

LESSON NOTES.

THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE KINGS.

B.C. 975.] LESSON II. [July 12

IDOLATRY ESTABLISHED.

1 Kings 12, 25-33 Commit to mem. vs. 28-31.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
—Ex. 20. 3.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Disobedience to God ruins the brightest hopes.

DAILY READINGS.

M. 1 Kings 12. 18-23. Th. 2 Chron. 12. 1-16.
T. 1 Kings 13. 1-10. F. 1 Chron. 13. 1-22.
33, 34; 14. 19, 20.W. 1 Kings 14. 21-31. Sa. Lev. 26. 1-20.
Su. Deut. 8. 1-20.

TIME.—B.C. 975, soon after the division of the kingdom.

PARALLEL ACCOUNT.—2 Chron., chs. 11, 12.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—In our last lesson we saw the kingdom divided. The ten tribes, henceforth called *Israelites*, chose Jeroboam for their king. Rehoboam raised an army of 180,000 soldiers, and proposed to subdue the revolted tribes, but he was forbidden of God. Jeroboam immediately began to establish his kingdom, as recorded in to-day's lesson.

JEROBOAM'S PROSPECTS.—(1) Jeroboam was the free choice of the people. (2) He had good talents and experience. (3) He had the promise of success from God, if he would serve him. (4) He had a large, populous, prosperous people. The prospects before him were bright, but he ruined them by want of faith in God.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—25. *Built*—Built up, fitted for his capital. *Shechem*—The largest town in Ephraim, his own tribe; centrally situated for his capital. *Mount Ephraim*—The hill country of Ephraim. *Panuel* (face of God)—East of the Jordan on the brook Jabbok. It was for a defence of his eastern borders. Here Jacob wrestled with the angel. (Gen. 32. 24-32.) 27. *If this people do sacrifice, etc.*—If Jerusalem should continue to be the religious capital, and the people went up there three times a year as commanded, there would soon be a reunion of the kingdoms. *Kill me*—Jeroboam; to make the reunion possible. 28. *Two calves*—Probably imitations of the cherubim over the ark, and the colossal ones in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6. 23-28.) One of their four faces was that of an ox. He allied his worship to the old. They were not intended to be false gods, but symbols of Jehovah. 29. *Beth-el* (house of God)—an ancient place of worship on the southern borders of Ephraim, 12 miles north of Jerusalem. *Dan*—An old heathen shrine in the extreme north, at the sources of the Jordan. (See Judg. 18. 1-29.) 30. *Became a sin*—(1) It broke the second commandment; (2) it led to idolatry; (3) it made the people irreligious; (4) it led to the immoralities of idol worship. 31. *Lowest of the people*—Rather all classes of the people. The priests of the Levites had gone over to Rehoboam. (2 Chron. 11. 13, 14.) 32. *Feast in the eighth month*—Instead of feast of tabernacles, their thanksgiving day, in the seventh month as ordained by God.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Review of last lesson.—Jeroboam's prospects and possibilities.—His policy and the reason of it.—The foolishness of worldly policy that disobeys God.—The golden calves.—Bethel.—Dan.—The results of Jeroboam's policy.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—How long had Israel been one kingdom? (Saul was made king B.C. 1095.) When was it divided? From what cause? How many tribes went from Rehoboam? Who was chosen their king?

SUBJECT: BRIGHT HOPES BLASTED BY DISOBEDIENCE.

I. BRIGHT PROSPECTS OF JEROBOAM'S KINGDOM.—What had God promised Jeroboam? (1 Kings 11. 37, 38.) On what condition? How would his natural ability and experience aid his prospects? (1 Kings 11. 28.) By whose choice was he made king? (1 Kings 12. 20.) What was the size and condition of his kingdom? Could his life and reign have been a great success? Have we equal hopes and prospects?

II. WORLDLY POLICY (vs. 25-28).—What place did Jeroboam make his capital? Why? What other place did he fortify? What fear arose in Jeroboam's mind? Was there danger in this direction? What policy did he propose as a guard against this danger? Why was it a false policy? Is any policy good that forfeits the favour of God, or breaks his laws?

III. THE RESULT.—IDOLATRY ESTABLISHED (vs. 28-33).—What did Jeroboam do first in pursuance of his policy? What were these "calves" like? (1 Kings 6. 23-27; Ezek. 1. 5-10.) Why did Jeroboam imitate the temple symbols? Did he mean the people to worship false gods, or the true God in a wrong way? Which commandment did he break? Where did he place these golden idols? Why in these places? How did this act become a sin? Whom did he make priests? Why? What change did he make in the divinely appointed festivals?

IV. HIS BRIGHT PROSPECTS DESTROYED BY HIS POLICY.—What promise did Jeroboam forfeit by his course? (1 Kings 11. 37, 38.) What did he lose personally? (1 Kings 13. 1-6, 34; 14. 1.) How long did his line last? (1 Kings 15. 25-30.) What bad name was fastened upon him forever? (1 Kings 16. 26, 31.) What was one effect of his kingdom? (2 Chron. 11. 13-15.) Is there any true and lasting success except by obedience to God? (Lev. 26. 1-20.) Give examples. What is the promise of God to us? (Matt. 6. 33.) How was Jeroboam's failure the result of a want of faith?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. God gives us many precious prospects for this life and the next.
2. They are given on condition that we serve and obey him.
3. All worldly policy is foolish, that breaks the laws of God.
4. Religion and morality are essential to true prosperity.
5. Want of faith in God leads us to sin for the sake of some advantage.
6. God has many ways of bringing his promises to pass even when we cannot see how it can be done.
7. Faith in God, and obedience to God are the ways to a happy and successful life.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in concert.)

