Ministry" means service, or what John the Baptist did in obedience to God for the people. A lesson on the "ministry of John the Baptist" without teaching what John preached and taught the people to do would be very greatly incomplete.

John left his home and went into all the country about Jordan preaching "the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins." "Baptism of repentance" is baptism springing from repentance. The people repented and were baptized. Repentance is turning from sin to obedience to God. It is more than sorrow for sin. Sorrow is not repentance, but "godly sorrow worketh repentance." (2 Cor. 7: 10.) It is a change of purpose, a change of will, a change of heart, a de-



termination to forsake sin, and a real turning from sin to obedience to God. Repentance led to baptism, because baptism was the obedience which God required as an expression of repentance. Had he required some other act of obedience, truly penitent people would have rendered that. When they obeyed God, he forgave their sins; hence it was "the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins." There are two other passages like this: Christ shed his blood "for many unto remission of sins" (Matt. 26: 28); and, "Repent ye, and be baptized . . . unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2: 38). Christ shed his blood that sins may be remitted. "Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission." (Heb. 9: 22.) Then people repent and are baptized "unto remission of sins," or that their sins may be blotted out or forgiven. John did not preach repentance for (unto) the remission of sins, and baptism for (unto) something else. "The baptism of repentance" was for (unto) remission of sins.

So the people clearly understood him, because they "were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." (Matt. 3: 6.) Truly penitent people are not ashamed to confess their sins, to acknowledge them as their own and to blame no one else with them. Baptism itself, a burial in water of one dead to sin, is a confession of sin and an expression of repentance. John exhorted the people to repent because the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Matt. 3: 2), and that they might escape the wrath to come (Luke 3: 7). John baptized "in the river Jordan" and "in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there," and the people "came, and were baptized," and "went out unto him" and were baptized, and went "up out of the water" when baptized. (Mark 1: 5, 10; John 3: 23.) Baptism is a burial. (Rom. 6: 3, 4; Col. 2: 12.)

The prophecy concerning the work of John (Isa. 40: 3-5) was now being fulfilled. "The idea is taken from the practice of Eastern monarchs, who, whenever they entered upon an expedition or took a journey through a desert country, sent harbingers before them to prepare all things for their passage, and pioneers to open up the passes, to level the ways, and to remove all impediments." (Adam Clarke.) John was this voice, this warning, this exhortation to the people; he was the harbinger of the great King soon to come this way, and was preparing the way for him. He preached really in the literal wilderness, and he preached to Jews "in the desert of sorrow and sin." The harbingers of kings prepared the way for chariots and armies by filling up valleys, leveling down hills, and making straight roads through the wilderness and mountain passes. John prepared "the way of the Lord" by inducing the people to repent, made "his paths straight" by persuading them to forsake their crooked ways. "All flesh," Jew and Gentile, eventually saw the salvation of God in the gospel of Jesus (Verses 4-6.)

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Effects of John's Preaching

7. His preaching greatly interested and aroused the people. There went out to him "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins." (Matt. 3: 5, 6.) Luke says "the multitudes"; not absolutely every one, for some refused to be baptized. (Luke 7: 29, 30.) Among "the multitudes" were "many of the Pharisees and Sadducees," and to these especially he said: "Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matt. 3: 7.) This is direct, plain, and strong denunciation of sin. For this John's



speech was noted. This and his earnest and urgent exhortations to repentance greatly aroused and excited the people. They desired to flee the wrath to come. No responsible person can be saved without repentance. Sin is sin, and people should be made to see its exceeding sinfulness and horribleness.

The viper is a small, active, and very poisonous serpent. These Pharisees and Sadducees claimed to be the seed of Abraham, but John says they were children of the old serpent, the devil, a generation of vipers. They were noted for their religious forms and ceremonies and for keeping the traditions of the fathers, but they were denounced by Jesus as hypocrites filled with corruption. Their teaching was as ruinous and as poisonous to the souls of men as the bite of vipers was to the body. John saw by inspiration the poisonous, deadly effects of sin as God sees them, and we can see them through God's revelation. We should hate sin now as we hate rattlesnakes and copperheads, and we should flee from it as we would from these deadly serpents.

It is to be feared that many have their names on the church book who have never repented. They are deceived. Sin is as deceptive as servants. "The wrath to come" is the awful destruction which awaits all who do not repent. The destruction of Jerusalem and of the Jews, which soon followed the preaching of John, is a type of the still more awful destruction of all the impenitent. Have you repented of your sins—all sins? Repentance now should be a burning theme with all preachers—not repentance as a theory, but genuine, true repentance as practice.

8. John baptized multitudes and exhorted them to so live as to show they had repented. So in Matt. 3: 7 he therefore baptized the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism, and exhorted them to bring forth fruits worthy of the repentance unto which he had baptized them. None could claim special privileges in the kingdom of Christ because they were fleshly descendants of Abraham. John knew their hearts and their claims. God did not select Abraham arbitrarily. Abraham was a good man, a man of faith, and he, therefore, obeyed God (Heb. 11: 8; Gen. 18; 19; 22: 12-18; 26: 1-5), and hence his children were entitled to no special privileges because they were his fleshly descendants.

If they will not obey God, as did their father, they must be cut off. In fact, their being the children of Abraham, with so great opportunities to know and to do God's will, instead of benefiting them, will sink them deeper into destruction, unless they repent and obey God. God was able to raise up of the stones at their feet children to Abraham. He was independent of them for servants or worshipers; but they were there, poor, lost sinners, and God in grace was ready to save them upon their repentance and obedience in baptism. When the Jews judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, the gospel was declared unto the Gentiles, and of other nations God raised up seed unto Abraham. (Gal. 3: 26-29.)

9. This destruction is near; the ax even now "lieth at the root of the trees," ready for the use of the woodman in cutting them down. Every one is responsible for his own life and sins. All are compared to trees; every tree that does not bring forth good fruit—fruit worthy of repentance—will be cut down and cast into the fire.

10-14. The multitudes asked him what they must do to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. He who had two coats must impart to him who had none; he who had meat must do likewise; the publican (taxgatherer) must exact no more than is due; and soldiers must do violence to none, accuse none falsely, and be contented with their



wages. He warned each against the peculiar temptations to which his position exposed him, and exhorted each to serve faithfully in his place. He instructed his disciples in other religious duties. (Matt. 9: 14; Luke 11: 1.)

15. The whole nation was in expectation that God would send them a wise deliverer who would free them from Roman bondage and gather together the scattered Jews into a kingdom of peace and prosperity in their own land. John's earnest, fervent preaching; his denunciation of sin; and the widespread influence of his work, caused the people to wonder in their hearts if he were not the Christ. The Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him if he were that prophet, and he said he was not, and told them who he was. (John 1: 19-28.)

16. John knew their thoughts, and answered that he was not the Christ by telling them that he baptized with water, but there was to come one mightier than he, the latchet of whose shoes he was not worthy to unloose, and that he would baptize them in the Holy Spirit and fire. Unloosing one's shoe latches was a humble service. Slaves among Jews, Greeks, and Romans put on, took off, and carried the shoes of their masters. It may have been done sometimes as a voluntary and humble service. John considered himself unworthy to do this for Jesus. He was "the friend of the bridegroom," and was happy to sustain that relationship to Jesus, and he said Christ must increase, while he must decrease. (John 3: 29, 30.) Christ overwhelmed their souls in the Holy Spirit, as John had baptized their bodies in water.

This came to pass on the day of Pentecost, just after Christ's ascension. (Acts 2), and at the household of Cornelius (Acts 10: 44-47; 11: 15). It seems clear from verse 17 and from the omission of the baptism of fire in the promise of Jesus when he was speaking to his disciples alone of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1: 4, 5) that burning the chaff with unquenchable fire is the baptism of fire.

17. Jesus came with the winnowing fan in his hand. This was a shovel with which the wheat and chaff together, after they had been tramped out by beasts, were thrown up before the wind, which blew out the chaff, while the wheat fell down of itself. Jesus came to the Jews as the seed of Abraham, the Son of God. Some accepted him, others rejected him. Those who accepted him were wheat, the rest were chaff and were destroyed. So at the end of the world the good (the wheat) will be gathered into the garner of eternal salvation, and the wicked (the chaff) will be burned in unquenchable fire, the baptism in fire.

Jesus is a great separator. He separated the traditions, the doctrines and commandments of men, from the word of God, the seed of the kingdom, and gave the world the pure gospel; he separated the church from the world; and he will separate at the judgment the good from the bad into their places of eternal abode.



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
What were John's food and raiment?  
What was his mission?  
Who was Tiberius?  
Who was Pontius Pilate?  
Name all the Herods mentioned in the New Testament.  
What does "tetrarch" mean?  
Where were Iturae, Trachonitis, and Abilene?  
Who were Annas and Caiaphas?  
How did the word of God come unto John?  
What was the "wilderness"?  
How old was John now?  
Where did he preach?  
What did he preach?  
What is "repentance"?  
What is "baptism"?  
What is meant by "baptism of repentance"?  
What was this for?  
Should we confess our own sins?  
Where is this prophecy found?  
What does it mean?  
7 What effect did John's preaching have?  
Who came to his baptism?  
What did he call them?  
What does "offspring of vipers" mean?  
How did it apply to the Jews?
- Should repentance be preached now?  
Why?  
What is "the wrath to come?"  
8 What did John tell them to do?  
What is meant by "fruits worthy of repentance?"  
Did being the fleshly descendants of Abraham benefit them?  
Why did God separate Abraham from his kindred?  
What is meant by raising up of the stones children unto Abraham?  
How may any or all be saved?  
9 What is meant by "even now the ax lieth at the root of the trees?"  
Tell all about it.  
10-14 What question did the multitudes ask?  
What did John tell each class to do?  
15 Whom did the nation expect?  
Was John he?  
16 How did John reply to their thoughts?  
What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?  
What is the baptism of fire?  
17 What is meant by this illustration?  
What and whom does Jesus separate?



## THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

When John was baptized the people (see Luke 3: 21), Jesus went from Nazareth to Galilee to the Jordan (about seventy-five or eighty miles) to be baptized of John—most likely to Bethabara (the house of the ford, or passage), or, as in the version used in preparing these lessons says, "to Bethany [which must have been a village whose site is now unknown] beyond the Jordan [on the eastern bank], where John was baptizing" (John 1: 28); for John baptized in the Jordan, and Jesus was baptized in that river. John knew Jesus, not as the Christ, but to be a good man, better than himself, and, therefore, at first declined to baptize him, saying: "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" John preached "the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins," and Jesus had no sins of which to repent and to be remitted. John recognized his own unworthiness in the presence of Jesus. All along he sought to honor Jesus. His mission was to prepare a people for him. Now Jesus demands baptism at his hands. He did not see the fitness in baptizing Jesus.

If remission of sins is the only reason for being baptized, there would have been no reason for baptizing Jesus; but there are other reasons. Jesus said: "Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matt. 3: 14, 15.) Then John baptized him. Evidently the greater was baptized by the less. Jesus came down from heaven to do God's will—all God's will. (John 6: 38.) Had he declined or refused to be baptized, as did the Pharisees and lawyers (Luke 7: 29, 30), he would have been disobedient to God and would not have fulfilled all righteousness. To do God's will, whatever it is, is to do righteousness. Since Jesus, the sinless Son of God, traveled so far to be baptized in obedience to God, should we not follow his example? "Thus [like me in this obedience] it becometh [is fitting and proper] us [others besides Jesus] to fulfill all righteousness." John also baptized that Christ might be made manifest unto Israel.

By the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus, John knew him to be the Son of God and Savior of men. John knew Jesus before this as a righteous and good man, but not as the Son of God and Messiah. (See John 1: 29-34.) Jesus was not baptized, then, into his priestly office. He was not a priest on earth. (See Heb. 7: 12-28; 8: 4.)

"Straightway coming up out of the water" after he was baptized, and Luke (3: 21) adds, "and praying," "he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him." "The Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, as a dove" (Luke 3: 22), "and it abode upon him" (John 1: 32). John saw this, and all present must have seen it. Jesus saw it and looked through the open heavens into the glory beyond, for "the heavens were opened unto him." (Matt. 3: 16.) Here he was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power. (Acts 10: 38.) He was full of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4: 1), and had the Spirit without measure (John 3: 30-36).

"And a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." All present must have heard this voice. On two other occasions God spoke aloud from heaven to Jesus—in Jerusalem (John 12: 20-36) and on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. 7: 5). It is most significant that God sent his Spirit upon Jesus and confessed him, before the world as his beloved Son when he was baptized. He acknowledges us as his children, and gives us his Spirit when we obey him. (Acts 2: 38; 5: 32.) "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Jesus Christ. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (Gal. 3: 26, 27.)



## LESSON IV—OCTOBER 22

**JESUS TEMPTED—Luke 4: 1-30. Print 4: 1-13**

LUKE 4. 1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led in the Spirit in the wilderness

2 during forty days, being tempted of the devil. And he did eat nothing in those days: and when they were completed, he hungered.

3 And the devil said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread.

4 And Jesus answered unto him, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone.

5 And he led him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him, To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them: for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If thou wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

9 And he led him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

10 for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to guard thee:

11 and,

On their hands they shall bear thee up,

Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.

13 And when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted. (Hebrews 2: 18.)

*Time*—Probably A.D. 27.

*Place*—The place of temptation was probably in the northern part of the wilderness of Judea.

*Persons*—Jesus, God, Satan, the angels; later, the disciples Jesus chose.

*Memory Verses*—Matthew 4: 10, 11.

*Devotional Reading*—Hebrews 4: 14 to 5: 10.

*Reference Material*—Philippians 2: 5-11; Hebrews 2: 14-18; 4: 14-16.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Oct. 16.—Jesus tempted.—Luke 4: 1-13. Tu.—The purpose of his temptations.—Heb. 2: 14-18. Wed.—A common temptation.—1 Tim. 6: 6-10. Th.—Overcoming temptation.—1 Cor. 10: 1-13. Fr.—The sources of temptation.—James 1: 12-18. Sat.—The secret of victory.—Rev. 3: 18-22. Su.—Jesus our high priest.—Heb. 4: 14-5: 10.

**INTRODUCTION**

It is impossible to learn all that God teaches on any given subject without studying all that the writers of the Bible say on that subject. Study all that Matthew, Mark, and Luke say on the temptation of Jesus, and we have the following lesson. Look out the quotations yourselves as they are made from any of these writers.

**EXPLANATORY NOTES****I. The Forty Days' Fast**

1, 2. After the baptism of Jesus, he "returned from the Jordan," and was driven immediately by the Spirit "into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil," and "was with the wild beasts." (Mark 1: 13.) In the beginning of the race, Adam was tempted, and fell; in the beginning of his great work of reclaiming the earth and redeeming the race, Christ was tempted and gained a triumphant victory. Christ



was doubtless tempted before. During the thirty years he spent at Nazareth he must have suffered different temptations; but now that he enters upon his public work, Satan renews these attacks with increased energy and force; he does all he can to thwart the purposes of God and to defeat Jesus in his mission of salvation. Besides, this temptation was a preparation for Jesus in the flesh for his great work as the Messiah; he must grapple with every difficulty and conquer every foe. He is not the Savior of men and cannot establish his spiritual kingdom if he yields in a single point or does not really overcome Satan in his subtlest and mightiest attacks; but, having overcome, he is ready to succor all who are tempted. The loyalty of every soul must be tried; and as one proves faithful, God commits to him greater trusts. Luke says: "During forty days, being tempted of the devil."

During all this time he endured temptation. The temptations are not specified, as below; but being in the flesh, with all the lusts and appetites of the flesh, he was tempted in all points as we are. He "fasted forty days and forty nights." "He did eat nothing." Moses fasted the same number of days twice (Ex. 24: 18; 34: 28); Elijah, once (1 Kings 19: 8). If Jesus had been miraculously sustained during this time, the effects of the fast would have been destroyed; but "he afterwards hungered." Any great grief, imminent danger, deep anxiety, mental excitement, or intense interest destroys for the time being the natural desire for food. (See Acts 27: 20-44.)

Fasting and prayer lift one above animal appetites into closer union and communion with God, and are means of gaining spiritual strength and power. (See Mark 9: 29; 2 Cor. 6: 3-19; 11: 16-33, especially verse 27.) Intensely interested in the greatest work the earth has ever witnessed; overwhelmed with its vast importance, in deep anxiety and constant prayer for strength and power to accomplish it; and undergoing the severe test, the fiery trials, and the great mental and spiritual strains to which the shrewd and mighty temptations of Satan subjected him, Christ's natural desire for food was suspended. In this mighty, unrelenting conflict he is most successful at absolutely every point. He resists triumphantly every attack of the subtle deceiver. The danger seemingly is past; the victory is his; and nature reacts and asserts its claims with powerful force, and he is hungry in the extreme of a gnawing, imperious appetite.

## II. The First Temptation

3. "If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread." The tempter watched his time. He withdrew only for a moment to change his tactics, to renew his energy, to increase his force, and to return to make his subtlest, most cruel, most severe, and most powerful assault in the time of Christ's greatest weakness. So he attacks us in our weakest places and moments—when we are weary, weak, nervous, sick, depressed in spirit, or disheartened. There are two points in this temptation: (1) To display his power in turning stones into bread, and (2) to satisfy his hunger—an appeal to his fleshly appetite. Christ's temptations were real and powerful. "If thou art the Son of God" suggests a doubt and a taunt.

Why should the Son of God hunger? "You are not he; if so, you could make bread of these stones." "Let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen." (Luke 23: 35.) "Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us." (Verse 39.) Jesus fed the multitudes and raised the dead, but he did not use his miraculous power to feed himself or to save himself from the cross. He and the apostles did not use their miraculous power for self-benefit or self-glorification.



To have done this would have thwarted his earthly mission. He came in the flesh to live as a human being among men, to suffer, to be tempted, to weep, to die. Satan appealed to a most imperious appetite (hunger), and did it in the subtlest way.

What wrong is there in eating bread when one is hungry, and when, too, one's power is displayed in making it? To eat wholesome food is not wrong within itself; it is necessary, and clothing and shelter are necessary; but "the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment." Jesus is here voluntarily as a man, and to have used miraculous power to sustain life would have made his humanity a mere appearance. God led the children of Israel into the wilderness to humble them, to prove them, whether they would trust and obey him or not; and while they knew not what they would eat, he fed them on manna. So the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted and approved.

4. Jesus was under God's protection, and God would feed him when he saw fit; hence he said to the devil: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (See Deut. 8: 3.) God could be trusted to sustain him. "Every word" of God means that all of God's will must be done, if it leads through hunger and poverty, to the cross and death; and God will sustain him who does it. The sword of the Spirit, the word of God—"the written word," as people sometimes say—is the only weapon Jesus used with which to defend himself. He at once quoted the scripture, saying: "It is written."

### III. The Second Temptation

The second temptation given by Matthew is the one of tempting or making trial of God; this is recorded as third by Luke, but is really the second. Hence verses 1-12 of this lesson will be studied next and before verses 5-8.

9-11. The devil then took Jesus into Jerusalem. "The holy city" was Jerusalem, and the pinnacle of the temple was some very high point of the building, overlooking, perhaps, a deep valley below. Again the doubt and taunt are repeated. To cast himself down without injury would show his power and gain the applause of the wondering multitudes. Love of applause and love of distinction are human passions. Thus he would open up a short way into the confidence of the Jewish nation and easily establish himself at once as their King. This would be a quicker and more desirable way than the patient, suffering, tearful, prayerful, self-denying way of the cross. This was a temptation. Jesus, in human tears, sweat, and blood, shrank from the cross and prayed God that the cup might pass; but in its dark shadow, as in the wilderness of temptation, his only desire was that God's will should be done. Since Jesus relied so implicitly upon the word of God, the devil quoted scripture to induce him to do wrong. He quoted Ps. 91: 11, 12, but left out an important line: "To keep thee in all thy ways." God will protect and keep those who walk in the way which he has appointed for them. Going where God says go is trusting him. Satan first tempted Jesus to distrust God, but now he tempts him to go to the extreme of rashly tempting him.

"The devil can cite scripture for his purpose.

An evil soul producing holy witness

Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,

A deadly apple rotten at the heart."



12. Jesus at once replied: "It is said," or "Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God." God's statements do not conflict; his word is always harmonious. He does not tell men what to do or what not to do, and then send the devil, or even angels, to them to countermand his directions. Jesus still relies implicitly upon the word of God as "it is written." So may we; it is always right.

#### IV. The Third Temptation

This is the last temptation at this time, and it is the mightiest. It has been called "Satan's masterpiece." In this he throws off the mask and acknowledges that he is "the prince of the world." From a lofty eminence—"an exceeding high mountain"—he spreads out before Jesus, "in a moment of time," "the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." Jesus sees all—the luxury and ease, the pomp and splendor, the bright crowns and dazzling glories; the wealth of the East, the culture and refinement of Greece, and the power and triumphant armies of Rome. Satan offers all this to Jesus, saying: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." "For it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it."

6, 7. "All this authority, and the glory of them. . . . It shall be thine." This was a great temptation. The love of worldly power and glory is one of the strongest, if not the strongest, human passions. Satan told no lie; all this has been delivered to him, and he is "the prince of the world." (John 14: 30.) It would have been no temptation to offer to Jesus that which Satan did not possess. Christ's "kingdom is not of this world." (John 18: 36.) "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ." (Rev. 11: 15.) Christ must rescue all from Satan. He did not dispute Satan's claim to these things. To reclaim them and to reign with God, Jesus must tread the thorny way alone; he must endure the cross and its shame; he must go through blood and the grave. If Jesus would give up this purpose and worship Satan (make him head and leader), then Satan would place Jesus on the throne without this self-denial and suffering.

