

LESSON NOTES. FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE KINGS AND PROPHETS.

B.C. 892.] LESSON I. [Oct. 4.

ELISHA AT DOTHAN.

2 Kings 6. 8-23. Commit to mem. vs. 15-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.—2 Kings 6. 16.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The Christian has a multitude of unseen defenders from evil.

DAILY READINGS.

M. 2 Kings 6. 1-23. Th. 2 Chron 32. 1-22.
T. Ps. 139. 1-24. F. Matt. 26. 47-54.
W. Ps. 91. 1-16. Sa. Rom. 8. 31-39.
Su. Rom. 10. 9-21.

TIME.—Probably about B.C. 892.

PLACE.—Samaria, the capital of Israel; and Dothan, a small city twelve miles north of Samaria

RULERS.—Jehoshaphat and Jehoram, kings of Judah; Jehoram king of Israel; Benhadad II., king of Syria.

INTRODUCTION.—We now take up the history of Elisha where we left it in the last quarter. After healing Naaman, the Syrian general, Elisha worked a miracle for one of the sons of the prophets (2 Kings 6. 1-18,) and then follow the events of to-day's lesson.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—8. *King of Syria*—Benhadad II. *Warred*—Sent roving bands for plunder and perhaps to subdue. *Camp*—Or ambuscade. 10. *The king sent*—To see if the prophet knew and was correct in his warning. 11. *Sore troubled*—Heb., was in a tempest of anger. 13. *Dothan*—A small city twelve miles north of Samaria. Here Joseph was sold to go into Egypt (Gen. 37. 17.) 14. *A great host*—A large band of foot-soldiers. 16. *They that be with us are more, etc.*—God was with them, and innumerable angels, and all the forces of nature. 17. *The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire*—The mountain was the hill on which Dothan was situated. The Syrians were on the surrounding hills. The space between them and Elijah was filled with the unseen defenders. The chariots of fire were symbols of the angels and spiritual beings and secret forces of nature, which are always around God's people. 18. *When they*—The Syrians. *S-note them with blindness*—The word means, not complete blindness, but a dazed and bewildered vision, that could not see things as they are. Elijah could not lead a host of totally blind people twelve miles. 19. *This is not the way*—Dothan was not Elisha's city. He led them to his own home, Samaria, twelve miles away. 21. *Smite them*—Kill them. 22. *Set bread and water*—Change the enemies to friends. Learn a better way of treating enemies. 23. The treatment is here shown to have been successful.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Elisha.—Jehoram.—God knowing our secret thoughts.—The Christian's defenders.—Bible proof of angels and spirits being continually around us.—The blindness of the Syrians.—Elisha's treatment of them.—The true treatment of enemies.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What work did Elisha do in our last regular lesson? What miracle did he next perform? (2 Kings 6. 1-7.) How long before Christ did Elisha live?

SUBJECT: THE DEFENDERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

I. THE ISRAELITES ATTACKED (v. 8).—Who made war against Israel? In which direction was Syria from Israel? Was there any natural boundary between? What might have been the objects of this war?

II. DEFENDED BY GOD'S PROPHET (vs. 8-12).—Who was a king of Israel at this time? What kind of a king was he? (2 Kings 3. 1-3.) What did Elisha do for him in this war? Why did he do so much for such a king? What did the king of Syria think about it? How could Elisha know what was in the heart of others? Does God know our inmost thoughts? (Ps. 139. 1-4, 7-11; Prov. 15. 3; Heb. 4. 13.) What influence should this fact have upon us? When is it a comfort?

III. THE ASSAULT ON ELISHA (vs. 13, 14).—What did the king of Syria do next? Where was Elisha's home? (2 Kings 6. 24, 32.) Where was he at this time? How far was Dothan from Samaria? Whom did the king send to capture Elisha?

IV. ELISHA'S DEFENDERS (vs. 15-17).—What did Elisha's servant learn in the morning? How did he feel? How did Elisha calm his fears? How does faith drive away fear? What did God show the servant of Elisha? What like this was true of Christ? (Matt. 26. 53.) Of what were the horses and chariots of fire a symbol? Are angels and spiritual beings around us? (Heb. 1. 14; 12. 22; Ps. 91. 11; Matt. 18. 10; Luke 16. 22.) What other unseen defenders have we? (Ps. 46. 1; Matt. 28. 20; John 15. 16, 23.) Are the secret powers of nature on the side of the Christian? (Rom. 8. 23.) What lessons can we learn from these facts?

V. THE VICTORY OF PRAOR (vs. 18-23).—What did Elisha do to this army? Was the blindness total? Where did he lead them? How far was it? What did the king propose? How did Elisha have them treated? What was the good result of this policy? How should we treat our enemies? (Matt. 5. 43-48; Rom. 12. 20, 21.) Why is this a wise as well as a pious policy?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. God knows our every secret thought and feeling.
2. It is vain to fight against God.
3. The lack of faith leads to fear.
4. The Christian has countless unseen defenders.—(1) God himself, (2) the ever-present Jesus, (3) the Comforter, (4) ministering angels, (5) the forces of nature.
5. Pray God for insight.
6. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

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

1. How was Jehoram, king of Israel, defended against the attacks of the Syrians? ANS. By the prophet Elisha revealing their plans. 2. What did the king of Syria do? ANS. He surrounded Elisha in Dothan with an army. 3. How was Elisha defended? ANS. By a multitude of invisible heavenly beings. 4. What became of the Syrian army? ANS. They were blinded, and Elisha led them as captives to the king of Israel in Samaria. 5. What was done to them there? ANS. They were treated well, and sent home; and this ended the war.