7. Who was chosen king of the ten tribes? ANS. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat.
8. What danger did he fear? ANS. That if Jerusalem should continue to be the religious centre of his people, he would lose his kingdom.
9. What did he do to avert this danger? ANS. He set up golden images in Bethel and Dan.
10. What was the effect? ANS. He forfeited the favour of God; he led the people into sin; and brought ruin upon his family and upon the nation.

B.C. 929-914.] LESSON III. [July 19.

OMRI AND AHAB.

1 Kings 16. 23-34. Commit to mem. vs. 30-33.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord.—Prov. 15. 9.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The wicked tend to grow worse and worse.

DAILY READINGS.

M. 1 Kings 15. 1-15. Th. 1 Kings 16. 15-34.

T. 1 Kings 15. 25-34. F. Josh. 6. 17-27.

W. 1 Kings 16. 1-10. Sa. Prov. 4. 14-27.

Su. Matt. 3. 1-12.

TIME.—B.C. 929-914. Some fifty years after the last lesson.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—1 Kings, chs. 13-16. 2 Chron., chs. 13-17. Fifty years have passed since the kingdom was divided. Neither was perfect, but Judah was the better of the two. After Rehoboam and his son Abijah there followed two long reigns of good men, who brought the people back to religion and to God. But the Kingdom of Israel grew worse and worse. Jeroboam's line ended with his son, and every one of his family was slain. The usurper Baasha was treated in the same way. Then Omri, a general, was chosen king, and he and his son Ahab led the people farther and farther away from God.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—23. *Thirty-first year of Asa*—B.C. 925. *Omri*—The sixth king of Israel; was a general in the army. His tribe is unknown. *Twelve years*—Four of these were spent in civil war,and for only eight did he reign over a united kingdom. The thirty first year of Asa marks the beginning of the eight years, not of the twelve. *Tirzah*—A few miles from Shechem. 24. *The hill Samaria*—Six miles from Shechem. A place specially fitted for his capital. *Two talents*—A talent is \$1042.50 of our money. 26. *His sin*—Setting up the idol calves, and leading the people into idolatry. 26. *Book of the Chronicles*—Not the books of that name in our Bible, but the national records. 29. *Thirty-eighth year of Asa*—B.C. 918. 31. *Jezabel*—The same name as our Isabel. She was a strong-willed woman, beautiful and attractive, and an idolater. *Zidonians*—On the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The kingdom included Tyre and Sidon. *Baal*—The sun god. 32. *The house of Baal*—A splendid temple Ahab built for this idol. 33. *Made a grove*—Rather, a wooden pillar, the symbol of Asherah or Astarte, regarded as the wife of Baal. She was like the Grecian Venus, and was worshipped with licentious rites. 34. *Hiel and Beth-el* i.e.,—Who lived at Bethel, the seat of one of Jeroboam's idols. *Built Jericho*—A curse was laid upon whosoever should rebuild this city. (See Joshua 6. 26.) His first-born died when he began to build, and his youngest when he had completed it.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The intervening history.—Omri.—Ahab.—Jezabel.—Baal.—The "grove."—The rebuilding of Jericho.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—How much time intervenes between the last lesson and this? Who reigned in the kingdom of Judah during this time? Were they good or bad kings? Name the succession of kings in Israel. What was the general condition of things there?

SUBJECT: GROWING WORSE AND WORSE.

I. OMRI.—OUTWARD SPLENDOUR AND INCREASING SIN (vs. 23-28).—Who was Omri? How long did he reign? In what years before Christ? Where was his capital? For how much did he purchase the hill of Samaria? From whom did the place receive its name? What was the character of Omri's reign? Why is it said that this evil was "in the sight of the Lord"? Whose bad example did he follow? What was Jeroboam's sin? What worse did Omri do? What is meant by "provoking the Lord to anger"? Are all good beings indignant at sin? Is God angry still with sin? What is meant by vanities? Was Omri a great man? Where was the history of his reign recorded? What lessons can you learn from his history?

II. AHAB.—WORSE AND WORSE THROUGH BAD COMPANIONS (vs. 29-34).—Who succeeded Omri? How long did he reign? What was his character? What did he do that was worse than the deeds of those who went before him? Who was Jezabel? What was her character? What influence did she have over Ahab? Why is it dangerous to make bad persons our intimate companions? What does David say of bad companions? (Ps. 1. 1; 26. 4, 5; 101. 7.) What does Solomon say? (Prov. 1. 15; 4. 14, 15; 12. 11; 13. 20; 22. 24, 25.) What does Paul say? (1 Cor. 5. 11; 15. 33; 2 Cor. 6. 14-18.) How did Ahab favour idolatry? What was Baal? What is meant here by "grove"? What account is given here showing the evil influences of the times? Where did Hiel live? Under what special evil influences? (1 Kings 12. 28, 29, 33.) What curse was pronounced on the builder of Jericho? (Josh. 6. 26.) How was it fulfilled? Was Hiel's act a defiance of God? Can such acts go unpunished?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. The tendency of the sinner is to grow worse and worse.
2. A nation may have splendid buildings and gain great victories, and yet grow worse and worse.
3. It is an awful thing to lead others into sin.
4. One wrong step leads to another.
5. God is angry with the wicked every day.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in concert.)

11. Name the first seven kings of Israel in order. ANS. Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab.
12. What was the state of the kingdom? ANS. Growing worse and worse.
13. In what respect? ANS. (1) By repeating the sins of their fathers; (2) by alliance with heathens; (3) by introducing the most immoral idolatries; (4) by leading others into sin; (5) by defiance of God.

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