8. Jesus feels the force of the temptation, but abhors the thought and repels the adversary with indignation, exclaiming: "Get thee hence, Satan ["Leave me, thou arch-enemy of God and men"]: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (See Deut. 6: 13.) Again Christ's defense is the word of God: "It is written." This is sufficient. God is Creator and Ruler of the universe, and to worship and serve him is man's only and greatest good; to turn from him is ruin forever. Satan has done his best. He has presented all his temptations—"the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life" (1 John 2: 16)—and he has presented them in his subtlest and most artful manner, and Jesus has resisted all. Satan recognized his defeat and "departed from him for a season."

When Jesus had fought off the devil, "angels came and ministered unto him." They came after the victory, not to fight his battles. In all probability, they brought him food and sympathy. Angels, indeed, have charge of him now. All must be tempted. (Matt. 18: 7.) All are tempted through their own lusts. (James 1: 13-15.) None are tempted above their ability to resist. (1 Cor. 10: 13.) Temptations prove all and strengthen all who resist. (James 1: 2-4.) "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."



## QUESTIONS

Give the subject.

Repeat the Memory Verse.

Repeat the Golden Text.

Give the time, place, and persons.

- 1, 2 How alone can we learn all that

God teaches on any subject?

What led Jesus into the wilderness?

Was he ever tempted before?

Why was he so tempted at this time?

Was he tempted through the forty days?

Was he miraculously sustained during this fast?

What will cause one to fast?

What benefit may be derived from fasting and prayer?

When did Jesus become hungry?

Why?

Why did Satan come to him just then?

When does Satan try us most sorely?

What is the first temptation?

How many points are there in it?

Why does Jesus not thus feed himself?

How does he defend himself?

Where is this scripture?

What does "every word . . . of God" mean?

How do we live by it?

What was the "holy city?"

- 9-11 What is "the pinnacle of the temple?"

What is the second temptation?

How does Satan try to persuade Jesus to yield?

What Scripture did Satan quote?

What part did he omit?

- 12 How does Jesus meet it?

Does God contradict himself?

- 5 What is the last temptation?

What does Jesus see?

- 6, 7 Does Satan lie in this?

Why is this a great temptation?

- 8 How does Jesus meet this one?

What is it to worship Satan?

What is it to worship God?

Why did Satan leave Jesus?

Who "ministered unto him?"

How?

How can we resist temptation?



## LESSON V—OCTOBER 29

**WORLD-WIDE PROHIBITION—WORLD'S TEMPER-  
ANCE SUNDAY—Isaiah 61: 1-9**

ISAIAH 61. 1 The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

2 to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

3 to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified.

4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and foreigners shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

6 But ye shall be named the priests of Jehovah; men shall call you the ministers of our God: ye shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

7 Instead of your shame ye shall have double; and instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their portion; therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be unto them.

8 For I, Jehovah, love justice, I hate robbery with iniquity; and I will give them their recompense in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

9 And their seed shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which Jehovah hath blessed.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people. (Proverbs 14: 34.)

*Time*—About B.C. 712.

*Place*—Jerusalem.

*Persons*—Isaiah and the Kingdom of Judah.

*Memory Verse*—Amos 5: 15.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 93.

*Reference Material*—Matthew 7: 15-20; Romans 14: 13.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Oct. 23.—A righteous nation.—Isa. 61: 1-9. Tu. Sin a national reproach.—Prov. 14: 28-35. Wed.—The true foundation.—Matt. 7: 15-27. Th.—National neglect.—Rom. 1: 18-23. Fr.—The nations tested.—Amos 6: 1-6. Sat.—The nations judged.—Matt. 25: 31-46. Su.—Jehovah reigneth.—Psa. 93.

**INTRODUCTION****I. Civil Law Not Necessary to Force Christians to Do Right**

The prohibition of everything which God forbids and the force of everything which he commands should be world-wide. One thing as much as another—war as much so as strong drink should be prohibited. Citizens of Christ's kingdom, or members of God's church, under the rule of the gospel, abstain from all intoxicating liquor and from engaging in carnal warfare because God forbids Christians engaging in such sins. But law is necessary to restrain evil doers from doing wrong and to compel them to do right. (See Rom. 13: 1-7; 1 Tim. 1: 8-11.)

**II. Isaiah**

Isaiah prophesied to Judah during the reigns of the kings mentioned in Isa. 1: 1. He belongs to this period of the national history. Isaiah liveth to an old age and was prophet for a long time. He must have been between eighty and ninety years of age when he died. Tradition says he was sawn asunder in the trunk of a tree



by Manasseh, king of Judah, to which reference is made in Heb. 11: 37. "Isaiah" means "Salvation of Jehovah." His wife and children, he says, were given to him for signs, and wonders in Israel. (See Isa. 7: 3; 8: 3, 18.) Isaiah sustained to the kings mentioned in Isa. 1: 1 that relationship which Elijah and Elisha did to the kings of Israel. Both kingdoms had never enjoyed so much wealth and prosperity since the days of Solomon. With this prosperity came luxury, ease, licentiousness, drunkenness, and immorality of all kinds: idolatry, oppression of the poor; vain confidence in man and corresponding lack of confidence in God; and with all this a perfunctory performance of religious ceremonies without the power. These sins rendered both Judah and Israel weak and exposed to the invasion of surrounding nations. "In those days [the reign of Joatham] Jehovah began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah," (2 Kings 15: 37; 16: 5, 6.) In the reign of Ahaz the Syrian smote him and carried a great multitude of captives to Damascus." The king of Israel, Pekah, also "slew in Judah a hundred and twenty thousand in one day, all of them valiant men; because they had forsaken Jehovah, the God of their fathers."

Pekah also "carried away captive . . . two hundred thousand women, sons and daughters" and took "much spoil;" but under the influence of Oded, "a prophet of Jehovah," those captives were clothed, fed and wintered, and brought (the weak and helpless ones on asses) to Jericho and sent home. (See 2 Chron. 28: 5-15.) The Philistines from the west invaded Judah. "For Jehovah brought Judah low because of Ahaz," etc. (2 Chron. 28: 18, 19.) The Syrians, too, invaded Judah (verses 20-24.) This gives some idea of the kingdom of Judah during the time of Isaiah's ministry and the importance of studying his prophecies in connection with these kings. He touched on the destiny of nations surrounding Judah and Israel, and foresaw, beyond the revolutions of kingdoms and the downfall of empires, the coming Savior whose work and kingdom should surpass all others. Our present lesson embraces a part of his work. Isaiah has been called the "gospel prophet," because he gives so many prophecies relating to Christ and his work. (See Isa. 7: 14, 15; 9: 6, 7; 11: 1-10; 35; 53.)

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Isaiah Foretells the Messiah and His Preaching

1. It is very clear from Luke 4: 18-21 that this prophecy refers to Christ, since Christ read this in the synagogue at Nazareth and declared without equivocation that it was fulfilled in him. Isaiah himself prophesied by the Spirit of Jehovah. (Isa. 48: 16.)

Isaiah foretold the captivity of Israel in Babylon, and the deliverance therefrom, but also the still grander deliverance from sin through Jesus and the greater blessings of his kingdom. Jesus was anointed "with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10: 38), and "with the oil of gladness above thy [his] fellows" (Heb. 1: 9), when he was baptized, and he had the Spirit without measure (John

3: 34). He was begotten of God, was the Son of God, and was endowed with wisdom by his divine nature in all his work from a child; but by the Holy Spirit he was enabled to perform miracles, and thereby convince the people that God sent him and was with him. He was also anointed to preach the gospel to the poor. This verse tells his mission upon the earth. God made provisions for the poor



and afflicted in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The poor must not be oppressed. Jews must lend to their poor brethren without interest, and the way we now treat the poor is a test of our Christianity. (Matt. 25: 31-46; Gal. 2: 10; James 1: 27.)

Jesus has taught us that we have the poor always with us, and our treatment of them is our treatment of him. Looking after the temporal wants and the salvation of the poor is so contrary to the spirit of the world that it was evidence to John the Baptist that Jesus was the Christ, because he preached the gospel to the poor. (Matt. 11: 5.) Christianity has done great things for the poor. We can see this when we compare the condition of the poor where Christianity is with that of the poor where it is not.

The gospel is printed, the Bible is published and sent without cost into every poor home in the land, and it is translated into the various languages and dialects of the earth and scattered "without money and without price." Schools all over Christian lands are open to the poor, where they can all learn to read, and, therefore, to read for themselves the word of God.

Colleges, public libraries, and art galleries are open to them. Asylums, hospitals, sanitariums, widows' and orphans' homes, houses of refuge, and various other benevolent institutions have been provided for the needy. There is not the case where Christianity is not known. These reflect the light of "the sun of righteousness" as the moon reflects that of the king of day. Were there no sun, there would be no light for the moon to reflect; were there no Christ, every continent would be the "dark continent." Much more remains to be done along this line in carrying out the glorious mission of the gospel, but all that has been accomplished has been done through the influence of Christianity.

Then Christ preaches the gospel to all the poor—to those who are humble or "poor in spirit" (Matt. 5: 3) and to poor sinners doomed to everlasting destruction, unless they repent. Christ is "the water of life" to the thirsty, "the bread of life" to the hungry, "the light of the world" to all who are in darkness, "the great Physician" and the "balm in Gilead" to the afflicted and to those who mourn. Hence he heals the broken-hearted—those who are broken down and overwhelmed with sorrow. How consoling, how healing, to the bleeding heart are the "precious and exceeding great promises" of Jesus! He preached deliverance to the captives of sin, of which deliverance from Babylon was a type. "Every one that committeth sin is the bond-servant of sin." (John 8: 34.)

All slaves of evil habits, of fleshly passions—like intemperance, worldly pride, and vanity—are set free by Jesus. Note what Christianity has done in the way of prison reforms and the freedom of literal slaves. Jesus opened the eyes of the literally blind, and Christianity has erected blind asylums and made books which the blind can read; but Jesus has opened the eyes of the ignorant and of the spiritually blind, pointing them to heaven and to the highest aims and hopes of true life. Jesus did all this while on earth, but what he did in person was only an earnest of what his church would afterwards accomplish in the same great work. Christianity to-day is known by its fruits

2. "The year of Jehovah's favor," or "the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4: 19), was the time when all this would be fulfilled. The Deliverer—and therefore, the deliverance—had come. He would save men from sin and eternal death. This was probably a reference to the Jewish year of jubilee. (Lev. 25: 8-17.) This year, to the



Jews, was full of great promises and blessings: the landed property went back to the owner who through poverty had to sell it, and the captive went free.

"And the day of vengeance of our God."

How great the meaning of "Our God," "Our Father," and the God and Father of our Lord and Savior!

That "day of vengeance has not yet come, but it would come to all the disobedient. (See Isa. 34: 8; 63: 4; 2 Thess. 1: 7-9.) Jesus afterwards proclaimed it in his solemn warning to the rebellious cities where he labored.

3. At Nazareth Jesus read no further than the two preceding verses, but closed the book and gave it to the attendant. God would "appoint unto them that mourn" joy instead of sorrow, as the context shows. There were those then who mourned, and there are those now in spiritual Israel who mourn. Isaiah 60: 20 speaks of the days of mourning coming to an end; and chapter 57: 18 says God will restore comfort to mourners. Jesus says: "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted."

Those in sorrow put on "mourning apparel, did not anoint themselves with oil (2 Sam. 14: 2), put ashes upon the head, and rent their garments. (2 Sam. 13: 19.) Instead of ashes upon the head, God would give them a "garland" of beauty; of mourning, "oil of joy," costly ointments used on occasions of festivity. (See Ps. 23: 5; Amos 6: 6); "for the spirit of heaviness and mourning apparel," the garments of praise.

Jesus said to his disciples in the awful night of his betrayal while they would soon weep and lament in sorrow their sorrow should be turned into joy. (John 16: 20.) Instead of being bowed down with grief, they should be trees of God's planting, strong and upright—"trees of righteousness." They would be strong in faith or in the truth, and such as would glorify God. (See Ps. 1.)

4. "And they shall build the old waste places," "raise up former desolations," "repair the waste cities," "desolations of many generations." What does this mean? "They," the people of God, should do this. Jerusalem and the cities of Judah which were long to lie in ruins would be rebuilt. Returning from Babylonian captivity the city was rebuilt, but that is not all. God declares that the tabernacle of David, "which is fallen down" shall be rebuilt, the breaches thereof closed, and "as in the days of old," that he would bring back the captivity his people Israel; that they shall build waste cities; and that he will bless them with abundant harvest. (Amos. 9: 11-15.). James (Acts 15: 16-18) plainly declares that this has been fulfilled in Jesus and his spiritual kingdom. The spiritual restoration, as well as the literal restoration from Babylon, embracing the Gentiles is meant, as is learned from Amos. This "restoration," Peter declares, is going on now, while Jesus occupies in heaven David's throne. (Acts 3: 19-21.) God spoke this "by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old." This "restoration" embraces that which the prophets have spoken not more. The remainder of Acts 3—verses 22-26, is proof of Peter's declaration. Christ has come as "that prophet and the restoration" has been going on among Jews and Gentiles since. (See Luke 1: 68-79—especially verses 69-73.)

5-6. Under these figures of material prosperity—strangers feeding their flocks, foreigners acting as plowmen and vine dressers—God's people shall be "named priests of Jehovah," shall be called "ministers of our God," shall "eat the wealth of the nations" (another figure



showing spiritual prosperity, and "beasts" themselves, as rejoicing "in their glory." Chapter 60: 5 says, "the wealth of the nations shall come into thee" and chapter 66: 12 says, "behold I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an ever-flowing stream." All Christians now are kings and priests and servants (ministers) unto God. (See 1 Pet. 2: 5, 9; Rev. 1: 6; 5: 10.)

7. "Ye shall receive double." This is another expression of increased blessings—a double portion. The Jews received their law when they came back from Babylon; hence they received it twice. Instead of shame and dishonor, or humility, they should rejoice in their position; returning from Babylon, in their land they should possess double, also "everlasting joy" should be upon them. (See Isa. 35: 10.) In the forgiveness of Jerusalem God said she had "received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins." (Isa. 40: 2.) To the "prisoners of hope" God says he will render "double." (Zech. 9: 12.)

8. Jehovah loves justice. He not only teaches his people to deal justly, with equity and righteousness, "but he is faithful and righteous to forgive" sins, and in his justice he will restore his people and give them "double" in their return from captivity. God also hates "robbery with iniquity." He not only reproveth and chastised his people for their sins, but he hated the robbery and iniquity practiced on his people by their enemies and would deliver his people and punish their enemies. So he said he would do to Sennacherib (Isa. 10: 12) and Nebuchadnezzar. (Jer. 27: 6, 7). God would make "an everlasting covenant with them" to do this.

9. "Their seed," or God's people, "shall be known among the nations" and all who see them "shall acknowledge them" as his people. They are all his children both Jews and Gentiles and compose one family, as there is one fold and one shepherd.



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
 Repeat the Golden Text.  
 Give the time, place, and persons.  
 Repeat the Memory Verse.  
 What should be prohibited and what protected the world over?  
 For whom and for what is civil law made?  
 What will Christians do anyway?  
 When did Isaiah prophesy?  
 How old must he have been?  
 What does his name mean?  
 For what were his wife and children given him?  
 How does tradition say he died?  
 What was the state of the material prosperity of both the kingdom of Israel and of Judah when Isaiah lived?  
 What morally?  
 What effect did these sins have on both kingdoms?  
 Whom did Jehovah begin to send against Judah on every side?  
 Beyond the revolution of kingdoms what did Isaiah see?  
 What prophet has Isaiah been called?  
 1 To whom does this prophecy refer?  
 What captivity did Isaiah foretell?  
 What Spirit did he and Christ have?  
 When and how was Jesus anointed?  
 To what extent did he have the Spirit?  
 What was he anointed to do?  
 What provision has God made for caring for the poor?  
 What was one proof of John the Baptist that Jesus was the Christ?  
 What provision has been made for the poor in spirit?  
 What does Christ do for the broken hearted?  
 What for the captives?  
 What is the worst captivity?  
 What does Christ do for the blind?  
 What is Christianity now doing for the blind?
- What is Christ doing for slaves of different kinds?  
 What is Christianity doing in various ways for all the afflicted of earth?  
 2 What is meant by "the favorable or "acceptable year of the Lord?"  
 What is "the day of vengeance?"  
 What is God to us?  
 3 How much of this prophecy did Jesus read at Nazareth?  
 What did he say in regard to its fulfillment?  
 What would God appoint for those who mourn?  
 What did those in sorrow do to show their sorrow?  
 Instead of ashes what would God give?  
 Quote John 16: 20.  
 What is meant by "trees of righteousness?"  
 4 What should be rebuilt, raised up, repaired, etc?  
 When was "the tabernacle of David" rebuilt and set up?  
 When was this spiritual restoration begun?  
 What does "the restoration" spoken of by Peter embrace?  
 How does Peter prove that it is going on now?  
 5, 6 What do these declarations of material prosperity show?  
 What shall God's people be called and what are they now?  
 What is meant by eating "the wealth of the nations?"  
 In what will God's people boast or rejoice?  
 7 What is meant by receiving double?  
 Instead of shame and dishonor, what should they have?  
 As to their sins, what should they receive?  
 8 What does Jehovah love and what hate?  
 What in his justice would he do?  
 How does he use and punish wicked nations?  
 9 Who are the seed of God?  
 What will all do who see them?



## LESSON VI—NOVEMBER 5

**JESUS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN—Luke 4: 31-5: 39. Print  
5: 17-26**

LUKE 5. 17 And it came to pass on one of those days, that he was teaching; and there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who were come out of every village of Galilee and Judaea and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was with him to heal.

18 And behold, men bring on a bed a man that was palsied: and they sought to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

19 And not finding by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went up to the housetop, and let him down through the tiles with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

20 And seeing their faith, he said, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

22 But Jesus perceiving their reasonings, answered and said unto them, Why reason ye in your hearts?

23 Which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk?

24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he said unto him that was palsied), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thy house.

25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his house, glorifying God.

26 And amazement took hold on all, and they glorified God; and they were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things today.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases. Matthew 8: 17.

*Time*—A. D. 28, probably in the summer.

*Place*—A private house in Capernaum.

*Persons*—Jesus, the paralytic, those who bore him, and the audience.

*Memory Verse*—Luke 5: 20.

*Devotional Reading*—Isaiah 63: 7-14.

*Reference Material*—Matthew 9: 35-38; Mark 1: 21-45.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Oct. 30.—Jesus the Great Physician.—Luke 5: 17-26. Tu.—Jesus' healing foretold.—Isa. 61: 1-6. Wed.—Power over unclean spirits.—Luke 4: 31-37. Th.—The healer at work.—Mark 1: 29-38. Fr.—Teaching, preaching, healing.—Matt. 4: 23-25. Sat.—Praying for the sick.—James 5: 13-18. Su.—God our Savior.—Isa. 63: 7-14.

**INTRODUCTION****I. Jesus in the Home**

After a preaching tour through all Galilee, Jesus "entered again into Capernaum after some days"—that is, when the excitement created over his many miracles of healing and casting out demons had quieted down. We have already seen that he could not enter into the city, but remained "without in desert places." (Mark 1: 45.) He now entered quietly into Capernaum, for "it was noised [or reported, rumored] that he was in the house." The margin says "at home." Jesus had no home of his own (Matt. 8: 20); but dwelt in Capernaum (Matt. 4: 13) in a house occupied by some friend, probably Peter (Mark 1: 29), as at Bethany his home was with Lazarus and his sisters. How can we now have Jesus in our homes? What a blessing to have him make his home with us! If our hearts are clean and pure, Christ will delight to dwell in them. We can tell how we would treat Christ, if he were here on earth as he was then, by the way we treat the poorest, humblest, and weakest of his disciples. (Matt. 25: 31-46.)



## II. Oriental Houses

It is said that "in order to understand the story that follows, it is necessary to have a clear idea of an Oriental house. The houses are usually one story, with a flat roof and outside stairs to the roof; for during the heat of summer the family always sleep there. The rooms are large. A house of the better class consists generally of a blank wall facing the street, with a narrow doorway in the center, opening into a courtyard, to which there is no other access. Around three sides of this square are attached chambers—sometimes wholly or partially inclosed, sometimes with only pillars supporting the roof, between which curtains may be hung. The principal, or reception, room is on the side facing the entrance. At the farther end of it, against the wall, runs a raised dais, with a few cushions. Besides these, and perhaps a few scraps of carpet, there is rarely any furniture. The poorer houses have no upper story; but whether there is an upper story or not, the roof is invariably flat, covered with earth and lime, whitewashed, and frequently pressed down by the use of stone rollers." This house was covered with "tiles." (Luke 5: 19.) The flat roof was furnished with battlements around the edge (Deut. 22: 8; Judg. 16: 27; 2 Sam. 11: 2) to prevent people from falling off.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Reaching Jesus

17. As soon as it was understood that Jesus was in the house, great crowds gathered to see and to hear him; "so there was no longer room for them, no, not even about the door." The room was full, the court was full, and the narrow street into which the gate opened was full. Among the crowds were "Pharisees and doctors of the law" (scribes), who had "come out of every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem," attracted by his fame and to inquire into these new and strange things which were taking place. "And he spake the word unto them"—the word of God, "the gospel of the kingdom of God." "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4: 17.) With this compare Acts 4: 4; 13: 5; 14: 7, 21; 15: 7, 35; 18: 11; 2 Tim. 4: 1. The pure gospel which heals the sin-sick soul, is the only thing worthy to be preached to dying audiences.