B.C. 891.] LESSON II. [Oct. 11.

THE FAMINE IN SAMARIA.

2 Kings 7. 1-17. Commit to mem. vs. 14-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.—Luke 18. 27.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God fulfils his promises.

DAILY READINGS.

M. 2 Kings 6. 24-33. Th. Job 18. 5-21.
T. 2 Kings 7. 1-20. F. Ps. 78. 10-33.
W. 2 Kings 8. 1-20. Sa. Ps. 78. 42-64.
Su. Luke 18. 18-27.

TIME.—About B.C. 891.

PLACE.—Samaria, the capital of Israel.

RULERS.—Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah; Jehoram, son of Ahab, king of Israel; Benhadad II., king of Syria.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—The peace between Israel and Syria with which our last lesson closes, was not of long duration. In a year or two the Syrians made another invasion of Israel. Benhadad came with a great army and besieged Samaria.

THE FAMINE.—The siege was unexpected and the city unprepared, so that ere long the citizens were on the verge of starvation. So severe was the famine that an ass's head was sold as high as 80 shekels (\$44.00,) and mothers ate their own children. (2 Kings 6. 24-33.)

THE TRIAL OF FAITH.—And yet Elisha's God, who had wrought so many miracles through him, did not interfere to save. How this must have tried even the faith of Elisha, much more that of the king and people. The famine was, no doubt, on account of the sins of the people, and would continue till it had wrought in them a better and more repentant disposition. At length the king threatened to kill Elisha; probably because he had promised help which had not yet come. Here, again, Elisha's faith was tried. The lesson begins with Elisha's reply to this threat. The relief was about to come.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. *A measure*—A seah, a peck and a half. *Shekel*—65 cents. *Gate of Samaria*—The usual market-place. 3. *Four leprous men*—Men with the leprosy, forbidden to enter the city, but living just outside the gates, to beg of those who passed through. 4. *Fall unto*—Fall into the hands of. 5. *Uttermost part of the camp*—The outmost, that nearest the city. 6. *The Hittites*—Descendants of Heth, son of Canaan. They were from the North, as the Egyptians from the South. 10. *The porter*—The guard, consisting of a number of men. 14. *Two chariot horses*—Two chariot teams; two chariots, with their horses and men. 15. *Unto Jordan*—Which must be crossed to reach Syria. 17. *Charge of the gate*—Probably to collect taxes on what the people brought in from the Syrian camp. *Trade upon him*—Purposely, in indignation at his work.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The war with Syria.—The famine.—The trial of Elisha's faith.—The promised abundance.—The four lepers.—The cause of the Syrians' flight.—The fulfilment of the promise.—The fate of unbelief.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What was the state of affairs between Israel and Syria at the close of our last lesson? Who was king of Israel? Who of Syria? How long did this peace last?

SUBJECT: GOD'S PROMISES FULFILLED.

I. THE FAMINE IN SAMARIA.—What was Samaria? Who besieged it? What was said of the severity of the famine? (2 Kings 6. 24-29.)

II. THE TRIAL OF FAITH.—Why was this famine allowed to be so terrible, since God had often helped the people before? (Deut. 28. 47, 48, 52, 53, 58.) How would it try the faith of the king and the people? How did it try the faith of Elisha? What did the king propose to do to Elisha? (2 Kings 6. 30-33.) Why was this another trial of Elisha's faith.

III. THE PROMISE OF RELIEF (vs. 1, 2).—What did Elisha have from God? How soon would the relief come? How much was a "measure"? The value of a shekel? What did the king's officer say as to the impossibility of this? Can God relieve our wants when relief seems to us impossible?

IV. THE PROMISE FULFILLED (vs. 3-6).—In what strange way was this promise fulfilled? Why were these lepers at the gate of the city? Why did they go to the Syrian camp? Meaning of *uttermost part of the camp*? Why had the Syrians fled? Was this a miracle? Why did they leave their camp with horses tied, etc.? What did the king think when he heard the report of the lepers? What course did he take? Was it wise? What was the result? How would the fulfilment of Elisha's promise tend to make the people return to God? How would it increase their faith?

V. THE FATE OF UNBELIEF (v. 17).—What man had refused to believe Elisha? What had Elisha said to him? How was this fulfilled? What was his duty at the gate? Why did the people tread him to death? What is unbelief? Why is it wrong? How will it be punished?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. God tries the faith of his children.
2. Do not oppose the preachers of righteousness, but the sins which make their words necessary.
3. Not the doubt that explores, but the unbelief that mocks and disobeys, is punished.
4. God can supply his people's want in unexpected ways.
5. God's word never fails, neither of promise nor of threat.

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

6. Who soon besieged Samaria? ANS. The Syrians, under king Benhadad. 7. What was the result of the siege? ANS. A terrible famine. 8. What did the king do? ANS. He threatened Elisha with death for not bringing relief from God. 9. What did Elisha promise? ANS. That God would make food abundant within one day. 10. How was it fulfilled? The Syrian thought they heard in the night the sound of approaching armies, and they fled in a panic. 11. What befell the man that mocked Elisha in unbelief? ANS. The people trode him to death at the gate of the city.

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