18. A man with the palsy was carried to Jesus. "Palsy" is a contraction of "paralysis," and then included more than what we now call "paralysis." It then included catalepsy (cramps) and tetanus (lockjaw). This poor paralytic could not walk, but four kind friends bore him in arms of love to Jesus.

19. When they approached the house, they could not reach Jesus—"could not come nigh unto him for the crowd." The street about the door being full, they could not reach the door. Finding no other way to reach Jesus, they ascended the outside stairs to the roof, and broke it up, or dug through it, and let down the sick man on his bed in the midst of the crowd before Jesus. It was not very difficult to lower him through the low, flat roof. If any damage was done to the roof, it could easily be repaired. The one important thing was to reach Jesus.

### II. Faith Without Works is Dead

20. "Their faith" means the faith of the five persons—the paralytic and the four who bore him. "Jesus seeing their faith." Then their faith could be seen. It was seen in their efforts to get into the presence of Jesus. They overcame difficulties. They had all confidence in Christ's power to heal if they could get to him, and they mani-



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
What did Jesus do early the next morning after the events of our last lesson?  
Why was it necessary for him to pray?  
What did his disciples say when they found him?  
What reply did he make?  
Tell where he went and what he did.  
Tell what is meant by "offer for thy cleansing?"  
Why did he remain without the city?  
What does Christianity do for people?  
Whose house was this?  
How would we treat Jesus?  
Describe the houses of that country.
- 17 Who came to hear Jesus?  
Who were among the crowd?  
What did Jesus preach?  
18 Who was brought to Jesus?  
What is "palsy?"
- How was the palsied man brought?  
19 How did they reach Jesus?  
20 How could he see "their faith?"  
How must faith be shown now?  
What did he say to the sick man?  
21 Who were the scribes?  
What did the scribes say?  
How did they say this?  
Who were the last to obey Christ?  
Why did they say Jesus blasphemed?  
22 In what way did Jesus show his divinity?  
23 What did he say in answer to the questions of the scribes?  
What does that mean?  
What did he say to the sick man?  
24 What does this show?  
How could it show he had power to forgive sins?  
25 What did the man do?  
How?  
What did the people say?  
Did they become disciples of Jesus?  
What does Mark 2: 13-22 relate?



## II. Oriental Houses

It is said that "in order to understand the story that follows, it is necessary to have a clear idea of an Oriental house. The houses are usually one story, with a flat roof and outside stairs to the roof; for during the heat of summer the family always sleep there. The rooms are large. A house of the better class consists generally of a blank wall facing the street, with a narrow doorway in the center, opening into a courtyard, to which there is no other access. Around three sides of this square are attached chambers—sometimes wholly or partially inclosed, sometimes with only pillars supporting the roof, between which curtains may be hung. The principal, or reception, room is on the side facing the entrance. At the farther end of it, against the wall, runs a raised dais, with a few cushions. Besides these, and perhaps a few scraps of carpet, there is rarely any furniture. The poorer houses have no upper story; but whether there is an upper story or not, the roof is invariably flat, covered with earth and lime, whitewashed, and frequently pressed down by the use of stone rollers." This house was covered with "tiles." (Luke 5: 19.) The flat roof was furnished with battlements around the edge (Deut. 22: 8; Judg. 16: 27; 2 Sam. 11: 2) to prevent people from falling off.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Reaching Jesus

17. As soon as it was understood that Jesus was in the house, great crowds gathered to see and to hear him; "so there was no longer room for them, no, not even about the door." The room was full, the court was full, and the narrow street into which the gate opened was full. Among the crowds were "Pharisees and doctors of the law" (scribes), who had "come out of every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem," attracted by his fame and to inquire into these new and strange things which were taking place. "And he spake the word unto them"—the word of God, "the gospel of the kingdom of God." "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4: 17.) With this compare Acts 4: 4; 13: 5; 14: 7, 21; 15: 7, 35; 18: 11; 2 Tim. 4: 1. The pure gospel which heals the sin-sick soul, is the only thing worthy to be preached to dying audiences.

18. A man with the palsy was carried to Jesus. "Palsy" is a contraction of "paralysis," and then included more than what we now call "paralysis." It then included catalepsy (cramps) and tetanus (lockjaw). This poor paralytic could not walk, but four kind friends bore him in arms of love to Jesus.

19. When they approached the house, they could not reach Jesus—"could not come nigh unto him for the crowd." The street about the door being full, they could not reach the door. Finding no other way to reach Jesus, they ascended the outside stairs to the roof, and broke it up, or dug through it, and let down the sick man on his bed in the midst of the crowd before Jesus. It was not very difficult to lower him through the low, flat roof. If any damage was done to the roof, it could easily be repaired. The one important thing was to reach Jesus.

### II. Faith Without Works is Dead

20. "Their faith" means the faith of the five persons—the paralytic and the four who bore him. "Jesus seeing their faith." Then their faith could be seen. It was seen in their efforts to get into the presence of Jesus. They overcame difficulties. They had all confidence in Christ's power to heal if they could get to him, and they mani-



fested strong faith in surmounting all difficulties which lay in their way. "Faith apart from works is barren." (See James 2: 14-26.) This principle of God's dealing with men runs through the whole Bible. Heb. 11 is an illustration of this. Of the long worthy list of the faithful enumerated in that chapter, all did something by faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into as marching around the walls of Jericho, that act by faith must be performed. (Heb. 11: 30.) By faith the bitten Israelites looked upon the brazen serpent and were healed. (Num. 21: 9.)

They could not have been healed by looking up a tree or in not looking at all. Their faith must be expressed in the specific act that God required. There was no such act required during Christ's personal ministry on earth in order to be healed or pardoned. Hence any manifestation of faith in an earnest effort to reach Jesus was acceptable—for instance, touching the hem of his garment (Matt. 9: 20-22; 14: 34-36), or anointing him with ointment and kissing his feet and washing them in tears of humility and penitence (Luke 7: 36-50), or as in this lesson. But faith which did not lead to action did not lead to the blessing. Just before he ascended to heaven Christ ordained certain specific acts in which faith in him is expressed.

In partaking of the Lord's Supper, faith in the body and blood of Jesus is shown and his death is proclaimed (1 Cor. 11: 26), and in baptism is manifested "faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead" (Col. 2: 12.). This faith is not manifested in performing some other acts or in doing nothing at all. To be pardoned now, Jesus has ordained that people must believe in him, repent of all their sins, and be baptized in his name. (Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 44-48; Acts 2: 36-41.) "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (Gal. 3: 26, 27.)

Faith, trust, and confidence in Christ always lead one to do just what Christ demands. Faith never does less or more than God requires. Such is not faith. In disobedience to God, one cannot be saved by faith. People fail to obey God's specific requirements, not because of their great faith, but because of their lack of faith. Faith takes God at his word. Jesus, full of tenderness and compassion, kindly said: "Son, thy sins are forgiven." He healed him and forgave his sins.

### III. Jesus Proves His Power to Forgive Sins

21. We have learned that the "scribes" were the teachers and the leaders of the people. They "began to reason." They did not speak openly; they remained silent; but, "reasoning in their hearts," they said: "Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, even God?" These leaders were naturally more unfavorable to Jesus than others. It is noteworthy that the priests were the last, as a class, to become "obedient to the faith." (Acts 6: 7.) These scribes were watching Jesus, ready to catch up the first thing they could against him. God alone can forgive sins. These scribes, then, were right in this. Therefore if Jesus be not what he claims for himself, he does blaspheme; for it is blasphemy for a mere man to arrogate to himself the prerogatives and power of God. But Jesus is the Son of God.

22. That he is more than human and has power to forgive sins he proves to them by declaring their thoughts before they had been expressed. Hence he asks: "Why reason ye these things in your



hearts?" More than once he showed his power to read the hearts of men. So now he replies to no open speech, but to the question of their hearts by asking another question.

23. "Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?" To divine power one is as easy to do as the other or as difficult to do as the other; but to men it would seem easier to say, "Thy sins are forgiven," because no visible results could test the saying. Should he say the other and the sick man could not arise, he would be covered with defeat and shame. Hence he proposed to demonstrate his authority to do the former by doing the latter. Healing bodily infirmities and forgiving sins were not necessarily equal to each other. One might be healed and not forgiven or forgiven and not healed. Bodily ailments may be the result of sin, and yet healing and forgiving not be the same. If he could heal the paralytic, he was more than a mere man and God was with him. No man could do these things "except God be with him." (John 3: 2.) This was admitted by a ruler himself. If God was with him, he was divine and was correct in his claim to have authority to forgive sins. Jesus is our only Savior; repentance and remission of sins are preached in his name among all nations, (Luke 24: 46, 47); and there is no "other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." (Acts 4: 12.)

24. Therefore he proposed to demonstrate the matter just then by commanding the poor, helpless, palsied man, who could not walk, to arise, take up his bed, and go home. By doing this, which all could see, he showed his power—his authority—to do that which they could not see, to forgive sins. (See also Matt. 28: 18.) God gave to him this authority. "The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me." (John 10: 25.) "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." (Verses 37, 38.) He calls himself "the Son of man" because he was manifest in the flesh.

25. Before them all, at the command of Jesus, the sick man arose immediately and went forth. The stiff and shrunken limbs became at once alive and supple again, and the vigor and elasticity of youth returned. Making the effort through faith in Jesus, he received strength to arise and walk. That great audience was amazed, and no wonder. Nothing like this had been seen before: hence they admitted: "We never saw it on this fashion." They "glorified God"—gave him the praise and honor of healing the paralytic. Yet how soon this applauding multitude is to turn from Jesus and see him crucified, if not to help to do it, for they did not become his disciples? See the woes he pronounces upon Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum for not repenting. (Matt. 11: 20-24.) Mark 2: 13-22 relates the call of Matthew and the feast he made for Jesus.



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
 Repeat the Golden Text.  
 Give the time, place, and persons.  
 What did Jesus do early the next morning after the events of our last lesson?  
 Why was it necessary for him to pray?  
 What did his disciples say when they found him?  
 What reply did he make?  
 Tell where he went and what he did.  
 Tell what is meant by "offer for thy cleansing?"  
 Why did he remain without the city?  
 What does Christianity do for people?  
 Whose house was this?  
 How would we treat Jesus?  
 Describe the houses of that country.
- 17 Who came to hear Jesus?  
 Who were among the crowd?  
 What did Jesus preach?
  - 18 Who was brought to Jesus?  
 What is "palsy?"
  - How was the palsied man brought?
  - 19 How did they reach Jesus?
  - 20 How could he see "their faith?"  
 How must faith be shown now?  
 What did he say to the sick man?
  - 21 Who were the scribes?  
 What did the scribes say?  
 How did they say this?  
 Who were the last to obey Christ?  
 Why did they say Jesus blasphemed?
  - 22 In what way did Jesus show his divinity?
  - 23 What did he say in answer to the questions of the scribes?  
 What does that mean?  
 What did he say to the sick man?
  - 24 What does this show?  
 How could it show he had power to forgive sins?
  - 25 What did the man do?  
 How?  
 What did the people say?  
 Did they become disciples of Jesus?
- What does Mark 2: 13-22 relate?



## LESSON VII—NOVEMBER 12

**JESUS THE GREAT TEACHER—Luke 6: 1-49. Print 6:****27-38**

LUKE 6. 27 But I say unto you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you,

28 bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you.

29 To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and from him that taketh thy cloak withhold not thy coat also.

30 Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32 And if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them.

33 And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same.

34 And if ye lend to them from whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? even sinners lend to sinners, to receive again as much.

45 But love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil.

36 Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

37 And judge not, and ye shall not be judged: and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: release, and ye shall be released:

38 give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. Luke 6: 31.

*Time*—A. D. 28.

*Place*—A level place in Galilee, where Jesus taught the people.

*Persons*—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitudes.

*Memory Verse*—John 4: 7.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 119: 9-16.

*Reference Material*—Matthew 5: 1-18; John 3: 2; 6: 68; 7: 46; Colossians 2: 3

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Nov. 6.—Jesus the great teacher.—Luke 6: 27-38. Tu.—Jesus teaches about happiness.—Matt. 5: 1-12. Wed.—Jesus teaches about influence.—Matt. 5: 13-16. Th.—Jesus teaches about love.—Matt. 5: 43-48. Fr.—Jesus teaches about prayer.—Matt. 6: 5-15. Sat.—Jesus teaches about true religion.—Matt. 7: 13-23. Su.—The great Teacher's text-book.—Psa. 119: 9-16.

**REMARKS ON THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

Matt. 5-7 contains what is called "the Sermon on the Mount." Luke 6 gives many of the same principles, and has been identified by some with the Sermon on the Mount. But "he went up into the mountain" and delivered the sermon recorded by Matthew, and "he came down with them, and stood on a level place" (Luke 6: 17), and delivered the one recorded by Luke. Luke (5: 17-39) records the healing of a leper, healing the paralytic, the call of Matthew and the feast at his house, and also the choosing of the twelve apostles before the sermon "on the level place;" while Matthew gives the healing, seemingly of the same leper, after the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 2: 1-14), and healing the paralytic, the call of Matthew and his feast, and choosing the twelve apostles, seemingly later on (Matt. 9 and 10). Matt. 4: 23 to 8: 4 seems to come in regular order, and corresponds to Mark 1: 38-45 and Luke 5: 12-17. The Sermon on the Mount is fuller than the one in Luke 6, and not in the same order. Luke gives other portions of his sermon in 11: 9-13;



13: 22-31. No doubt Jesus preached these same principles everywhere and to all people, not always in the same order or in exactly the same words; and it is more than probable that Matthew records the sermon delivered at one time and Luke at another. This is a much needed lesson because it teaches to love enemies as well as neighbors, and also what love is.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. The Law of Love

27. In Luke the contrast between the teaching which was formerly delivered to the Jews and the teaching of Jesus is not pointed out as it is in Matthew. Luke says: "Love your enemies." Matthew (5: 43, 44) says: "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you Love your enemies." Lev. 19: 18 teaches love for neighbors as for oneself. The parable of the good Samaritan shows who one's neighbor is and what it is to love him. (Luke 10: 25-37.) This is also shown in Rom. 13:8-10. "And hate thine enemy." This is nowhere found a precept of the law, but that which God had said to the children of Israel led them to consider it so taught. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," implies this. The Jews were forbidden to make any covenant with the Canaanites (Ex. 34: 11-16; Deut. 23: 6), their enemies. Jesus advanced upon the teaching of the law when he commands love for enemies. It is not impossible to love enemies, because God never requires impossibilities. Love, as a command is not a passion, but a principle of service. To love enemies is to treat them as God directs, "But if thine enemy hunger feed him; if he thirst, give to him drink. . . Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12: 20, 21.) Jesus, Stephen and Paul prayed for their enemies.

28. To bless instead of to curse is to love enemies; to pray for those who spitefully use one is to love them. This forbids retaliation and vengeance.

29. Instead of taking vengeance, Jesus says when one cheek is "smitten offer also the other." Christians are forbidden to take vengeance in any way. "Render to no man evil for evil . . . Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. (Rom. 12: 17-19.) The "cloak" was the outer garment and the "coat" the inner garment. Instead of taking vengeance even when oppressed and the cloak is unjustly taken by law, let the coat go also. Christians must suffer wrong rather than do wrong. (1 Cor. 6: 7.)

### II. Give to Every One

30. Instead of taking vengeance, Jesus' disciples must "give to every one" who asks of them, and of him who takes away their goods they must not ask them again. This does not forbid such self-protection as Paul sought when he claimed the rights of a Roman citizen (Acts 16: 37; 22: 25-29) and appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:11); but it does forbid vengeance, and teaches that Christians should endure wrong rather than to do wrong.

### III. The Golden Rule

31. This has been called the "Golden Rule," not because it brings one under the rule of gold, but, like "the golden age" of a kingdom, this rule is so excellent that it is compared to the most precious



metal. There is a very great difference between the Golden Rule and the rule of gold. The Golden Rule lifts men high above selfishness and leads them from the worship of gold to loving service of men and the worship of God. According to this, no man can cheat, defraud, wrong, oppress, or rob others. It is loving your neighbor as yourself; it is rendering to all their dues and owing "no man anything, save to love one another." (Rom. 13: 7, 8.) It is the "royal law." (James 2: 8.) Jesus sums up in this one rule all duties man owes to his fellow-men. He adds in Matt. 7: 12: "For this is the law and the prophets." All that is required in "the law and the prophets" as regards man's duties to others is embraced in this command. This is the way to love men; it is love itself. "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law." (Rom. 13: 9, 10.)

In all conditions, circumstances, trades, transactions, and associations with others, Jesus means for us to live daily by this rule. He does not mean that we are to do for people what, in their selfishness, greediness, sensuality, and foolish wishes, they may ask of us, but that which, in justice, righteousness, mercy, and love, we would have them do to us were we in their place and they in ours. This rule works two ways: We are not only not to injure others in any way, but to really do something for them—to do unto them as we would have them do unto us. It also requires of us not to demand more of others than we are willing to give under similar circumstances. Some people are exacting, but are quite unwilling to do the same themselves. This rule is active; it is something to be and do. Many do not kill, do not steal, do not commit adultery, do not bear false witness; and, on the other hand, they do not do what the Lord says they must do. On the positive, active, aggressive side of Christianity many fail.

#### IV. Christians Must Do More Than Sinners

32-34. "And if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye?" To love those who love you is human and easily done. Aside from the Bible, the highest conception the world has of right is to love those who love you and hate those who hate you. Many who profess to be Christians do but little, if any, better than that now. "For even sinners love those that love them." The force of Jesus' statement is that those considered the worst and most depraved loved their friends and hated their enemies, and his disciples must do better than these. Doing good to those who do good to you and lending to those who lend in turn to you are practiced by sinners, or by any of the people of the world; but Christ's disciples must do more than that.

35. In contrast with the practices of sinners, Jesus adds: "But love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, never despairing." His disciples must not grow weary in well doing; and if they do not, their reward will "be great" and they will be "sons of the Most High." Loving enemies is essential to being children of God; for he loves his enemies, and those who do not love their enemies are unlike him. God shows his love for his enemies by sending sunshine and rain upon the evil and unjust. All who live in sin are God's enemies. "God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5: 8.)



36. Since God is merciful, his children must be merciful. To be merciful is to treat an offender better than he deserves, to forgive when punishment or penalty could be exacted; also to carry relief, to show kindness, and to extend pity to the needy and suffering. Those who are full of mercy will obtain mercy from men and God.

### V. Judge Not

37-38. "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged." Judging is the opposite of showing mercy. To know men by their fruits is not forbidden. (See Matt. 7: 15-20; 2 Thess. 3: 6-15; Rom. 16: 17, 18; 1 Cor. 5: 2, 12.) This is not judging men. Unjust, unfair judgment and harsh criticism, in which many indulge, is here forbidden. It is wrong to form opinions, to draw conclusions, and to pass sentence upon any one before knowing the facts. It is quite sinful to impugn motives or to condemn without giving all the charges an impartial and careful examination. Partiality is prohibited. (James 2: 1-13.) Such judges have "evil thoughts." Fault-finding, ill will, and rash judgment are condemned.

Judging others according to one's own impure motives and wrong intentions is very unchristian. "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (John 7: 24.) "Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man." (John 8: 15.) True, God "will render to every man according to his own works;" but one's deeds are good or bad as they are in obedience or disobedience to the will of God. (Rom. 2: 6-11; John 12: 47-50.) It is wrong to condemn others for what one practices himself. "Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practice the same things.

"And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practice such things. And reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest them that practice such things, and does the same, that thou shall escape the judgment of God?" (Rom. 2: 1-3.) "Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law; but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

"One only is the lawgiver and judge, even who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbor?" (James 4: 11, 12.) "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling." (Rom. 14: 13.) We should all be glad that God, and not man, is our judge. Such are man's preferences, prejudices, partiality, and blindness that he would consign to perdition many whom God will save, and permit others to enter heaven who in character and life are fitted only for perdition. "That ye be not judged" is the promise based upon obedience to the command, "Judge not."

Gentleness, kindness, mercy, forbearance, forgiveness, patience with others, and love bring one into favor with God and men. It is stated as a fact that men will receive the judgment they pass upon others, for God "will render to every man according to his works." "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." "For judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment." (James 2: 13.) "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if



ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. 6: 14, 15; see especially Matt. 18: 23-25.)

As a rule, too, according to their judgment of others, people will be judged by their fellow-men, and justly so. One who thinks everybody is a thief will bear watching himself. The Pharisees were of the devil (John 8: 44), and accused Jesus, therefore, of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils; and in reply to his accusation Jesus said: "Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?" (Matt. 12: 34.) Fault-finding, censuring, harshly criticising, and picking flaws in everybody and everything will soon react upon those who do such things. "So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai." (Esth. 7: 10.) "He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it." (Eccles. 10: 8; see Luke 6: 36-38.) It is a law running through all the government of God, spiritual as well as natural, that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6: 7.)

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Did you read all the references?  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Memory Verses.  
Give the reasons why you think the Sermon on the Mount and the one in Luke 6 were not delivered at the same time.  
Why is this called "the law of love?"
- 27 What contrast does Jesus in Luke not point out which he does in Matthew.  
To what teachings of the law does Jesus refer in Matt. 5: 43, 44?  
Who is one's neighbor?  
Why did the Jews infer that the law taught them to hate their enemies?  
Whom does Jesus teach his disciples to love?  
Why is it possible to do this?
- 28 What is it to love enemies?  
What does this verse forbid?
- 29 When smitten on one cheek, what should be done?  
To whom does vengeance belong?  
What lesson is taught by the cloak and the coat?
- 30 To whom must we give?  
What does this not forbid?
- 31 Why has this been called the "Golden Rule?"  
From what and to what does it lead men?  
What does it embrace?  
What does Rom. 13: 8-10 say about our duties to others and love?  
In what ways does this rule work actively?
- 32-34 When do we deserve thanks for loving?  
What classes love friends and hate enemies?
- 35 Why should Christians not despair in loving enemies?  
What is essential to being sons of God?  
How does he commend his love to us?
- 36 Why are children of God merciful?
- 37, 38 How are we to know false prophets and other bad men?  
How can the church know from whom to withdraw?  
What is condemned, then, by "judge not?" (Let the teacher see that all these references are discussed.)  
What blessings have those who judge not?  
What will befall those who judge?



## LESSON VIII—NOVEMBER 19

**JESUS THE FRIEND OF SINNERS—Luke 7: 1-50. Print  
7: 37-48**

LUKE 7. 37 And behold, a woman who was in the city, a sinner; and when she knew that he was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster cruse of ointment,

38 and standing behind at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee that had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have something to say unto thee. And he saith, Teacher, say on.

41 A certain lender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred shillings, and the other fifty.

42 When they had not *wherewith* to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath wetted my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, *the same loveth little.*

48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—"Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (Tim. 1: 15.)

*Time*—A. D. 28.

*Place*—Most probably Capernaum.

*Persons*—A Pharisee named Simon, Jesus, the sinful woman, and the guests.

*Memory Verse*—Luke 7: 35.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 51: 1-10.

*Reference Material*—Luke 15: 1-32.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Nov. 13.—Jesus the friend of sinners.—Luke 7: 37-48. Tu.—He came to seek and to save.—Luke 19: 1-10. Wed.—The lost sheep.—Luke 15: 1-7. Th.—The erring son.—Luke 15: 11-32. Fr.—"All have sinned."—Rom. 3: 19-23. Sat.—Jesus saves.—Rom. 8: 1-11. Su.—A prayer for pardon.—Psa. 51: 1-10.

**INTRODUCTION****I. The Character of This Lesson****II. Two Classes of Sinners**

This lesson is a beautiful and touching illustration of the mercy and love of Jesus. He is always tender with the erring and unfortunate when they seek salvation and better life. This was demonstrated at Jacob's well (John 4: 1-42) and at Jerusalem when the Pharisees carried a similar character to him, (John 8: 1-11). None have descended so low in shame and immorality as to go beyond the reach of Jesus' mercy and love when they are willing to forsake sin and return to God.

In this lesson, as at the feast in Matthew's house (Mark 2: 13-17), in John 8: 1-11, and in other scriptures, there are placed before us two distinct classes of sinners: (1) The Phari-



sees—proud, haughty, self-confident, self-righteous, and hypocritical (2) The immoral—those who in sin through the impulses and appetites of the flesh. Jesus was ready and anxious to save all Pharisees who would come to him, but they would not come. They were zealously religious, and went about to establish their own righteousness (Rom. 10: 1-3); yet their worship was vain, because they rejected the commandments of God in order to keep their own traditions (Mark 7: 1-15). They prayed, fasted, gave alms, and made broad the phylacteries of their garments to be seen of men. Their "theology," self-righteousness, and hypocrisy blinded them to the truth. In the most withering and scathing terms Jesus exposes and denounces them in Matt. 23.

As this lesson and other facts demonstrate, publicans and harlots went into the kingdom of God before the Pharisees (Matt. 21: 31, 32), because publicans and harlots in humility and penitence confessed their sins and obeyed God. The Pharisees were very punctilious in observing many religious forms and ceremonies and in standing aloof from those called "sinners;" yet they crucified the Son of God. There can be no greater sinners than this class. Stubbornness and rebellion are the highest crimes against God's government.

These are the great sins, because the stubborn, rebellious, self-righteous, and self-sufficient, although they may be scrupulously moral, cannot be reached by the simple, plain gospel of Christ. Such characters will not submit to God. God cannot save the immoral in their sins, but immoralities spring from fleshly impulses and not from stubborn and rebellious wills; hence the immoral are more easily moved by the gospel to repentance and better life. It is possible to be both immoral and rebellious, impenitent and stubborn.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Jesus Accepts an Invitation to Dine With a Pharisee

36. We do not know who this Pharisee was, except his name was "Simon." (Verses 40, 44.) "Simon" was the name of several different persons mentioned in the New Testament. Many of the Pharisees were not yet so decided against Jesus as to refuse to hear him. This one wanted to hear him, and invited him to his house. There is no evidence that he ever did more than this. He would have to become much better than this lesson leaves him to become a disciple of Jesus. Jesus accepted the invitations alike to eat with publicans and Pharisees, always with the purpose to honor God and to teach men. (See Luke 11: 37; 14: 1; 5: 27-35; John 2: 1-11; 12: 1-11.) He "sat down to meat," or reclined on his left elbow toward the table, with his feet stretched out behind him, according to the custom.

### II. The Sinful Woman Anointed Jesus' Feet

37. "Behold, a woman, . . . a sinner. This woman was not an invited guest, but came in while the guests were at the table. This was no violation of custom or rules of politeness. It was customary for strangers to pass in and out of the house during a meal if they desired to speak to any of the guests. During Matthew's feast the Pharisees and disciples of John the Baptist went in to talk with Jesus. This woman was a "sinner;" so was Simon; but she was a recognized "sinner." She was an unchaste woman. She lived in the city, which was probably Capernaum. She had heard of the mercy and compassion of Jesus before, as the expression, "when she knew" Jesus was in Simon's house, shows.



She sought him there. Probably she had heard his "woes" against the wicked cities about there and his gracious invitation to those who labor and are heavy laden to come to him for rest and peace. There was no mercy and rest for her among the people generally. This was her only hope, but it was a bright one; her only way of escape, but it was a safe one. "Alabaster" is a kind of stone out of which were carved cruses, ornamental vases, etc. (See Smith's Bible Dictionary or any encyclopedia.) It was considered the best material in which to preserve ointments.

This woman "brought an alabaster cruse of ointment." On quite a different occasion and just before his death, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, at a supper in the house of Simon the leper, anointed the head and feet of Jesus with a costly ointment of spikenard from an alabaster cruse. (Matt. 26: 6-13; Mark 14: 3-9; John 11: 2; 12: 1-8.)

38. This woman could easily stand at Jesus' feet behind while he reclined at the table. The word of which "standing" is a translation means primarily to place, to put, to take position. This woman took a position behind Jesus—not upon her feet, for then she could not have wiped his feet with her hair or kissed them. She was doubtless on her knees with her head bowed to his feet. Behold the picture! She was "weeping," and her profuse tears "wet" the Savior's feet. They were tears of penitence sweetened with the hope of mercy. Having no towel, she loosened her hair and wiped the travel-stained, tear-washed feet with it. Then in humility and reverence she kissed them, and in respect and love anointed them with ointment. Simon, in self-righteousness, drew back from pollution. It is no wonder so many artists have endeavored to put this on canvas.

### III. Jesus' Reply to Simon's Thoughts

39. Luke (15: 2) says: "And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, 'This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.'" It was contrary to their ideas of sanctity to receive "publicans and sinners." In their estimation "publicans and sinners" were worse than Gentiles, and it was "an unlawful thing for . . . a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation" or to eat with him. (Acts 10: 28; 11: 3.) Simon thought Jesus should maintain this ceremonial sanctity and separation from "sinners." Therefore "he spake within himself," etc. He did not express his thoughts, but he reached the conclusion that Jesus was not a prophet. If so, Jesus would know what manner of woman touched him; and if he knew, he would not allow her to do so.

40. But according to Simon's own standard, Jesus was not a prophet, because he knew Simon's unexpressed thoughts and replied to them. Jesus knew both Simon and the woman.

41, 42. Jesus made the reply of these verses to Simon's thoughts. "Five hundred shillings," (see the margin of the version used in preparing these lessons) are equal to about eighty-five dollars; fifty shillings, to about eight dollars and fifty cents. Both "debtors" were insolvent and helpless, and their creditor freely forgave them. The "lender" represents God; the "debtors" are men, and their sins are their debts. All are insolvent. One sin, however small, as well as ten thousand, must be forgiven. God alone can forgive, and without forgiveness there is no salvation; but God freely forgives all, the small and the great. If Simon was conscious of any sins in himself, in his own estimation they were small. He certainly realized no need of pardoning mercy, although we know the enormity of his



sins. This poor, unfortunate woman is the larger debtor—not that she is really a greater sinner than Simon, but he thinks so, and she feels much more keenly her sense of guilt and shame and her great need of pardon. Which had the greater reason for loving much?

43. Simon could appreciate the forgiveness of a money debt, and answered correctly: "He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most."

#### IV. The Application—The Woman Saved

44. Jesus made the application. He pointed Simon to the woman, turning to her, but looking at Simon. This was a severe rebuke to Simon. In his own house was the proper place to treat Jesus cordially, and where he had every opportunity for expressions of honor and love; but he did not even wash Christ's feet. The feet were shod with sandals and were dusty with travel, and it was hospitable and refreshing to wash them. On this act of hospitality read the following: Gen. 18: 4; 19: 2; 24: 32; 43: 24; Judg. 19: 21; John 13: 4-17; 1 Tim. 5: 10. If this indifference does not show a want of common courtesy on Simon's part, it does show that he treated Jesus in a most ordinary way. Where he withheld water, this woman poured out her precious tears.

45. "Thou gavest me no kiss." The kiss—not, however, between the sexes—was a common way of salutation. On this see Gen. 45: 14, 15; 2 Sam. 15: 5; 19: 39; 20: 9; Matt. 26: 49; Acts 20: 37; Rom. 16: 16; 1 Pet. 5: 14. Simon had no kiss for Jesus' face, but this woman covered his feet with kisses.

46. "My head with oil thou didst not anoint." Oil for the head, as well as water for the feet and kisses of salutation, were courtesies of the East. On this use of oil see Ruth. 3: 3; 2 Sam. 14: 2; Ps. 23: 5; Eccles. 9: 8; Dan. 10: 3; Amos 6: 6; Matt. 6: 17. Simon did not anoint Jesus' head with ordinary oil, but this woman anointed his feet with costly ointment. Simon was self-righteous and unconscious of his enormous sins, and was blind to his need of Jesus' pardoning mercy. This woman realized her sins, felt her heavy burden, was truly penitent, and longed for forgiveness and a pure life.

47. Therefore, Jesus said to Simon: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven." Jesus forgave her many sins, lifted the burden, and gave her rest; therefore she "loved much." The dearest and grandest blessing of the gospel is the pardon of sins. Without this all else avails but little. "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whom the Lord will not reckon sin." (Rom. 4: 7, 8.) "To whom little is forgiven" means he who realizes but little need of forgiveness; such a man can love but little. Many do not come to Jesus now because they do not realize their need of his grace and pardon.

48. To assure this woman of forgiveness, Jesus said to her: "Thy sins are forgiven."

#### V. The Woman's Faith Saved Her

"They that sat at meat with him began to say within [or "among"—margin] themselves, "Who is this that even forgiveth sins?" They knew that God could forgive sins, but who is this who assumes to do so? On other occasions Jesus was accused of blasphemy because he forgave sins. (Matt. 9: 1-8; Mark 2: 7.) If he were not what he claimed to be, it would have been blasphemy for him to assume to forgive sins; but he is the son of God, the Messiah, the Savior. These guests did not realize this; hence they raised this question.



50. "Thy faith hath saved thee." (Verse 50.) This woman's faith was not passive, but active. It led her into the house in that public way to Jesus; it was manifested in her penitence and love. Faith which does not act is dead. (James 2: 14-26.) We are saved by faith now through Christ, but it is "faith working through love" (Gal. 5: 6) that saves. "Go in peace" is the blessed assurance—into abiding peace with God and into that soul rest for which her broken, burdened heart yearned. "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 7.)

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
 Did you read all the references?  
 Repeat the Golden Text.  
 Give the time, place, and persons.  
 Repeat the Memory Verses.  
 What characteristics of Jesus does this lesson illustrate?  
 Name other characters mentioned in the New Testament similar to the woman of this lesson.  
 What two classes of sinners do we find in this lesson?  
 What are the greatest sins against God?  
 Why was the worship of the Pharisees vain?  
 Why did Jesus denounce them?  
 Who went into the kingdom of God before them?  
 Why?  
 Why are rebellion and stubbornness such great sins?  
 Does God save the immoral in their sins?  
 36 What is said of the Simons mentioned in the New Testament?  
 Why did this Simon invite Jesus to his house?  
 Why did Jesus accept invitations to eat with such characters and with "publicans and sinners?"  
 What position did people then occupy at the table while eating?  
 37 Why did this woman go into the house at this time?  
 How did she know Jesus was there?  
 What did she do?
- What is "alabaster?"  
 What was the character of the ointment?  
 Who else anointed Jesus' head and feet?  
 38 What position did this woman occupy?  
 What different acts did she perform?  
 39 Why did the scribes and Pharisees murmur?  
 What did Simon say within himself?  
 40 What proved that Jesus was a prophet?  
 41, 42 What parable did he give?  
 43 What reply did Simon make?  
 44 How did Jesus apply this?  
 What did he say Simon had not done and this woman had?  
 45 What is the purpose of foot washing as practiced in the Bible?  
 What purpose did kissing serve?  
 46 What is the purpose of the anointing with oil mentioned here?  
 To what was Simon blind?  
 47, 48 What did Jesus do for this woman?  
 Why did she love much?  
 Why did the guests raise the question of this verse?  
 Why was it not blasphemy in Jesus to forgive sins?  
 What saved this woman?  
 What kind of faith was hers?  
 What kind of faith saves now?  
 What "peace" did this woman enjoy?



## LESSON IX—NOVEMBER 26

# JESUS THE GREAT MISSIONARY—Luke 8: 1-56. Print

## 8: 1-3, 26-33, 38, 39

LUKE 8. 1 And it came to pass soon afterwards, that he went about through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good tidings of the kingdom of God, and with him the twelve,

2 and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary that was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out,

3 and Joanna the wife of Chuzas Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who ministered unto them of their substance.

26 And they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is over against Galilee.

27 And when he was come forth upon the land, there met him a certain man out of the city, who had demons; and for a long time he had worn no clothes, and abode not in any house, but in the tombs.

28 And, when he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I beseech thee, torment me not.

29 For he was commanding the unclean spirit to come out from the man. For oftentimes it had seized him: and he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters; and breaking the bands asunder, he was driven of the demon into the deserts.

30 And Jesus asked him, What is thy name? And he said, Legion; for many demons were entered into him.

31 And they entreated him that he would not command them to depart into the abyss.

32 Now there was a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they entreated him that he would give them leave to enter into them. And he gave them leave.

33 And the demons came out from the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd rushed down the steep into the lake, and were drowned.

38 But the man from whom the demons were gone out prayed him that he might be with him: but he sent him away, saying,

39 Return to thy house, and declare how great things God hath done for thee. And he went his way, publishing throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done for him.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—"The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19: 10.)

*Time*—A. D. 28.

*Places*—Sea of Galilee, and the "country of the Gerasenes."

*Memory Verse*—Psalms 111: 14.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 47.

*Reference Material*—Matthew 4: 23; 9: 35-38.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Nov. 20.—Jesus the great missionary.—Luke 8: 26-39. Tu.—The parable of the sower.—Luke 8: 4-15. Wed.—A Gentle believer.—Matt. 15: 21-28. Th.—The great commission.—Matt. 28: 16-20. Fr.—The missionary spirit.—Rom. 1: 8-17. Sat.—The missionary call.—Acts 26: 12-20. Su.—"God reigneth over the nations."—Psa. 47.

## INTRODUCTION

This lesson embraces two different passages of Scripture, both however, in the same chapter, but relating to different events in Jesus' ministry; but both representing Jesus as a great missionary. Following this lesson there will appear a short article on missionary work. It will state that a missionary is one who has been sent on a mission. Jesus was sent on the very greatest mission of which there can be any conception—namely, to seek and to save the lost and to call sinners to repentance. Jesus came to serve and not to be served; to give his life for the salvation of all who will accept him; to taste of death for every man, to shed his blood for many for the remission of sins; to arise again from the dead for our justification: to return to heaven as conqueror of death and Satan; to live in the presence of God as priest and advocate to make in-



decession for all who trust in him; and to return the second time to usher in the new heavens and earth in which the righteous will dwell forever, or take his redeemed ones home. All his followers have his spirit.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. A Preaching Tour of Jesus

1. "Soon afterwards"—that is, soon after the events of Luke 7: 36-50—Jesus made the preaching tour of this verse. He made different tours, going from village to village, from city to city. (See the following references: Matt. 4: 23; 9: 35; 13; Mark 1: 14, 21, 39; 10: 1; Luke 4: 15, 44; 6: 6; 13: 10; John 6: 59.) Besides his preaching, Jesus went about doing good—healing all manner of diseases, giving sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, casting out demons, and raising the dead. He also sent "the twelve" and, later, "the seventy" to preach the gospel of the kingdom to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" in the end he sent the apostles to teach "all the nations" (Matt. 28: 19, 20), to "preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16: 15, 16), to preach "repentance and remission of sins . . . in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24: 47). The church, as "the pillar and ground of the truth," must teach the truth now. (1 Tim. 3: 15.)

### II. Mary Magdalene and Other Women

2, 3. With Jesus and his apostles were "certain women," whom he had "healed of evil spirits and infirmities," who ministered unto them of their substance. Jesus had done so much for them that in gratitude they followed him to minister unto him and his apostles. They were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and many others. They possessed some means, or they could not have supplied the necessities of Jesus and his apostles. Their home affairs did not interfere with their going and making public speeches.

"Joanna being the wife of the steward of Herod Antipas shows that these women were of good standing and not outcasts. Such women to-day can thus serve Jesus and do good. To minister unto the humblest, poorest, weakest, and most ignorant of Christ's disciples and to have fellowship in furtherance of the gospel is to minister unto Christ. Let us not forget this, but let us do it. Referring to these good women later, Mark (15: 41) says they "ministered unto him" "when he was in Galilee;" and they, with many others, had come with him to Jerusalem. Matthew (27:55) says they "had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him." (See also Luke 23: 49; John 19: 25.)

This service, like that of Mary's anointing Jesus (Mark 14: 9), will never be forgotten. Little did these grateful women think that their loving service would be incorporated in the gospel of the Son of God. But every service now rendered to Christ's poor will meet all who render it at the judgment as an eternal blessing. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." Susanna is nowhere else mentioned. Joanna is again mentioned with the women who saw Jesus after his resurrection. (Luke 24: 10.) This is the first mention of Mary Magdalene. "Magdalene" is "a woman of Magdala" (Thayer)—properly, "Magadan" (Matt. 15: 39), a town on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.

This indicates that this place was Mary's home. This name seems to have been attached to Mary to distinguish her from the other Marys of the New Testament. Besides this Mary, there were Mary



the mother of Jesus, Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus, Mary the wife of Cleopas, Mary the mother of John Mark (Acts 12: 12), and a Mary mentioned by Paul (Rom. 16: 6). Mary Magdalene was not the woman of Luke 7: 36-50, who washed Jesus' feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, and anointed them with ointment; and she was not the sister of Martha and Lazarus.

Until delivered by Jesus, she was unfortunately possessed of seven demons. How these affected her is not stated, but she was in a wretched condition. Because she had been saved from this state of misery she was very grateful, and manifested her gratitude in the substantial way given in this lesson and by a life of service to her Savior. More than once the fact is stated that Jesus cast out of her seven demons. Sin must have prepared people for the possession of demons, as purity and righteousness prepare them for the indwelling of God's Spirit.

The "unclean spirit," having gone out of a man, returned to his "house" and found it "empty, swept, and garnished"—or the heart vacant—and went in, taking "seven other spirits more evil than himself." (Matt. 12: 43-45.) This shows that the condition of the heart fitted it for the occupancy of these spirits. But there is no proof that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute, as some would have her. Having been cleansed of demons and saved to the service of Jesus, Mary Magdalene became associated with the best women on earth—the mother of Jesus (John 19: 25), the mother of James the less and Joses, and the mother of James and John (Mark 15: 40), and others, who "stood afar off beholding" Jesus on the cross (Luke 23: 49).

Being a Christian now places one in the best of company. With these, Mary waited at the cross until all was over; followed the body of Jesus to its burial (Matt. 27: 61; Mark 15:47; Luke 23: 55); rested on the Sabbath, and just as soon as it had ended—at sunset—"bought spices" with which to anoint the body (Mark 16: 1); very early on the next morning (Matt. 28: 1; Mark 16: 2; John 20: 1) went to the tomb, and finding it empty, ran in sorrow to tell Peter and John that the body had been removed (John 20: 2); returned, following Peter and John, to the tomb, and, looking in, saw the angel (John 20: 11-13), and then turned and saw the Lord (John 20: 14-17). She was the first human being to see the risen Lord and was the first one sent to tell the good news of his resurrection. (John 20: 18.) Her faithfulness and loving service were greatly rewarded.

### III. Cross the Sea

26. "And they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes", having come "to the other side of the sea" (Mark 5: 1) from the western side where Jesus spoke the parable of the sower (Luke 8: 4-19) and other parables (Matt. 13.) On this journey a great storm swooped down upon the apostles rowing the boat, while Jesus, weary with arduous work of the day, lay asleep on the seaman's cushion. The waves were filling the boat and the wild winds were about to wreck it. The affrighted disciples awoke Jesus and cried out: "Master, Master, we perish"! In the strength and majesty of him through whom all things were created, he rebuked the winds and waves, saying, "Peace, be still," and "a great calm" followed (Mark 4: 35-41.)

Gadara and Gerasa were towns east of the Jordan, and the country surrounding the one, it is supposed, embraced the other and the country surrounding it; hence Jesus went into "the country of the Gadarenes" as well as into that of the Gerasenes.



#### IV. One Frequently is Put for the Whole

27. As soon as Jesus had landed, "there met him two possessed with demons." (Matt. 8: 28.) Mark mentions only one—the fiercer and more noted of the two and the one who spoke to Jesus. Mark (10: 46). Luke mentions only the most prominent of the two blind men, while Matthew (20: 30) mentions both; Mark (11: 2) and Luke (19: 29-36) mention only the colt on which Jesus rode, while Matthew (21: 2) mentions the mother and the colt; Mark (11: 21) mentions Peter, who did the talking, while Matthew (21: 20) mentions the disciples as a body; Mark (12: 2) and Luke (20: 10) mention one servant, while Matthew (21: 34, 36) mentions other servants. There are other similar cases of mentioning only the most prominent one of a group of persons or things. Demons realized that the mission of Jesus was to "destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3: 8), and they asked if he had come to torment them before the time (Matt. 8: 29).

#### V. Demons

An "unclean spirit" was a demon who possessed an unfortunate man. This was not simply a physical or mental disorder—Evil spirits or demons took possession of human beings and controlled their speech and actions. They caused dumbness and blindness and other afflictions (Matt. 17: 14-18); some possessed of demons exercised supernatural strength (Matt. 5: 4); some could "divine" (Acts 16: 17); demons knew Jesus (Mark 1: 4); Jesus addressed them as having intelligence (Matt. 8: 28-32); demons acknowledged Jesus' control over them (Mark 5: 1-20); the seventy asserted Jesus' authority over demons (Luke 10: 17); Peter declared Jesus' power to cast them out (Acts 10: 38); out of Mary Magdalene Jesus cast seven demons (Luke 8: 2), and a legion out of another; demons, cast out of persons, sought the body of hogs and entered them. McGarvey, in his commentary on Matthew (8:16), says that "demons" in the Jewish use of the term, is "applied exclusively to the departed spirits of evil men," and that "this usage was adopted by Jesus and the apostles, and consequently all that is said of demons in the New Testament agrees with it." Demons were evil spirits of some kind. Demons believed and shuddered (James 2: 19), because they knew that Jesus had come to "destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3: 8), and they asked if he had come to torment them before the time (Matt. 8: 29).

When God worked miracles, it seems that he allowed Satan to do the same to some extent (See Ex. 7:8); but God showed his super-spiritual power over Satan in that Aaron's rod swallowed the others and Satan could not perform all the miracles which God did. So, in Christ's day his power over Satan was demonstrated when he cast out demons (Matt. 12: 24-39). Christ is represented as binding Satan and spoiling his house by casting out evil spirits.

An evil spirit "cried out with a loud voice" while Jesus was teaching. His teaching must have aroused this demon. The demon said: "Let us alone"—that is, "Do not trouble us." And, "Art thou come to destroy us?" Demons realized that the mission of Jesus was to "destroy the works of the devil". (1 John 3: 8), which is an admission that Jesus will succeed. Wicked men now bent on evil say: "Let us alone"; do not disturb our business.

#### VI. The Demoniacs of This Lesson

28, 29. That which Matthew, Mark and Luke say is placed together in verses.



These demoniacs had their dwelling in "the tombs," and came "out of the tombs" to meet Jesus. McGarvey says: "It may be that the demons selected the tombs as a dwelling place because of a preference for a place of gloom and seclusion; or it may be that their own bodies were buried there, and that on this account they had a fondness for this spot." Matthew (8:28) says they were "exceeding fierce, so that no man could pass that way." They were dangerous, and people were afraid of them. Mark says in the lesson of the one he mentions: "No man could any more bind him, no, not with a chain; because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been rent asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: and no man had strength to tame him." This shows that, possessed of these demons, he had superhuman strength. In his quiet moments he had been bound often; but when the demons asserted their power, he broke his fetters and chains and rushed to the mountains and tombs; but he had become so fierce and wild that no one "could any more bind him." The "tombs" were natural caves or graves cut perpendicularly in the rock or horizontally in the hill-sides. On graves, see Gen. 23: 9; 35: 8; 50: 5; 2 Chron. 16: 14; Isa. 22: 16; Matt. 27: 60.

They could no longer be bound or confined, but remained "always, night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains," crying and cutting themselves with stones. There is nothing comparable to this wretchedness, except the condition of the lost in perdition.

The demoniacs did not wait for Jesus to approach them, but, while he was afar off, ran to meet him, and "worshipped him." They paid him homage by falling at his feet. This was only an outward act of reverence, and not worship in spirit and truth.

"What have I (we) to do with thee?" There was nothing in common between these demons and Jesus. On another occasion (Mark 1: 24) a demon said the same. These demons desired Jesus to let them alone. "Thou Son of God." These demons knew who Jesus was. "The demons also believe, and shudder." (James 2: 19.) "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matt. 8: 29.)

"For he said unto him, Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man." This command was given before the demons entreated Jesus not to torment them, and this fact is stated as the reason for making this entreaty. Luke (8: 29) says: "For he was commanding the unclean spirit to come out of the man." The demons considered it a punishment to be driven out of the man.

30. "My name is Legion: for we are many." A legion was a division of the Roman army, and contained originally six thousand men, but varied in number according as it had been diminished by service. It is an amazing fact that so many demons could enter one unfortunate man. That there were thousands of them is seen from the fact that they entered into about two thousand hogs, as stated in verse 13.

31. "That he would not send them away out of the country" is equivalent to the request not to "command them to depart into the abyss." The "abyss" is perdition, or the bottomless pit." Rev. 9: 1, 2, 11; 11: 7; 17: 8; 20: 1, 5.)

32. The demons preferred going into the bodies of the hogs to going into the "abyss;" so they requested Jesus to permit them to go into the hogs.

33. Jesus granted this request. When the demons entered the hogs, the hogs rushed from the mountain side on which they were feeding "down the steep into the sea," and were drowned. The hogs were maddened by the demons, but the demons could not control the bodies



of the hogs, as they had controlled the body of the man. By the death of the hogs the demons were driven out of them and forced to go into the "abyss" at last. Why Jesus permitted the destruction of so much property is not very clear. Really we cannot tell. It has been supposed that he did so because the hogs were unclean animals according to the law, and that the Jews who owned them were in an unlawful business; or if owned by Gentiles, they kept them in violation of law for the Israelites.

## VII. The Effect Upon the People

Verses 34-37 state the effect of this wonderful work of Jesus upon the demoniacs and upon the inhabitants of that country.

"They that fed them fled." (Mark 5: 14.) We have read about shepherds. These are swineherds. That country was not fenced, and all kinds of stock were protected by herdsmen. The swineherds witnessed all that was done. However interested they may have been in the release of the unhappy demoniacs, they fled when they saw the hogs, filled with demons, rushing down into the sea and drowned. Some ran into the city and some through the country, and told everywhere as they went what had happened.

Those who heard the wonderful story of the swineherds "came to see what it was that had come to pass." Matthew (8: 38) says "all the city came," and Luke says "all the people of the country." When they came to Jesus, they beheld a wonderful sight—the demoniac "sitting, clothed in his right mind." He was sitting "at the feet of Jesus"—a position of humility, trust, and security. "For a long time he had worn no clothes, and abode not in any house. "People were afraid." They were filled with wonder and awe over the manifestation of such miraculous power.

Those who had witnessed what had been done by Jesus declared the facts in detail to the multitude.

Then "they began to beseech him to depart from their borders." They were not ready to receive Jesus. They were filled with fear at his miraculous power, and did not appreciate his mercy or understand his mission. Since the destruction of the swine may have been punishment for an unlawful business, they may have feared that Jesus would visit upon them other punishment for their many sins. People must have the right condition of heart to receive the truth, and for their failure to have it they themselves are responsible. The people of Nazareth rejected Jesus because of their lack of faith. Since these people would not receive him, Jesus at once granted their request and departed.

## VIII. Tell "How Great Things Jesus" Has Done for You

38. The man saved from his horrible condition was very different from his neighbors, in that he besought Jesus "that he might be with him." He made his request as Jesus was entering the boat to leave that country. He felt that his only place of safety was in the presence of Jesus. Our only safety from sin and the power of Satan is in the presence of our Redeemer.

39. Jesus suffered not this man to go with him, but said: "Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how he had mercy on thee." Jesus usually forbade those he miraculously healed to publish it abroad. (Matt. 8: 4.) He did this in order to prevent undue excitement and the gathering of such multitudes as would interfere with his work. There



was no danger of such things in this case; and since he was leaving the country, it was proper that this man should proclaim his power and mercy. This is the true missionary spirit—tell your friends what great things Jesus has done for you. Does it not seem that every Christian should be glad to do this and that nothing could prevent his doing so?

This man obeyed Jesus. "Decapolis" means ten cities, and was a larger country than "the country of the Gerasenes" or that of the Gadarenes and embraced both. "And all men marveled." As this man went about preaching the power and mercy of Jesus, the people remembered what he had been and saw what he was then—a living monument of what he was proclaiming. This one man produced a great change in the people by the time Jesus again went into Decapolis. When he again visited that country, "great multitudes" gathered about him, and he healed "the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others;" and the people "glorified the God of Israel," and said of Jesus: "He hath done all things well." In that country Jesus fed the four thousand. (See Matt. 15: 29-39; Mark 7: 31-37.) This demonstrates the fact that God is ever ready to bless when people are ready to receive his blessings.

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Repeat the Memory Verse.  
As what does this lesson place Jesus before us?  
What was Jesus' mission to earth?  
State in order what he did to save the world.
- 1 Soon after what did the facts of this verse occur?  
What can you relate about the different preaching tours Jesus made?  
What other good things did Jesus do?  
What and to whom did he send the twelve and the seventy first to preach?  
What and to whom did he finally send the apostles to preach?  
Who must teach today?
  - 2, 3 Who were with Jesus and the apostles on this journey?  
What had he done for them?  
What were they now doing for him and his apostles?  
What shows that they possessed some means and were of good standing?  
What kind of "work" did these women not do?  
What can such women do now?  
What is it now to minister to Jesus?  
What other mention was made of the service of these women?  
Where will every service be remembered?  
What is said of Joanna and Sanna?  
What indicates Mary Magdalene's home?  
What seems to be the reason for calling her "Magdalene?"  
Name other Marys.
- Of what was she possessed?  
What shows that the condition of heart has something to do with being possessed of demons?  
What shows Mary's gratitude?  
Into what company was Mary placed?  
What does Christianity do now for people?  
State what else Mary and other good women did.
- 27 Into what country did Jesus and his apostles go after the busy day referred to?  
Across what sea did they have to go?  
What arose?  
What effect did it have upon the apostles?  
How was the tempest stilled?  
What is an unclean spirit or a demon?  
Give the proof of their intelligence and control of the bodies of men.  
Whose power did they admit?  
Did Satan ever work miracles?  
How was God's power over Satan shown?  
How was Christ's power over Satan shown?  
What did demons say to Jesus?  
What do evil men and false teachers say?
  - 26 How is it that Jesus went at the same time into the country of the Gerasenes and that of the Gadarenes?  
Give what is said of Gadara.
  - 27 Who met Jesus as soon as he landed?  
Give some examples of the mentioning of only one person or thing of a number.  
Why is this sometimes done?  
What did the demons realize concerning Jesus?



- What request did they, therefore, made?
- 27-29 Where did these demoniacs dwell?
- Why did they dwell in the tombs?
- What effect did the demons have upon the man here considered?
- Why could he no longer be bound or tamed?
- What were the "tombs?"
- Where did he spend all his time?
- What did he do?
- What did the demoniacs do when they first saw him?
- State, in order, what the demons said to Jesus.
- What does Jesus say of them?
- Why did the demons request Jesus not to torment them?
- 30 Why did Jesus ask their name?
- What reply was made?
- What was a "legion?"
- What fact shows that there were many demons in this man?
- 31 Where did the demons not wish to go?
- 32 Where did they request to be sent?
- 33 What occurred when they entered the hogs?
- What became of the demons upon the death of the hogs?
- Why did Jesus suffer the destruction of the hogs?

- What became of the swineherds?
- What effect did their story have upon the people?
- Where and in what condition did they find the demoniac?
- Why were the people afraid?
- What was related to the people?
- What request did they make of Jesus?
- Why did they make this request?
- Why did Jesus depart?
- What is necessary to the reception of the truth?
- 38 What request did the man saved from the demons make?
- Where is the only safety for Christians?
- 39 What did Jesus tell this man to do?
- Why did Jesus forbid some telling what he had done for them and command this man to do so?
- What is the true missionary spirit?
- What did the man do?
- Why did the men marvel?
- What was Decapolis?
- Did Jesus ever visit Decapolis again?
- In what condition did he find the people then?
- What produced this change?
- What did he do for them?

## LESSON ON MISSIONARY WORK

Jesus says: "Think not that I came to destroy the law and the prophets. I have come not to destroy, but to fulfill." (Matt. 5: 17.)

One of the prophecies Jesus fulfilled is the following: "And it came to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem." (Isa 2: 2, 3; see also Mic. 4: 13.) Jesus tasted of death for every man. (Heb. 2: 9.) After his resurrection he said: "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Luke 24: 45-47.) Jesus is the fulfillment of all this.

This shows his mission and that he is the greatest missionary in the world. He came to seek and to save the lost and to call sinners to repentance. He came not to be served, but to serve and even to lay down his life for the salvation of the world. He came, not to do his own will, but the will of God who sent him.

A missionary is one who has been sent on a mission. God has sent every Christian on a mission, hence has made every one a missionary. Even one who knows the gospel and is not a Christian, is not—not because he has no responsibility and no mission, but because he is not filling his mission. The church of God has a mission, and is missionary to the extent that it is filling that mission. To glorify God, to honor Jesus, to save themselves, and to save the world, is the mission of the church.



To save themselves, people must live in obedience to God at home and in the common affairs and daily obligations and duties of life. (Eph. 3: 20, 21; 1 Tim. 3: 15; Heb. 22-28.) In following the commands God gave through Paul, Timothy would both save himself and those who heard him. (Tim. 4: 16.) To save themselves and to save others is the work of the church. "Ye are the salt of the earth. . . Ye are the light of the world. . . Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5: 13-16.)

Every man has been sent on a mission—(1) to himself, (2) to his own family, (3) to his immediate neighbors, and (4) to the world around him.

The great commission embraces all nations for all time. (Matt. 28: 19, 20; Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 45-49.) The gospel was preached from Jerusalem unto all nations by the church there. (Examples—Acts 8: 4; 11: 19-26.) Different churches became radiating centers from which the gospel was preached. The one in Antioch in Syria, the one at Philippi and the one at Thessalonica are fine examples. (See Acts 13, 14; Phil. 1: 5; 4: 10-20; 1 Thess. 1: 8.) Every church must be the same, and is when in the full discharge of duty.

Every Christian and every congregation of Christians is in this sense leaven, sending out a permeating influence for good and extending the gospel, therefore, until the whole world has been leavened. Every Christian and every congregation of Christians is light, sending forth Christianity from himself or themselves, like the light from the sun, all around from the center to the remotest bounds of the earth. Reader, are you such a light? Is your influence such as leaven in this sense? Is the congregation where you meet for public worship such? What are you and your congregation doing to extend the kingdom of God among men?



## LESSON X—DECEMBER 3

**JESUS SENDING OUT MISSIONARIES—Luke 9: 1-10: 24.****Print 10: 1-11, 17**

LUKE 10. 1 Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come.

2 And he said unto them, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest.

3 Go your ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves.

4 Carry no purse, no wallet, no shoes; and salute no man on the way.  
5 And into whatsoever house ye shall enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

6 And if a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall turn to you again.

7 And in that same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

9 and heal the sick that are therein and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10 But into whatsoever city ye shall enter, and they receive you not, go out into the streets thereof and say,

11 Even the dust from your city, which cleaveth to our feet, we wipe off against you: nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh.

17 And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—"The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he send forth laborers into his harvest. (Luke 10: 2.)

*Time*—Autumn, A. D. 29.

*Place*—Supposed by many to be Perea.

*Persons*—Jesus and the seventy.

*Memory Verse*—Matthew 16: 15; 16.

*Devotional Reading*—Matthew 28: 16-20.

*Reference Material*—Matthew 10: 1-42; John 17: 17-21; 20: 21.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Nov. 27.—The twelve sent forth.—Luke 9: 1-9. Tu.—Feeding the hungry.—Luke 9: 10-17. Wed.—Sacrificing for Christ's sake.—Luke 9: 18-27. Th.—The authority of Jesus.—Luke 9: 28-36. Fr.—Suffering humanity.—Luke 9: 37-46. Sat.—The seventy sent forth.—Luke 10: 1-17. Su.—The great commission.—Matt. 28: 16-20.

**INTRODUCTION**

Between the feast of tabernacles and the feast of dedication (John 10: 22.) some suppose that Jesus returned to Galilee, and thence back to Jerusalem through Galilee and Samaria eastward to the Jordan and through Perea, "beyond the Jordan," and while in Perea sent forth the seventy. It is supposed that Matt. 19: 1; Mark 10: 1; Luke 9: 51 record the final departure from Galilee. Others suppose that Jesus remained at Jerusalem, or in Judea, during this interval and sent forth the seventy after the feast of dedication.

**EXPLANATORY NOTES****I. The Mission of the Seventy**

"These things" are the facts mentioned in Luke 9: 51-62. The "Lord appointed seventy others." He had previously appointed the twelve and sent them forth. (Matt. 10; Luke 9: 1-6.) It has been suggested that the twelve apostles represented or corresponded to



the twelve tribes of Israel; the seventy, to the seventy elders appointed to assist Moses. (Num. 11: 16,17) The twelve gates of the new Jerusalem correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel; the twelve foundations, to the twelve apostles. (Rev. 21: 12-14) He sent them "two and two," as he had formerly sent the apostles. (See Mark 6: 7.) One could supplement the work of the other—reach some the other could not reach; encourage, help, counsel, and sympathize with the other; and, as Jesus says, it was written in the law "that the witness of two men is true." (John 8: 17; see also Deut. 17: 6.)

Doubtless these are some of the reasons why he sent them "two and two." He sent them "before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come"—that is, in advance of his coming—to prepare the people for him. The time was short, and his ministry increased in activity as it drew to its close. The seventy would preach the gospel of the kingdom to the people, awaken an interest, beget hope, show mercy, and prepare them for the coming of Jesus. As he had selected the apostles to be with him (Mark 3: 14, 15) for a while in training before he sent them out, so now, having trained others, he sends them forth. That seventy are ready to go shows how his work grew. It is God's law that to him that has shall more be given, and to one faithful in little will be opened opportunities for greater usefulness.

2. So he exhorted the disciples when he sent forth the twelve. (Matt. 9: 37, 38.) God is the Lord of the harvest; the world is the field; the many people willing to receive the truth are the ripening grain, ready to perish if not gathered in. In many the good seed was ripening. When Jesus went "beyond the Jordan," it is said that "many came unto him; and they said, John [John the Baptist] indeed did no sign: but all things whatsoever John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there." (John 10: 40-42.)

The seventy were to go as reapers, but they were few compared to the great need; so as they went and worked, they were to pray the Lord to send others. This shows that prayer is effective. It was understood that God would hear and answer. But while they prayed for other laborers, they must go themselves. Just so it is with us. While we pray for the salvation of men, we must work as laborers in the harvest. It is an abomination in the sight of God to pray for "the spread of the gospel" and for "those laboring in word and doctrine" while we do nothing to spread the gospel or to support those who do. There is great need of God-sent laborers to-day.

There is a vast difference between those whom men send and those whom God sends. God-sent laborers, like Paul, realize: "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" They preach at any cost; they make tents and preach; they preach for Christ's sake. Such, too, always preach the gospel, "the whole counsel of God"—nothing more or less. Those who do not preach the gospel, or who would "pervert the gospel" (Gal. 1: 7-9), are not God-sent. God never sends a man to preach anything else but his will, his plain and simple commandments. The hireling "fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep." The hireling hunts the best pasture—not for the sheep, but for himself. Those who think "godliness is a way of gain" (1 Tim. 6: 5) are not God-sent. That "the poor have good tidings preached to them" (Luke 7: 22) is proof supreme that Jesus is the Christ.

## II. Go as Jesus Directs

3. "Go your ways"—that is, as Jesus directed and to places where he sent them. They were lambs among wolves, defenseless and helpless as lambs. Their enemies were ravenous and greedy,



like wolves. So it is to-day. Christ is the same to-day; his spirit and his disciples are the same; and the world is the same ravenous, greedy enemy of the church. They were to harm, or hurt, no one, and were not to defend themselves by force or with "carnal weapons" against any attack of the enemy. They were not equipped with carnal weapons. Christ was like a sheep led to the slaughter and like a lamb dumb before his shearers.

4. Jesus gave in substance the same instruction to the twelve. "Purse" is here put for money. (Matt. 10: 9, 10.) "Wallet" was a traveling bag, used for carrying provisions—more properly, a shepherd's bag used by the shepherd for carrying food when tending his sheep away from home. "No shoes." The twelve were "to go shod with sandals." (Mark 6: 9.) "Sandals" were soles of leather, felt, or wood strapped across the foot with thongs. In different countries different materials were used, as in Egypt palm leaves and papyrus stalk were used. The word translated "shoe" literally means "what is bound under, a sandal" (Thayer), and is the word used by John the Baptist in the expression: "The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." (Mark 1: 7; see also Matt. 3: 11; Luke 3: 16; Acts 13: 25.) To be "shod with sandals" means to bind on the sandals (Acts 12: 8), or to have sandals for shoes. There is also another word for "sandals" (Mark 6: 9), but it is used interchangeable with the one for "shoes." As the apostles were not to take "two coats" (Matt. 10: 10) and "a staff only" (Mark 6: 8), so they were not to take two pairs of shoes, but to go as they were, shod with sandals.

It was customary to carry an extra pair on a journey; but the seventy were to go without further preparation for their journey and to depend upon the provision God would make for them, "for the laborer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10: 7), and those whom they served would supply their needs. They were to dress in a simple way live according to the customs of the common people. They were to go without expense, show, and self-seeking, and not with the air of superiority, like the rabbis or many of the modern clergy. "And salute no man on the way"—not because Jesus would have them impolite and discourteous, but the salutations of that day, as in the East now, were formal, insincere, and consumed much time, and their work required haste. Singleness of purpose is the point emphasized here by Jesus, while they were to be sincerely polite and courteous to all, as the next verse shows.

### III. The Peace of God

5. "Peace be to this house" was the usual form of blessing when entering a house as a guest. It is said that "peace" with the Jews comprehended all other blessings. So when it came from the servants of God, it meant God's protection and blessings upon that house. It is a blessing now to really entertain good men—God's servants—and have them pray in our families and for us.

6. But the enjoyment of the blessings depends also upon the inmates of the house. "If a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall turn to you again"—that is, if they will receive the servants of God and extend to them kindness and hospitality because they are God's servants, the blessings of God will abide upon them; if not, God will withhold the blessings and reward them according to their sins. To the twelve Jesus says: "Search out who in it is worthy: and there abide till ye go forth . . . And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it," etc. (Matt. 10: 11-13)



7-8. "In that same house" which is worthy and would receive them they were to remain. To any evangelist now the reason for this seems clear, for this is in many ways best for his work. The considerate Shunammite woman built for Elisha a small room, and placed in it a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick; and it pleased Elisha to stop and to rest there and to bless the woman. (2 Kings 4: 8-37.) The preacher needs a quiet place to study, to pray and sometimes to rest. It is not best to board around from house to house. Especially was this best with the seventy, for it is said that when a stranger came into a community, the neighbors, according to the rules of etiquette, must invite him one after another out to eat with them, and that they were quite strict in the observance of this rule, which involved much show and display.

There is some ostentation now sometimes in the manner of asking the preacher around to dinner and to tea, and sometimes it is quite formal. To avoid all this, the seventy and the twelve were to remain in one home. They were to eat and drink such things as were placed before them, and not complain or find fault with their fare. They were to adapt themselves to the circumstances. It is wrong for the preacher now to complain or to find fault with the entertainment offered him and to be so hard to please. "The laborer is worthy of his hire." This is a reason given for remaining in the same house and not going "from house to house." They carried "peace"—the rich blessings of God—to that house, which would far more than compensate its inmates for the hospitality extended.

As Paul says to the Corinthians: "If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?" (1 Cor. 9: 11.) Again: "Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel." (Verse 14.) The "laborer," not one who does not labor, "is worthy of his hire"—that is, a living; but he must labor. God provided this for them and provides it for him who preaches the gospel to-day; but he does it through the hospitality and generosity of worthy people, and not in a mysterious or miraculous way. So they could go free from all anxiety and give themselves wholly to their work, assured of a support. Sometimes Jesus and his disciples carried money with them (John 12: 6; 13: 29); others contributed to their support (Luke 8: 1-3); and sometimes, it seems, they carried bread (Matt. 16: 6, 7). On another occasion and under different circumstances Jesus gave different instruction: "When I sent you forth without purse, and wallet, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. And he said unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a wallet; and he that hath none, let him sell his cloak, and buy a sword." (Luke 22: 35, 36.)

This is not contrary to Christ's general instruction to the seventy, previously to the twelve, and throughout the Epistles, that "the laborer is worthy of his hire," and that "they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel." He condemns, just after that, the literal use of the sword when he bids Peter put it up. (Matt. 26: 52-54.) It seems by this that Jesus shows the trying times which would come upon them—that their enemies would assail them on every side. They went once as sheep among wolves, but now still more trying times were upon them. They must "preach the gospel to every creature" in "all the world," but would have to depend upon their own efforts sometimes, as in Paul's case, for a support, hence would need their "purse" and "wallet." In no wise does Jesus teach here that one may make a bargain for a support before he will preach the gospel, but rather the reverse.



9. In healing the sick they showed the presence of God was with them, and also their kindness to the afflicted. A manifestation of kindness and helpfulness opened the hearts of the people to the truth. It does now. Like the twelve, they had been blessed and should go and bless others. So should we. "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." They were to preach what the twelve preached. (Matt. 10: 7.) The expressions "is come nigh" and "at hand" mean the same. The preparatory work of the kingdom was still in progress; the kingdom was not yet inaugurated. After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus none ever preached "the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

10-11. But should any city not receive them—not hear the gospel of the kingdom which they preached—they were to shake off the dust of their feet against it, showing they had cleared themselves of all responsibility.

#### IV. The Doom of Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, Tyre and Sidon

12. Reference to the doom of Sodom and other wicked cities is made to emphasize the sin of rejecting the truth preached by the seventy as messengers of the Lord. Sodom was destroyed because of sin. But for its sin Jesus says "it would have remained." (Matt. 11: 23.) Cities, and nations fall because of sin. "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. 14: 34.) "That day" is "the day of judgment." (Matt. 11: 24.) It will "be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for" the cities which rejected the seventy, the apostles, and Jesus, because its opportunities were not so good. From this and the following verses we learn that there is judgment after death. Although Sodom had been destroyed about two thousand years when Jesus spoke this, yet its inhabitants were still in existence and will appear at the judgment. So with the inhabitants of the other cities mentioned and of all cities and nations. Then, as has well been said, "temporal punishment for wickedness will not satisfy eternal justice."

13, 14. The site of Chorazin is not certainly known. Ruins not far from the supposed site of Capernaum are thought to mark the site of Chorazin. "Bethsaida" means "house of fish," and was the home of Peter, Andrew, and Philip. (John 1: 44.) It was near Capernaum. It is difficult to determine its situation. There may have been two places by this name—one on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, near Capernaum and Chorazin (Matt. 11: 21; Mark 6: 45-53); the other, on the northeastern shore (Mark 6: 31-53; Luke 9: 10-17). Tyre and Sidon were rich commercial cities of Phenicia, on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. For a description of Tyre and its destruction, see Ezek. 26-28. "Sackcloth and ashes" were signs of sorrow and repentance. (See Jonah 3: 5.) "Sackcloth" was a coarse cloth woven out of camel's hair. Many of the miracles of Jesus were performed in and near these cities. Matthew (11: 20) says: "Most of his mighty works were done" in these cities. (See Matt. 4: 23-25; 9: 35; Luke 4: 31-41.)

15. Capernaum was then a city of thirty thousand inhabitants, situated on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Above all these cities, it enjoyed the advantage of being the home of Jesus after he was rejected at Nazareth. (Matt. 4: 13.) In the way of opportunities it was highly exalted; it was by this opportunity of being the home of Jesus "exalted unto heaven." "Thou shalt be brought down unto Hades" means that it will be destroyed, while its inhabitants



## LESSON XI—DECEMBER 10.

## STORY OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN—Luke 10: 25-37

LUKE 10. 25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answered saying, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?

30 Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him he was moved with compassion.

34 And came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee.

36 Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?

37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Lev. 19: 18.)

*Time*—Autumn. A. D. 29.

*Place*—Probably Perea.

*Persons*—Jesus, the lawyer, and characters of the parable.

*Memory Verse*—Luke 10: 37.

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 41: 1-4, 10-13.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Dec. 4.—Story of the good Samaritan.—Luke 10: 25-37. Tu.—Love, the test.—1 John 3: 13-24. Wed.—Love necessary.—1 John 4: 7-21. Th.—How Jesus helped.—John 9: 1-12. Fr.—Faith and works.—James 2: 14-26. Sat.—Love never fails.—1 Cor. 13: 1-13. Su.—Considering the poor.—Psa. 41: 1-4, 10-13.

## INTRODUCTION

The greatest consideration of life is responsibility—responsibility to God and men. Christianity embraces all responsibility. The parable of this lesson shows two things—(1) What it is to love one's neighbor as oneself (2) Who one's neighbor is. This is a most important lesson, and should be understood and practiced by all, because love is the only road to heaven. If there was ever a time when love was needed—love for God, love for neighbors, love for enemies, and love for brethren—this is the time.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

## I. Love—The Soul of the Lesson

25-29. The question which brought forth the parable of the Good Samaritan was asked by a lawyer in order to test Jesus or to catch him in his answer. Jesus' enemies attempted this at different times. Jesus had taught that he came to fulfill the law and the prophets, and the lawyer thought that in answer to his question Jesus would say something new and different from the law. Should Jesus do this,



the lawyer could excite prejudice against him as attempting to destroy the law. But Jesus came not to destroy either the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them. The lawyers and Pharisees destroyed the law and the prophets by their traditions. The lawyer's question was: "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" There is no question so important as this. Jesus answered the lawyer's question by asking another: "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" The lawyer quoted Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19: 18.

To thus love God is to love him with all the powers of one's being—physical, mental, and spiritual. The heart is the inner man, the seat of spiritual life—thoughts, intentions, imaginations, purposes, desires, aspirations, will, affections, hatred, love, and all sensibilities. "Heart," "soul," and "mind" are used here to teach that with all one's inner nature and powers one must love God; while "with the strength" means the physical powers must be devoted to his service. The Christian's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, and must not be abused and destroyed by sin. (1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; 6: 19.) When one thus loves God, the whole man is fully offered to God and laid out in his service.

To love God is to obey him, and to love men is to serve them. No obedience, no love; no service, no love. Love for God and men comprises the whole of Christianity. "On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets." (Matt. 22: 40.) Love, as described in the Bible, is not a mere sentiment and animal passion. "God is love," but God is not animal; he is Spirit. Love is an active principle. God's love sent Jesus to live for, to die for, and to do all he did for sinners in order to save them. God manifested his love in what he did. (John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 8; 1 John 3: 16; 4: 9-11.) Had God's love done nothing for the race, it could not have saved.

So our love for God is active. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5: 3.) "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14: 15, 21.) In service we manifest our love for men. As Jesus laid down his life for us, so "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth." (1 John 3: 16, 18.)

All the love some seem to have is "with the tongue" and "in word." "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (1 John 3: 14, 15.) But we do not know that we love "the brethren" by some animal emotion or feeling. "Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments." (1 John 5: 2.) "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law." (See Rom. 13: 8-10.) We are to love our enemies as God loves his. "But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head." (Rom. 12: 20) "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you." (Matt. 5: 44.) All the above quotations and numerous others which could be made show that love is an active principle; and no action, no love.



## II. Love of Oneself

Self-respect and love of self are not selfishness. The hog or any other brute and the animal in man are selfish; but love is unselfish. To love oneself is to seek one's own greatest good; to sin is to hate oneself. "Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul" (Prov. 29: 24), because in this way he destroys it. Selfishness leads to sin, and is hatred of oneself. He who does not strive to save his soul hates his soul. So he who would lead his neighbor into sin hates his neighbors, while he who seeks his neighbor's good loves him. To do for one's neighbors what in righteousness, justice and mercy one would have them do for one is to love them as oneself.

Love not only works no ill to men, but seeks the greatest good of all. Jesus said, "Thou hast answered right," because he had answered according to the word of God. "This do, and thou shalt live"—that is, have eternal life. This must be done now. In his attempt to ensnare Jesus, the lawyer himself was so entrapped that he was placed upon the defensive and sought some way to justify his own conduct. "Desiring to justify himself"—that is, to show that his conduct toward others was right—he asked: "And who is my neighbor?" The Jews considered those of their own nation only their neighbors. I ask now with all emphasis: "And who is my neighbor?"

Are the people of my own nation only, or of two or three nations only, my neighbors? Whom must I love as myself, and whom must I not love?

## III. The Parable

30. Jesus answered the lawyer's questions by this parable. It is not stated who his "certain man" was; but since he went from Jerusalem, it is probable he was a Jew. The fact, too, that Jesus is showing the lawyer that others as well as his Jewish brethren are his neighbors leads to the conclusion that this man was a Jew. Jericho was eighteen or twenty miles northeast from Jerusalem, near where the Israelites crossed the Jordan, and was the city whose walls fell down by faith "after they had been compassed about for seven days." (Heb. 11: 30.) It was literally "down from Jerusalem," since the descent is about thirty-five hundred feet in this short distance. Being a deep and desolate mountain pass made this a difficult road to travel. It was infested with thieves and robbers. It is considered dangerous yet to travelers unprotected by guards. The traveler of our lesson "fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead."

31. "And by chance a certain priest was going down that way"—from Jerusalem to Jericho. The priests were descendants of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi, whose duty it was to make offerings for the people. It was also their duty to teach the people by precept and example the true worship of God. (Lev. 10: 9-11; 2 Chron. 15: 3.) The law of God required mercy to burdened beasts as well as to suffering humanity. (Ex. 23: 4, 5; Deut. 22: 1-4.) A priest ought to have been a good, merciful, and holy man; but this one was destitute of all such characteristics. He saw the robbed, naked, wounded, and suffering man lying helpless on the road, but "passed by on the other side," leaving him unaided.

32. The Levites waited upon the priest in his service of the temple. (Lev. 3: 5-10.) They were taken in lieu of the firstborn of the children of Israel. (Lev. 3: 11-13.) Like the priests, they should have



known and practiced the law; but this Levite, like the priest, "saw" the wounded sufferer and passed him without assistance.

33. The Samaritans, as we have already learned, were a mixed race, and were looked upon by the Jews as enemies and dogs. "For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans." (John 4: 9.) Yet this Samaritan had sympathy for the unfortunate traveler, and was more willing to sacrifice for him and to help him and showed more of the spirit of God than the self-righteous priest and Levite. According to their own interpretation of the law, since this traveler was a Jew, they should have helped him as neighbors. If any one had excuses for not helping him, that one was this Samaritan, for whom the wounded Jew had no respect; but the Samaritan "was moved with compassion." These different characters make this parable very forcible.

34. The Samaritan went to the Jew and "bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine." He applied these remedies as he bound up the wounds. Oil and wine were highly esteemed curative and soothing remedies. The Samaritan then set the wounded man "on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." The inn here was more than a common caravansary, in which there was no room for Joseph and Mary when Jesus was born. (Luke 2: 7.) This inn was a house for travelers kept by a host, and somewhat like a hotel. This treatment of the wounded man by the Samaritan shows personal service, which required time and delay as well as expense. Personal attention requires more self-sacrifice and is more blessed than money put into the hands of others—of some committee, for instance. To bind up wounds, to dress sores, and to spend the night with a suffering stranger requires self-denial and shows a willingness to suffer with another. No amount of money, no committees, no aid societies can take the place of and bring to us the blessing of serving others ourselves. Such work cannot be done by proxy.

35. The Samaritan nursed this man through the night, and "on the morrow," realizing it was safe to leave him, placed money in the hands of the host for further necessities. Not only so, but he requested the host to use more money if necessary, promising to replace it. "Two shillings" were about thirty-four cents; but money then would buy many times as much as it will with us, and, besides, that amount seemed all that was necessary.

#### IV. The Application

36. "Which of these—the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan—"proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?" Jesus shows by this not only who is our neighbor, but also what it is to love our neighbor as ourselves. In this way he would break down also the wall of race prejudice between the Jews, the Samaritans, and others. Any man is our neighbor. The Samaritan, though a stranger, was neighbor to the wounded Jew and did a neighbor's part by him. Jesus would bring together into one spiritual family and brotherhood all the nations of earth.

37. The lawyer could make but one answer to Jesus' question; there was but one to make: "He that shewed mercy on him." Then the conclusion was supremely logical and irresistible: "Go, and do thou likewise." Thus the tempter fell into the pit he had dug for Jesus, and was caught in his own trap. This is a divine command to all now. This is love for men. Such service now on the part of those who claim to be Christians would "reach the masses," open their ears to the truth, and make all men brothers. More than all, such sympathy, self-sacrifice, and personal service would bring to us the greatest good. We are blessed as we help and bless others.



## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Memory Verse.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
What is the only road to heaven?  
25-29 What brought forth the parable of the good Samaritan?  
Why did this lawyer think Jesus would teach something new and contrary to the prophets?  
How did Jesus have the lawyer answer his own questions?  
What is it to love God as the first commandment requires?  
What is love?  
How does God manifest his love?  
How do men manifest their love for God and for one another?  
What is it to love one's enemies?  
What is it to love oneself?  
Who hates and who loves himself and his own soul?  
What is it to love one's neighbor as oneself?  
What did Jesus say to the lawyer's answer?  
What must one now do to inherit eternal life?  
In order to justify himself, what question did the lawyer then ask?  
In what did the lawyer seek justification?  
Whom must we love now, and whom hate?  
30 How did Jesus answer this question?  
Who was this "certain man"?  
Where and what was Jericho?  
How much was it below Jerusalem?  
What was the nature and dangers of the road from Jerusalem to Jericho?  
What befell this traveler?  
31 Who were the priests?  
What did this one do?  
What should he have done?  
32 Who were the Levites?  
What were their duties?  
How did this Levite treat this traveler?  
33 Who were the Samaritans?  
How did the Jews treat them?  
How did the Samaritan treat this traveler?  
Who above all should have cared for him?  
Why do these characters make this lesson so forcible?  
34 What did the Samaritan do for the traveler?  
What was the use of the oil and wine?  
What was the "inn"?  
How much time did the Samaritan spend with this traveler?  
What did all this require and show?  
35 How much money did the Samaritan leave with the host?  
How much is that in our money?  
Why did he not leave more?  
What instruction did he leave?  
36 What question did Jesus ask the lawyer?  
What lesson does Jesus teach by this parable?  
37 What answer did the lawyer make?  
What did Jesus tell him to do?  
Can money take the place of personal service?  
How can the church now "reach the masses?"

## INTRODUCTION

## I. Jesus Hates Sinners



## LESSON XII—DECEMBER 17.

**JESUS AMONG FRIENDS AND FOES—Luke 10: 38-11: 54.****Print 10: 38-42; 11: 42-44, 53, 54**

LUKE 10. 38 Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving; and she came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou are anxious and troubled about many things:

42 but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

11. 42 But woe unto you Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and every herb, and pass over justice and the love of God: but these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

43 Woe unto you Pharisees! for ye love the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the market-places.

44 Woe unto you! for ye are as the tombs which appear not, and the men that walk over them know it not.

53 And when he was come out from thence, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press upon him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things;

54 laying wait for him, to catch something out of his mouth.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—"Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you" (John 15: 14.)

*Time*—A. D. 28.

*Place*—Probably Capernaum.

*Persons*—Jesus and the Pharisees.

*Memory Verse*—John 11: 5.

*Devotional Reading*—John 15: 8-16.

*Reference Material*—Luke 2: 34, 35.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Dec. 11.—Jesus among friends.—Luke 10: 38-42. Tu.—Jesus among foes.—Luke 11: 14-26. Wed.—Jesus among the Pharisees.—Luke 11: 37-44. Th.—Friendship tested.—John 16: 25-33. Fr.—A blessed fellowship.—John 17: 1-13. Sat.—Friendship's failure in a crisis.—Matt. 26: 26-46. Su.—Friends of Jesus.—John 15: 8-16.

**INTRODUCTION****I. Jesus Hates Shams**

The Psalmist says: "I hate every false way" (Ps. 119: 104, 128), "I hate them that are of a double mind" (Ps. 119: 113), and "I hate and abhor falsehood" (Ps. 119: 163). "The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the perverse mouth, do I hate." (Prov. 8: 13.) "For I Jehovah, love justice, I hate robbery with iniquity." (Isa. 61: 8.) Jesus hates to-day all shams, all pretense, all hypocrisy. So with the mind of Jesus and in his spirit we must hate shams, hate pretense, hate double-mindedness, hate falsehood, hate hypocrisy, hate every evil way, and must love justice, mercy, and truth. We are commanded to withdraw ourselves from all who walk disorderly. (2 Thess. 3: 6-15.) True motives, sincere purposes, and honesty of heart in all particulars are essential to acceptable worship of God—to the Christian life. All who receive the word of God into good and honest hearts and "hold it fast" (Luke 8: 17) "bring forth fruit with patience," thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold. God desires "truth in the inward parts" (Ps. 51: 6) Commit Ps. 15.



## II. The Pharisees

"Pharisee" is a synonym of hypocrisy. The Pharisees prayed to be seen of men, and gave alms to have praise of men. The Pharisees were largely the most numerous sect among the Jews, having the scribes, the learned men, and most of the people. Paul was a Pharisee before he became a Christian. The name was taken from a Hebrew word which means "separated." It was the original purpose of the Pharisees to separate themselves from the national pollutions of the Jews and to restore the pure worship of God; but they soon degenerated into mere pretenders and hypocrites, and were denounced as such by our Savior in the plainest and most scathing and withering terms. "Pharisaism" means anything else but "holiness." We learn something about the theories and pretenses of the Pharisees in this lesson. Let not the good work of the people now who have undertaken to restore the New Testament order of work and worship degenerate into pharisaism.

The Pharisees believed in some things which are right—in angels, spirits, and the resurrection—while the Sadducees did not (Acts 23: 6-8); but they held to "the tradition of the elders." The Jews claim there were two laws—the written law and the oral law. The written law is the law of Moses, which is in the Bible; the oral law is traditional, handed down, they claim, from Moses through Aaron and his sons, the elders of that time, Joshua, and the prophets afterwards—from generation to generation successively. They claim that when God gave Moses the written law, he gave him also the tradition, or oral law, as explanation of the written law. They attached more importance to the tradition than to the law itself, or, human nature like, to their interpretation of the scriptures than to the scriptures themselves. A compilation, or digest, of the tradition is called the "Mishna," and comments upon and explanations of the Mishna is called the "Talmud." Thus the Mishna explains the law and the Talmud explains the Mishna. The various hair-splitting theories and inconsistent practices of the Pharisees were exposed and denounced by Jesus throughout his teaching. As an example of their teaching, note that they had a theory that to swear by the temple was nothing, or one was not bound by such an oath, but to swear by the gold on the temple bound one to keep one's oath; or to swear by the altar was nothing, but to swear by the gift upon the altar bound one to keep one's oath. Jesus called them "blind guides" and "fools," "hypocrites" and "children of Satan and hell."

Matt. 23 contains a fuller denunciation of the Pharisees than this lesson. Jesus taught the same principles—taught the whole truth—on different occasions and in different places—everywhere and always—exposing the false theories and denouncing the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. They attacked him publicly and privately and in all subtlety. They asked him to eat with them, that they might get something against him; they asked him various questions, that they might entangle him in his teachings; they had public discussions with him, that they might counteract his wide-spreading influence; but every time he uncovered their wickedness and exposed their hypocrisy. John 6: 26-71; 7: 14-52; 8: 12-59; Matt. 15: 1-20; Mark 7: 1-23 give an account of some of these controversies.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. Jesus Among His Friends

38, 39. "On their way" to Jerusalem, Jesus and his apostles came to Bethany. Bethany was less than two miles east from Jerusalem, and was the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. These good people loved Jesus, and he loved them and frequently stopped with them. (John 11: 12: 1-8.) That Martha received Jesus "into her house" and served indicates that she, at least, had charge of the household affairs and was the manager, if she did not own the home. Mary and Lazarus may have lived with her. At the supper given Jesus at Bethany, Martha served, Lazarus sat with him at the table, and Mary anointed him. (John 12: 1-8.) Martha was practical. She it was who suggested that Lazarus' body had begun to decay, having been four days dead. (John 11: 39.) Mary "sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word." She sat as a pupil at the feet of the teacher. (See Acts 22: 3.) This was more important than we may think now, because the teaching of Jesus had not been written, and Mary could not read it, as we do, when he was gone. She wanted to learn all she could of his will.

40. Martha was "cumbered" ("distracted"—margin; "anxious and troubled"—verse 41) about much serving." She was not worldly-minded and did not strain to make "a spread" and a show; but nothing she had was too good for Jesus, and she wanted to prepare for him the best she had, and plenty of it. She seemed to think Jesus would approve of her course, and asked if he cared not that her sister had left her to serve alone, and requested him to bid Mary help her.

41, 42. Martha's name was repeated in order to emphasize what Jesus was about to say. While he did not condemn her, he kindly reproved her for being "anxious and troubled about many things" for him to eat. He then said that "but few things" (see margin)—or "one thing"—were necessary. Mary had chosen "the good part" of hearing the words of Jesus, which could never be taken away. This is a good and great thing to-day. The care of this world sometimes chokes out the word of God, but this was not Martha's condition. Some now are too anxious about many things to eat, especially during protracted meetings; but this is not necessarily a sign of worldly-mindedness. Like Martha, they want to do the best they can for the preacher and the meeting. Hearing and doing the word of God is "the good part." This is the food which never perishes, but endures until eternal life. (John 6: 27.)

### II. Jesus Among Foes

These verses—37-52—and comments upon them are necessary in order to get the full lesson.

(Luke 11: 37.) "As he (Jesus) spake" the things in the previous verses, "a Pharisee asketh him to dine with him." Other Pharisees invited Jesus to eat with them. (Luke 7: 36.) Jesus ate also with publicans. (Luke 5: 29-32.) He did this in order to exert a good influence and to save the lost. Christians now for the same reason should eat with people of the world (Cor. 10: 27-33) when in doing so they are not called upon to violate some principle of the Gospel. Jesus attended a wedding feast, where he performed his first miracle. (John 2: 1-11.) Christians should attend such feasts.

38. Jesus "went in, and sat down to meat," without bathing himself as a religious act. At this the Pharisee marveled. Mark 7: 3, 4



specifies and explains the practices of the Jews in regard to various washings—namely, washing their “hands diligently” before eating, bathing themselves before eating when they came from the market places, washing cups, pots, and brazen vessels, and the Authorized Version says “tables.” The law of uncleanness is plainly stated in the law of Moses, but these practices of the Jews were not parts of that law; they were tradition, extensions of the law by human wisdom and authority—“doctrines” and “the precepts of men.” (See also Matt. 15: 9.) Washing the hands, different vessels, and tables, in order to cleanse them from dirt, was not peculiar to the Jews; others did that, and do it now. This was not the practice Jesus condemns; he condemns all kinds of filthiness. But however free from dirt were their hands, vessels, tables, and themselves, the Pharisees performed these acts, nevertheless, whenever they considered themselves ceremonially unclean. They performed them as religious services or ceremonies or rites. They washed their hands “with the fist” and “up to the elbow” (margin at Mark 7: 3), and immersed their vessels, their tables, and themselves. The law required the unclean to bathe themselves (Lev. 14: 9; 15; 16: 16-24; 17: 15; Num. 19: 7, 8, 19); but the Pharisees by their theories had added to the word of God ceremonies which the law did not require, and were punctilious in performing them. Let us beware of “the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.” (Luke 12: 1.) By our own theories, “logical deductions,” and traditions it is possible to become pharisaical.

39-41. To this Pharisee Jesus made the reply contained in this lesson. He uses in Matt. 23: 25, 26 the same figure as in these verses. The Pharisees cleansed the outside of the cup and platter—that is, were punctilious in keeping outward forms, while their hearts were full of “extortion and wickedness.” Jesus says make the inside—the heart—clean, and the outside will become clean. We cannot have dishonest, insincere, and impure hearts and clean hands and holy lives. With hearts full of corruption, hypocrisy, and other sins, we may outwardly perform religious rites; but our lives cannot be pure and good. On the other hand, unholy hands and filthy lives are not products of honest, sincere, pure, and good hearts. With such hearts we worship God in spirit and truth.

God, who made the outside, made also the inside; and from the inside the outside is to be made clean, and not the inside from the outside. Make the fountain pure, and the stream will be pure; make the heart right, and the life will be right. Out of the heart proceed all evil thoughts and evil deeds. (Matt. 15: 18-20.) So Jesus told this Pharisee to turn from his covetousness and extortion and to give alms of such things as he possessed, and the outward things, the very touch of which he thought would contaminate him, would be clean to him. Ah, no, eating with publicans and sinners, mixing with people of the world, refusing to perform external religious rites never commanded by the Lord do not defile the man; and the performance of all external rites not commanded by the Lord in order to conceal the hypocrisy, filth, and rottenness of the heart will not take away the defilement.

42. “But” the Pharisees could not escape sorrow and destruction with their theories and practices. “Woe unto you Pharisees!” “Woe” is a sorrow or curse. Jesus proceeds to show how that they were scrupulous and particular about tithing the smallest garden vegetables, such as “mint and rue and every herb,” and yet “left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith.” (Matt. 23: 23.) Justice, mercy, and faith are the weightier matters



of the law, because they are the principles from which springs all service to God and man.

The Pharisees were faithless, unmerciful, and unjust. Jesus called them a "faithless generation." They believed neither Moses nor Jesus. (John 5:44-47.) They devoured widows' houses and for a pretense made long prayers. They were self-righteous. "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get." (Luke 18:11, 12.) He trusted in himself and despised others. With all their self-righteousness, the Pharisees helped to crucify Jesus.

We know that tithing means giving a tenth, and this God commanded the Jews to do. (See Lev. 27:30-32; Num. 18:21-24, 26-28; Deut. 12:5, 6, 11, 17; 14:22, 23; Mal. 3:8.) Tithes are first mentioned in Gen. 14:20. (See Heb. 7:6-10.) Jacob promised to give "the tenth" to God. (Gen. 28:22.) But this was not all God had commanded the Pharisees to do; hence Jesus says they ought to have done this even to the smallest herbs, but they should not have left the other things undone. There is great hypocrisy now in pretending to be very religious and better than others by being exacting and punctilious in carrying out theories about a few of God's commandments, even to the splitting of hairs, while faith itself, mercy, justice, and hearty obedience to God are ignored.

We have not space here to write on the great need of faith, mercy, and justice. Faith is not devotion to some theory with an intense partisan spirit; it comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:10), and "is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Mercy treats offenders better than they deserve, and is kind and helpful to the poor and afflicted. Justice considers the dues and rights of all and acts accordingly. The word of God strongly condemns all injustice. He is a Pharisee who deals unjustly, acts unmercifully, and yet engages in public acts of worship as a pretense. If such a person can honestly think God will accept his worship, he is woefully deceived.

43. Again, the Pharisees were condemned and would come to sorrow because they loved religious titles and the highest places among men—chief seats in synagogues and salutations in the market places. Jesus dwells at length upon this feature of pharisaism and shams in Matt. 23:1-12. He forbids his disciples' wearing these titles and seeking chief places, and says the greatest of all is the servant of all. Titles in matters of religion are fruits of pharisaism.

44. The iniquity and corruption of the Pharisees were like putrid bodies in unseen tombs, over which people walked and did not know it; or they were "like unto whited sepulchers, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." (Matt. 23:27.) With a fair exterior, the hearts of the Pharisees were filled with rottenness.

45. Feeling the force of what Jesus said, a lawyer took exception to it, and said Jesus reproached the lawyers also. The lawyers were the scribes, who taught the law. (See comment under verse 25, Lesson III.)

46-52. Jesus retracted nothing because of this lawyer's exception, but pronounced a curse upon the lawyers for the fearful reasons given: (1) They loaded men with grievous burdens by their teaching—bound these burdens upon the people and forced the people to carry them, as beasts of burden were overloaded—and would not so



much as lift a finger to lighten these burdens. They said, and did not. This is hypocrisy yet. (2) They consented to the deeds of their fathers in killing the prophets because they built the tombs of these prophets; as it were, they buried those whom their fathers killed. Building tombs to the memory of prophets was commendable, had they been in sympathy with the prophets and meant to honor them; but they were hypocrites in pretending to honor the prophets, while their actions showed that they would have joined their fathers in slaying them. (3) They were persecuting Jesus and his "prophets and apostles." Jesus said to them that in "the wisdom of God" he would send to them "prophets and apostles," and they would persecute and kill them. (See Matt. 23: 34.) (4) They were filling full the measure of iniquity, which measure their fathers had made and had begun to fill. (Matt. 23: 32.) Hence the work of iniquity which their fathers had begun was being consummated by them. This work of persecution and rejection of the plan of salvation began when Abel was killed. Cain's rejection of the offering of blood was a rejection of God's remedy for sin, of the blood of the Lamb of God, of the salvation of the world. "Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission." (Heb. 9: 22.)

This rejection of God's way of salvation—the destruction of sin and death and Satan, and all the effects of sin, and the establishment of the new heavens and new earth, and God's dwelling again among men—and this destruction of his prophets continued from Cain to the crucifixion of Jesus and the persecution and slaying of the apostles. Hence the course of these lawyers would bring upon them the blood of all the prophets which had been shed from the foundation of the world—"from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zachariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary."

They were not responsible for the blood of Abel and for the blood of the prophets their fathers slew; but the persecution which began with the death of Abel culminated in the crucifixion of Jesus, and the punishment which Cain and all previous persecutors had suffered culminated in the final rejection of the Jews as a nation and the destruction of Jerusalem, to say nothing of eternal punishment. So Jesus said: "Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell (Gehenna)?" (Matt. 23: 33.) This is most fearful condemnation. John the Baptist had referred to these Pharisees and the Sadducees as the "offspring of vipers," but during the preaching of John and of Jesus and the apostles they had further opportunity to repent, and now their house was left unto them desolate. (Matt. 24: 36-39.) Two prophets by the name of "Zachariah" are mentioned in the Old Testament (see Zech. 1: 1; 2 Chron. 20: 14), and the death of one of these is referred to in 2 Chron. 24: 20-22. The Zachariah mentioned here was the "son of Barachiah." (Matt. 23: 35.)

The prophet who wrote the book of Zachariah was the "son of Barachiah" (Zech. 1: 1), but we have no account of his martyrdom; still he may have been referred to in this lesson, since both prophets by that name may have been martyred. (5) These lawyers "took away the key of knowledge" from the people by their false theories and by covering the truth deep beneath the rubbish of their tradition. They would not accept Christ, and hence would not enter into his kingdom, and did all in their power to hinder others. Publicans and harlots went into the kingdom of God before them, because publicans and harlots repented at the preaching of John the Baptist, and they rejected both John and Jesus. (Matt. 21: 31, 32.) Routed



and condemned by Jesus, the Pharisees and scribes set themselves vehemently against him and laid schemes to catch something against him.

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the things which God hates.  
What should we hate?  
What must we love?  
What are essential to the Christian life?  
What persons bear good fruit?  
Of what is "Pharisee" a synonym?  
Who were the Pharisees as to religion?  
In what purpose did they originate?  
Into what did they soon degenerate?  
What did the Pharisees believe that was right?  
What did they believe and practice that was wrong?  
What is tradition?  
What are the Mishna and the Talmud?  
Give some of the theories of the Pharisees.  
In what chapter does Jesus more fully denounce the Pharisees?  
Did Jesus teach the same principles at different times and places?  
What should all teachers and preachers do now?  
Give the different ways and places in which the Pharisees attacked Jesus, and the results.
- 39, 40 At what village did Jesus stop?  
Where was Bethany?  
Whose home was there?  
Who received Jesus?  
Why did he frequently stop there?  
What shows that Martha had charge of things?  
State the importance of this at the time.
- 40 What does "cumbered about much serving" mean?  
What really was Martha's desire?  
What did she request Jesus to bid Mary do?
- 41, 42 Give Jesus' reply.  
What is meant by only one thing is necessary?  
What is said about much serving?  
What is "the good part?"  
Luke 11: 37 With whom did Jesus frequently eat, and why?  
What should Christians do in this respect?
- 38 At what did this Pharisee marvel?  
Why did not Jesus comply with the tradition of the Pharisees?  
Give their practices on various washings.  
What did the law require in regard to uncleanness?  
Why, then, condemn the Pharisees?  
In what way may people now become pharisaical?
- 39-41 Give Jesus' reply in these verses to the Pharisees.  
What must first be made clean, or what is the source of a pure and holy life or an impure and corrupt life?  
Repeat Matt. 15: 19, 20.  
What did Jesus tell this Pharisee to do?  
What will not conceal the corruption and rottenness of the heart?
- 42 Did the punctilious observance of their tradition save the Pharisees from destruction?  
For what in this verse does Jesus condemn them?  
What are "mint" and "rue?"  
What did the law teach on tithing?  
What had the Pharisees neglected?  
Why are justice, mercy, and faith weightier matters?  
In what were the Pharisees faithless, unmerciful and unjust?  
In what way did one show his self-righteousness?  
In what is there great hypocrisy now?  
What is mercy?  
What is justice?  
What is faith?  
Who acts a Pharisee now?
- 43 For what else were the Pharisees condemned?  
What does Jesus forbid his disciples wearing?
- 44 To what were the Pharisees compared?  
Why?
- 45 Who took exceptions to what Jesus said to the Pharisees?
- 46-52 Give the different reasons of Jesus for condemning the lawyers.  
In what way did they demonstrate that they would have joined their fathers in killing the prophets?  
In what way were they filling the measures of their fathers?  
In what way would the blood of all martyred prophets be required of them?  
Whom and what did Cain reject in turning from the sacrifice of blood and in killing Abel?  
In what did all this killing of the prophets culminate?  
What punishment would fall upon that generation?  
Who was Zachariah?  
How did the lawyers take away the key of knowledge?  
Who went into the kingdom of heaven before the lawyers?  
Why?  
What then did the Pharisees do?



## CHRISTMAS

This lesson is called a "Christmas Lesson" because it comes near December 25, which is supposed by some to be the birthday of Jesus. If this were known to be the birthday of Jesus, God does not desire that we celebrate it as such, for he has given no such information and directions. If God had desired the birthday of Jesus to be celebrated, he would have made that day known as definitely as the day of Jesus' resurrection.

Where Jesus was born and during the time of what rulers he was born have been made known, but his birthday is not known. Humanity seems prone to celebrate noted events and marked epochs. It has sought in vain to discover the birthday of Jesus in order to celebrate it. It seems that God purposely allowed this day to pass without being recorded, because he did not desire it celebrated.

Human nature also seems prone to neglect and to reject God's requirements and to institute ways and laws of its own. To obey God and to trustfully follow his wisdom is to honor him; it is self-glorification to follow human ways and wisdom.

God cannot be obeyed or worshiped in spirit and truth or honored by doing in religion something he has not ordained or commanded or by leaving off or undone anything he has commanded. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, and teaches that it be observed in memory of him, declaring that as often as this is done his death is proclaimed. (1 Cor. 11:17-34.)

He arose from the dead on the first day of the week, and teaches that his disciples should meet on that day to "break bread" and to otherwise worship God as he directs. (Matt. 28: 19, 20; Acts 2: 42; 20: 70; 1 Cor. 11: 20, 33; 1 Cor. 16: 1, 2; Heb. 10: 25.) No one can obey God by refusing or neglecting to do this which he has so plainly taught to be done in memory of his Son—the death on the cross, the shed blood and the resurrection—all for our sins, and in hope of Christ's coming again—and trying to celebrate the birth of Jesus, whose birthday no one knows and which celebration God has not commanded to be made. It is strange that any one claiming to be a Christian will act thus.

Let Christmas be a pleasant time, as Christians should "rejoice always"; but hilarity, foolishness, carousing, and all other sins are wrong at all times of the year. Christians at all times should abstain from "every form of evil."



## LESSON XIII—DECEMBER 24

## A LESSON IN TRUST AND PREPAREDNESS

## Luke 12: 16-31

LUKE 12. 16.—And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for *your* life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.

23 For the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment.

24 Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have no store-chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them: of how much more value are ye than the birds!

25 And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit unto the measure of his life?

26 If then ye are not able to do even that which is least, why are ye anxious concerning the rest?

27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 But if God doth so clothe the grass in the field, which to-day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more shall he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: but your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31 Yet seek ye his kingdom, and these things shall be added unto you.

American Revised Version, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons. Used by permission.

*Golden Text*—"The life is more than food and the body than raiment." (Luke 12: 23.)

*Time*—A.D. 29.

*Place*—Probably Perea; some suppose Jerusalem.

*Persons*—Jesus, his disciples, and the multitude.

*Memory Verses*—Matthew 6: 19, 21.

*Devotional Reading*—Luke 12: 22-31.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Dec. 18.—The birth of Jesus.—Luke 2: 8-20. Tu.—John the forerunner.—Luke 3: 1-6. Wed.—Jesus tempted.—Luke 4: 1-13. Th.—Jesus the teacher.—Luke 6: 39-49. Fr.—Jesus the Savior.—Luke 7: 36-50. Sat.—Jesus the friend.—Luke 10: 38-42. Su.—Jesus the king.—Isa. 32: 1-8.

## INTRODUCTION

## I. Covetousness of One of the Multitude

This circumstance, and this parable are found only in Luke, beginning with verse 13 of this chapter. "One out of the multitude" was not a disciple, but one of the many who heard Jesus. He recognized the justice and righteousness, influence and power of Jesus, and, therefore, made this request. Whether his brother had wronged him is not stated. Among the Jews the inheritance of the father was divided among the children, the eldest receiving a double portion and the rest equal parts. (Deut. 21: 15-17.) Whether this man's brother was the eldest and had all the inheritance is not stated, either; but it seems from the request that this is probable. His covetous and selfish disposition was not shown in simply wanting his own, but in losing sight of the eternal inheritance which Jesus was ready to give.



He placed earthly things above the heavenly, and desired to use the influence and power of Jesus to obtain only the earthly. His heart was so set on earthly gains that he interrupted. Jesus' reply to this was that he was not a temporal and official judge to look after earthly inheritances and to divide them among their legal owners. His mission was to save souls. He teaches the principles of right, truth, justice, mercy, unselfishness, love, and obedience, which will relieve all difficulties and right all wrongs; but he is not a temporal, political prince, forcing men to do right. He leads men into the possession of the right spirit, and teaches them to suffer wrong rather than to do wrong themselves, and fits them for the enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance.

## II. A Warning Against All Kinds of Covetousness

Jesus "said unto them"—the audience who were listening to him when the man interrupted him. This man's covetousness furnishes an example for a very necessary and much-needed lesson. "Take heed" means "to see to it," "beware," or "let it concern you." "And keep yourselves from all covetousness." (Verse 15.) Covetousness is a great sin. It is idolatry. (Col. 3: 5.) "For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." (Eph. 5: 5.) A covetous man may be more respectable among men than the drunkard and fornicator, but, so far as his salvation is concerned, he is no better. To worship money is as much idolatry as to worship any other false god or idol. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 6: 24.) People love money rather than God and serve it rather than God whenever they disobey God for the sake of money or violate one single principle of Christianity for the sake of making money; and after they have made it honestly, if they do not use it as God directs, they love and serve money rather than God.

We are sorry for the poor heathen worshiping his idols, but the professed church member who is covetous is in a worse condition. Covetousness is not simply the desire to have more by honest efforts and righteous means; it is covetous to desire that which is another's without due compensation or giving him "value received." "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." (Ex. 20: 17.)

To seek gain at the expense of others in any way or at the destruction of higher and better things is covetousness. Besides, a greedy, selfish use of one's own gains is covetousness. It is covetousness not to use that which one has made by honest means to the glory of God, as the following parable shows. It is wrong to spend what one honestly accumulates upon his own lusts. (James 4: 3.) "But thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth." (Deut. 8: 18.) "Honor Jehovah with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase." (Prov. 3: 9.) He who does not do this is covetous.

It is as much covetousness and sin to rob God as it is to rob men. "Will a man rob God? yet ye rob me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with the curse; for ye rob me, even this whole nation." (Matt. 3: 8, 9) Every man should give as God prospers him. (1 Cor. 16: 1, 2.) "Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of



necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9: 7.) He who does not do this is covetous.

Note that Jesus says, "Keep yourselves from all covetousness," or all kinds of covetousness. The reason is given: "For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." This shows that accumulating property for the sake of using it to gratify freshly appetites and lusts is covetousness. Life has higher aims and nobler purposes than simply making and spending money. "Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?" (Matt. 6: 25.) The real, true life is not to be estimated by one's earthly possessions and does not consist in them.

A fool may inherit a fortune, and a gambler, rascal, thief, robber, or defaulter may have money. Honor, integrity, uprightness, truth, purity, virtue, kindness, mercy, and love are elements of the true life, the real life. These may all be sold for money, but a world full of money cannot buy them back. Souls are sacrificed for money, but money cannot buy happiness and heaven. "But godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out; but having food and covering we shall be therewith content. But they that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Tim. 6: 6-10.) We should all teach our children that the things of earth are only means, and not the end, of existence; that the object of our creation is not to make money and to live in sensual pleasure, but to do good among men and to glorify God.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### I. The Parable of the Rich Fool

16. This parable illustrates the most common and the most dangerous form of covetousness. This rich farmer was not covetous, not a sinner and a fool, because he owned a farm. He is not accused of any dishonesty. It is not a sin to own property. Rich men may become Christians, and the Lord instructs how to live. (1 Tim. 6: 17-19.) Neither was he a fool and covetous because his ground brought forth plentifully. God made the earth beautiful, fertile, and fruitful as man's home, and he does not call a man a fool for accepting it. God directs that man shall till the soil. He commends and blesses energy, industry, and diligence; while sloth and laziness bring their corresponding curses. (Suppose you read Prov. 6: 6-11; 10: 4, 5; 13: 4; 19: 15; 22: 28; 24: 30-34; Eph. 4: 28; 2 Thess. 3: 10-12.) This man's foolishness and covetousness did not consist in his energy and industry. Industry, energy, thrift, and prosperity are no signs of foolishness and covetousness. God also sent fruitful seasons, and he was not foolish for using and enjoying them.

17, 18. He "reasoned with himself"—studied the matter over—as to how he would preserve his abundant harvests, into what he would gather his fruits; for his old barns were too small. He soon decided to pull down these and to build larger ones, and in them to gather his "grain" and "goods"—good things. He was not a fool and not covetous because he built new barns and because he took care of his abundant crops. It would have been both foolish and sinful to have allowed them to go to waste for lack of shelter. Wastefulness is sin. Jesus teaches economy in ordering his disciples to gather up the fragments, "that nothing be lost." (John 6: 12.) Frugality is praise-



worthy. Yet he could have found other places than new barns for his goods. He could have filled the mouths of the poor and the homes of widows and orphans with them; he could have used them in ministering to the wants of God's children, and so laid them up as treasure in heaven. "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also." (Matt. 6: 20, 21.)

19. This verse reveals his foolishness and covetousness. In the first place, he attributed his success and prosperity to his own wisdom and skill, and forgot God. He did not remember God in all this, or give God the credit and praise. It is easy to forget God in worldly prosperity, and it is just as foolish and perilous. Against this Moses warned the Israelites when they were about to enter the land of promise containing "great and goodly cities, . . . houses full of all good things, . . . cisterns, . . . vineyards and olive trees. . . . Then beware lest thou forget Jehovah, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." (Deut. 6: 10-12.)

Again, after enumerating all the good things of that land and warning them against forgetting God, he also warns them against saying, "My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth." "But thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth; that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as at this day." (Deut. 8: 17, 18.) This was the sin of Sodom. "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: pride, fullness of bread, and prosperous ease was in her and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abominations before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good." (Ezek. 16: 49, 50.)

This was the sin of Sennacherib, king of Assyria. He attributed his success to his own military skill, tactics, and superior wisdom. Although a heathen, God used him as his own battle-ax in chastising and destroying wicked nations; but Sennacherib did not serve God or thank God, and thought he could take Jerusalem with as much ease as he had conquered others; but God overthrew him in his haughtiness and pride. (See Isa. 10: 5-11, 36, 37.) So it was with Nebuchadnezzar. Notwithstanding God's solemn warnings through Daniel, he strutted like a proud peacock in the royal palace, and said: "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" (Dan. 4: 30; read the whole chapter.)

The Lord made Nebuchadnezzar king and gave into his hands all the kingdoms of earth. (Jer. 27: 1-11.) Thus did the beautiful Tyre, the proud mistress of the sea, sin. (Ezek. 28: 1-9.) Whether it be the poor man in his shop, the humble cottager, the farmer in his field, or the king upon his throne, he is there in the providence and by the power of God.

So the rich man in our lesson forgot that God gave him power to get wealth, and attributed his success to himself, saying to his soul: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." He did not thank God or honor God with his substance and the first fruits of all his increase. He left God entirely out of the consideration. This is as great a sin now as it was then. "The earth is Jehovah's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." (Ps. 24: 1.) No man laid it all up in order to take his "ease, eat, drink, be merry." should be remembered and have the praise. In the second place, this



man laid it all up in order to take his "ease, eat, drink, be merry," which means to be free from toil and care and to eat and drink the rest of his life in the merriment of a continual feast. He desired to spend it on his lusts. It was honestly and industriously made, but his intention was to spend it sinfully. He did not work in order to have something to give to the needy. (Eph. 4: 28.) He did not say: "God has abundantly blessed me with much fruits, and through me he will bless a hundred more." He hoarded it up for purely selfish purposes. He counted on living a long time, but just when he congratulated himself on being ready to live he had to die. His great anxiety was his temporal welfare for the future, and in preparing for that he lost his soul.

20. "But God said unto him Thou foolish one." When God says a man is "foolish," he is absolutely so. This man is not foolish in the eyes of men. Men praise him as thrifty and prosperous, wise and provident. They point their sons to him as worthy their imitation; but God calls him "foolish" and a covetous man doomed for destruction. His foolishness and sins consisted in not thanking God, in not attributing his success to God, in not honoring God with his substance, in thus robbing God, in making such a selfish use of that with which God had abundantly blessed him, and in thinking his soul's greatest need and greatest good was in eating, drinking, and having a merry time, and in thus robbing God. So when he thought he was ready for such a time, his life suddenly ended, and he was called away to leave all things behind; and whose shall they be? He can use them no further. They are now millstones about his neck to sink him in the pool of destruction. (1 Tim. 6: 9.) Had he laid up treasures in heaven, they would have met him there as blessings; but he had to leave them here, because they were laid up here.

21. This verse, too, emphasizes the man's covetousness and sin. "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." However industriously economically, and honestly it may be done, to lay up treasures for oneself and not to be "rich toward God" is covetousness and sin. The sin is in not being "rich toward God." What is it to be "rich toward God?" When one gives regularly, liberally, and according to the prosperity of the Lord, he is "rich toward God;" but the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not "rich toward God" is foolish, says Jesus. He who thinks more of this earth—its pleasures and merriments, its treasures and honors—than he does of his soul is foolish in the sight of God. Are you so foolish?

## II. "Be Not Anxious"

22, 23. "Therefore, . . . Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." "Therefore" introduces a conclusion from the above declaration. Since one cannot serve God and mammon, and since one should not serve mammon, one should not be anxious about food and raiment. The first reason Jesus gives for not being anxious is, "For the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment" and this is a very strong one. As Jesus says in another place: One does not live to eat, drink, and wear clothes; life has higher purposes and nobler aims. Jesus mentions two objects of anxiety—namely, the prolongation of life and the comfort of the body. Concerning the life, he specifies eating and drinking; and concerning the body, he specifies raiment. He does not teach that it is not necessary to eat, drink, and wear clothes, and that those necessities of life are not obtained through the God-appointed means, but that his disciples are not to be



full of care or anxiety about them. They should not worry or become despondent over the future, but should do their duty, be industrious, honest, economical, and faithful to-day.

24. This verse states the second reason for not being anxious for food, drink, and raiment. The birds neither sow, reap, nor gather into barns; yet God feeds them, and they are free from anxiety and entertain no gloomy forebodings of the future. The birds, however, do all God intends for them to do—namely, gather and apply the food God prepares for them. So, without anxiety and gloomy views of the future, God's children should use the means he has ordained to produce food and raiment.

25, 26. The third reason for not being anxious is that anxiety is unavailing; for "which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life?" Uneasiness and anxiety do not prolong life; they do not add even a cubit to the measuring rod by which life is measured. Anxiety and worry may shorten life, but certainly they do not prolong it. Since, then, anxiety cannot prolong life, why entertain anxiety about the means of sustaining it?

27, 28. The fourth reason for not being anxious is that God clothes the lilies, which neither toil nor spin, in greater beauty and richness than Solomon in all his glory; and since he does this for so insignificant a thing as the grass, which is alive to-day and to-morrow is used for fuel in the oven, will he not much more clothe his children? Not to believe this and not to trust God to do it is to exercise little faith. Timber about Jerusalem had been consumed, and grass was used for fuel in bake ovens.

29. For the foregoing reasons Christ's disciples should not anxiously inquire about food, drink, and raiment. The fifth reason for not being anxious about such things is, "For after all these things do the nations of the world seek 'after,' and Christ's disciples are different from them. Christ's disciples have a Heavenly Father who cares for them, and the Gentiles have not. 'For your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.' That God knows his children need such things and is able to supply them is the sixth reason why they should not be anxious.

30, 31. In contrast with being anxious for food and raiment, Christ's disciples are to seek "first his kingdom, and his righteousness." They are to seek these "first." To enter this kingdom and to live the righteous life it requires are to be the foremost and inmost consideration of Christ's disciples. At all times and in all things these must come first. All things must stand in the background for these, and even be forsaken, when necessary, for these. The advancement and glory of Christ's kingdom are the foremost considerations of his disciples now and receive their service and sacrifices. God's kingdom and his righteousness must be first in the prayers of Christ's disciples, first in their love, first in their labor, and first in the use of their money. When Christ's disciples seek first "his kingdom, and his righteousness," they have the promise that food, drink, and raiment will be added unto them. They will lack no good thing. The righteousness of God—obedience to him—embraces, as stated in the beginning of this lesson, some useful occupation, industry, economy, and the proper use of all God-appointed means. One cannot be idle and lazy and be righteous. In verse 32 Jesus calls his disciples his little flock and declares that it is God's pleasure to give them the kingdom.

Matthew (6. 34) says: "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow." Assured of God's watch care and protection, and in view of all that has been said above, Christ's disciples should not become "anxious for



the morrow," or become uneasy and despondent over the future. How beautiful, comforting, and encouraging the following exhortation and promise: "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus!" (Phil. 4: 6, 7). "The morrow will be anxious for itself." Each day will bring its own difficulties, burdens, and troubles; and such of to-morrow should not be borrowed and added to the ones of to-day. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." In faith and with true courage, good will, and hope, Christ's disciples should work at their honest occupations with industry, cheerfulness, and economy, and should otherwise pursue their Christian course to-day, and they will gain strength and God will give them grace and wisdom for the duties, responsibilities, and evils of to-morrow. How practical, how wonderful, and how well adapted to human life is the teaching of Jesus! His teaching contains the true philosophy of life, and is designed to make men useful and happy in this life, as well as to prepare them for happiness in eternity. This is the last reason Jesus gives for not being anxious.

## QUESTIONS

- Give the subject  
Repeat the Memory Verse.  
Repeat the Golden Text.  
Give the time, place, and persons.  
Who alone records this circumstance and parable?  
Who made this request?  
Why did he make it?  
Had he a right to his own?  
How did he manifest selfishness and covetousness?  
How do many sin in this respect now?  
What answer did Jesus make?  
What did he mean by this?  
What principles did he teach, and what will they accomplish?  
What was his mission?  
What did Jesus say to the audience?  
What is the meaning of "be-ware?"  
What is covetousness?  
Give its different features.  
How do men show they love money rather than God, or God rather than money?  
How can one rob God?  
How should one give to the Lord?  
What cannot money buy?  
In what does true happiness consist?  
What should we teach our children about life?
- 16 What would Jesus illustrate by this parable?  
Is it wrong to own property or to cultivate farms?  
What does God commend and bless?  
What does he condemn?  
Was this man foolish and covetous because he owned a farm, cultivated it, and was energetic and industrious?  
What was the result of his labor?
  - 17, 18 What did he say and then do?  
Was it wrong to preserve his fruits or to build new barns?
  - But where could he have bestowed his goods?
  - 19 In what then did this man's foolishness consist?  
In what was he covetous?  
Against what did God warn Israel?  
How did others sin—viz., Sodom, Nebuchadnezzar, Tyre, and Sennacherib? (The teacher should dwell particularly on this point and bring out every feature of this man's sin.)
  - 20 What did God then say to this man?
  - 21 What conclusion did Jesus draw?  
What is the sin emphasized by Jesus in these verses?  
What is it to be rich toward God?
  - 22, 23 What is the first reason Jesus gives for not being anxious?  
Repeat Luke 12: 15.  
What two objects of anxiety does Jesus specify?  
What does he say in regard to each?
  - 24 Give the second reason for not being anxious, so as to bring out the point which Jesus makes.
  - 25, 26 Give the third reason.  
What may anxiety do?
  - 27, 28 Give the fourth reason.  
Why was grass burned in the oven?
  - 29 Why should Christ's disciples not anxiously inquire about food and raiment?
  - 30, 31 In contrast with being anxious for the things of this life, what should be sought?  
What is meant by seeking these things first?  
What does the righteousness of God's kingdom embrace?  
Give the seventh reason for not being anxious?  
Why not be anxious for the morrow?  
Repeat Phil. 4: 6, 7.



## JESUS OUR SAVIOR AND KING

Read Matt. 21: 1-17. Commit the following:

"Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest."

"Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." (Matt. 21: 5.) This quotation is from Zech. 9: 9. Jesus, in riding thus into Jerusalem in fulfillment of this prophecy, applied to himself a prophecy which all the Jews themselves admitted referred to the Messiah.

In this he asserts his majesty as the Messiah and King, and yet in such a way as to show his kingdom is not of this world, and, therefore, not a temporal and political one. In this, too, he allowed his disciples and the applauding multitude to acknowledge him as Messiah and King.

"Hosanna" means "save, we pray." To this Mark adds: "Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David: Hosanna in the highest." And Luke adds: "Blessed is the kingdom that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." This means that Jesus is King in "the kingdom of our father David," and that he is, therefore, on David's throne. To acknowledge Jesus as the Son of David was to acknowledge him as King. In Acts 2: 25-36 Peter declares "by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven" that God, having exalted Jesus to his own right hand and having made Jesus "both Lord and Christ," has fulfilled his promise to David which is confirmed with an oath, "that of the fruit of his [David's] loins he would set one upon his [David's] throne."

Jesus is now the Messiah—God's anointed Prophet, priest, and King. No one doubts that Jesus is now "that prophet," above all prophets, who was to come. (See Deut. 18: 15, 16; John 1: 21; Acts 3: 22; 7: 37.) No one doubts that Jesus is now that Priest who was to be, not after the order of Aaron, but after "the power of an endless life" and "forever after the order of Melchizedek." (See Heb. 7: 15-28; 5: 5-10.) Then no one who believes the New Testament can doubt that Jesus is now, as "the seed of David," on David's throne, (see Matt. 21: 5; Mark 11: 10; Acts 2: 25-36; Heb. 2: 9).

"Christ" means "anointed." Prophets, priests, and kings were anointed, and Jesus is God's anointed. Why believe he is now God's anointed in being "that prophet" and God's anointed in being "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek," and not believe he is God's anointed in being King over "the kingdom of our father David," and, therefore, on David's throne? The quotations from Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in giving the prophecy of Zechariah, declare that he fulfilled this prophecy; and Peter says God fulfilled his promise to David when he raised Jesus from the dead, exalted him to his own right hand, and made him both Lord (King) and Christ.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever." (Isa. 9: 6, 7.) Since this has been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth—since he is now the "Prince of Peace," since he has received "the government" (see Matt. 28: 18; 1 Cor. 15: 24, 25), etc.—he is now also "upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom," etc.

Suppose some wise Jews had undertaken several hundred years or



any time before Jesus was born to tell how these prophecies would be fulfilled—not only Zech. 9: 9; Isa. 9: 6, 7; but also Amos 9: 14, 15, and all similar prophecies—would they have found their fulfillment in a poor carpenter of Nazareth, or humble peasant of Galilee, riding an ass' colt into Jerusalem, or in this lowly man's being led as a sheep to the slaughter, whose judgment of being innocent of all false charges and unrighteous accusations in his humiliation, as a lamb, was taken away, and in his crucifixion between thieves? Indeed they would not. They did picture out the fulfillment of these prophecies and rejected Jesus as their King and killed him because God did not fulfill these prophecies as they had expected they would be fulfilled.

This matter of foretelling how unfulfilled prophecy will be fulfilled is stated by Peter as follows: "Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, they did minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into." (1 Pet. 1: 10-12.)

Angels and inspired prophets knew that God said these things, and studied them and the prophets taught what God foretold; but neither prophets nor the angels knew *when* these prophecies would be fulfilled or *in what way* they would be fulfilled. It was not necessary to know. When they were fulfilled, as stated, the wise men (!) among the Jews rejected God's fulfillment of them and in *their ignorance* (see Luke 23: 34; Acts 3: 17; 13: 27) helped to fulfill them by murdering their Savior. Other wise men now, in their ignorance of unfulfilled prophecy, may help to rend the spiritual body of Christ, and thereby fulfill his prediction that "it is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come; but woe unto him through whom they come! It were well for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble." (Luke 17: 1, 2.)

Just so now all should study prophecy, fulfilled and unfulfilled, and should teach all that God says through them; but when men begin to search and to seek diligently "what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ," who was in the apostles and prophets, points out when he speaks in yet unfulfilled prophecy, and especially the things which, as in the olden time, angels did not know, and do not stop there, as the prophets and angels did, but teach their speculations as the truth of God, they are not only treading forbidden paths, but gendering strife. God will fulfill all his promises and bring to pass all his prophecies, and *faith* in him and *trust* in Christ implicitly rely on him to do so, knowing that not one jot or tittle of his word can fail. "We walk by faith, not by sight."



## LESSON XIV—DECEMBER 31

## REVIEW—JESUS THE WORLD'S SAVIOR—Luke 7: 11-23

*Golden Text*—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor." (Luke 4: 18.)

*Devotional Reading*—Psalm 98.

*Home Readings*.—Mon., Dec. 25.—The preaching prophet.—Luke 3: 1-9. Tu.—Jesus our high priest.—Heb. 4: 14-5: 10. Wed.—The healer at work.—Mark 1: 29-39. Th.—Jesus the great teacher.—Luke 6: 27-38. Fr.—"All have sinned"—Rom. 3: 19-23. Sat.—He came to seek and to save.—Luke 19: 1-10. Su.—The joy of salvation.—Psa. 98: 1-9.

## QUESTIONS

*Lesson I*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Relate the story of the birth of John the Baptist.

*Lesson II*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Relate the story of the birth and childhood of Jesus.

*Lesson III*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Tell of the ministry of John the Baptist.

*Lesson IV*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Relate the story of Jesus' baptism, of his temptations.

*Lesson V*.—Give the subject. Relate the facts of the fulfillment of this prophecy.

*Lesson VI*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Relate the story of Jesus healing the paralytic.

*Lesson VII*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. What is it to

love God and men. What is living by the Golden Rule?

*Lesson VIII*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. How did Jesus show his love for sinners?

*Lesson IX*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. How was Jesus the greatest missionary?

*Lesson X*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. What was Jesus' commission to the seventy?

*Lesson XI*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Tell the story of the good Samaritan.

*Lesson XII*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Give the facts of Jesus being among his friends. Give the facts in this lesson of his being among his enemies.

*Lesson XIII*.—Give the subject. Repeat the Golden Text. Relate the story of the rich fool. What lesson does Jesus teach by this?















