

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON.

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.

Fourth Quarter, 1904.

OCTOBER TO DECEMBER.

Lesson IV.—October 23.—Elisha and Naaman.—2 Kings 5: 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved.—Jer. 17: 14.

EXPLANATORY.

I. NAAMAN, AFFLICTED WITH A DEPILING AND DEADLY DISEASE.—Vs. 1. Now NAAMAN (pleasant, beautiful,) CAPTAIN, general, commander-in-chief. KING OF SYRIA. Ben-hadad II., whose capital was at Damascus, and whose kingdom joined Israel on the north, lying between Israel and the rising power of Assyria in the northeast. A GREAT MAN WITH HIS MASTER. His most talented statesman, his wisest counselor, his best general and military organizer, with a strong personality. Much more than now a successful warrior in those days, when the fighting was a hand-to-hand encounter, had to be powerful in body and skilled to the highest degree with every weapon. BECAUSE BY HIM THE LORD, Jehovah (as LORD in capitals always means,) HAD GIVEN DELIVERANCE UNTO SYRIA.

A MIGHTY MAN IN (OF) VALOUR. Of personal strength, courage and skill, excelling others in his warlike exploits.

Leprosy. BUT HE WAS A LEPER. It is not easy to decide just what form of leprosy afflicted Naaman. But the common leprosy satisfies all the statements in the story.

It is a loathsome, defiling disease in its later stages. In the Gospels the word used for curing the leprosy, in every case but one, is cleansing.

II. A LITTLE GIRL SHOWS HIM WHERE HE CAN BE CLEANSED FROM HIS DISEASE.—Vs. 2-4. 2. THE SYRIANS HAD GONE OUT BY COMPANIES. Roving bands of marauders, like those who used to come down from the Scotch highlands upon the rich lowland farms, as described by Scott. BROUGHT AWAY CAPTIVE . . . A LITTLE MAID. Such scenes are being enacted today along the whole Turkish border, from Pontus Euxinus to the Red Sea. Little girls are still the prizes of Kurdish and Bedawy forays.

3. MY LORD (Naaman) WERE WITH THE PROPHET THAT IS IN SAMARIA. Note how much a child can do, like the boy with the five loaves and two fishes in Christ's time; like the young Joseph and Daniel. They cannot teach but they can make known the teacher. They cannot argue, but they can invite.

4. AND ONE (probably Naaman) TOLD HIS LORD the king.

III. SEEKING DELIVERANCE IN EARNEST, BUT FROM THE WRONG SOURCE.—Vs. 5, 7. 5. AND THE KING OF SYRIA (Ben-hadad II., son of, or worshiper of, the Syrian god Hadad) SAID, GO TO, GO. Start immediately, set out on thy journey at once. I WILL SEND A LETTER UNTO THE KING OF ISRAEL. Probably Jehoram, the son of Ahab. He thought this the easiest way to reach Elisha. Of course such a powerful man must be at the court, and in the employ of the king. AND TOOK WITH HIM. To come before any one without a gift when a favor was to be asked would have been inexcusable rudeness. TEN TALENTS OF SILVER. There was no coined money, but only ingots or bars of gold and silver of definite weights for convenience. A talent of the heavy or common standard weighed 96 lbs. avoird., and was worth \$1040 in silver. SIX THOUSAND PIECES (shekels weight) OF GOLD. A shekel of the common standard weighed about 253 grains and was worth \$6.60, so that the present consisted of \$19,400 in silver and \$58,140 in gold, or \$77,540 in all. (There was, however, a lighter standard of about half the value of the above.) TEN CHANGES OF RAIMENT. The word means costly robes, suitable for festive occasions. The Oriental custom of including clothes among gifts of honor still continues.

6. THAT THOU MATEST RECOVER HIM OF HIS LEPROSY Through the prophet at the capital. He imagined that King Jehoram would of course know all about such a man.

7. THE KING . . . RENT HIS CLOTHES, as an expression of intense grief and fear. Jehoram lived in perpetual terror of his powerful and encroaching neighbor. HE SEEKETH A QUARREL AGAINST ME. A pretext for again invading the country.

IV. THE WAY OF HUMILITY AND FAITH.—Vs. 8-13. 8. WHEN ELISHA . . . HAD HEARD. He probably had his home in Samaria, in another part of the city (2 Kings 6: 32) LET HIM COME NOW TO ME, etc. However sinful the king had been, and however powerless to help Naaman, yet true religion was not dead; and God would graciously show his power through his prophet.

9. WITH HIS CHARIOT. Chariotry, R.V., "chariots." He came with a gorgeous cortege and pomp, to show how great a man he was, demanding rather than asking a favor.

AND STOOD AT THE DOOR OF THE little cottage, waiting, in his chariot, for the prophet to come forth and humbly ask the great man what he desired.

10. AND ELISHA SENT A MESSENGER UNTO HIM. . . . GO AND WASH IN THE JORDAN SEVEN TIMES. The Jordan was twenty-five miles away. There was no healing power in its waters. The prophet treated the great general with none of the humble deference and reverence he expected.

What was the object of all this? Evidently for its moral effect,—upon Naaman; upon the Syrians, and also upon the Israelites themselves.

11. BUT NAAMAN WAS WROTH. He probably had had little faith in the humble prophet, and now what he once had felt vanished away. He wanted something fitted to his station, some expression of honor, some visible display on the part of the prophet.

12. AND NOT ARANA AND PHARPAR, RIVERS OF DAMASCUS? "The Abana is no doubt the modern Barade," says Geo. Adam Smith (which signifies "cool" in the Arabic, and "clear" in the Hebrew,) "the river to which the beautiful oasis of Damascus, owes its beauty and its very existence." The Abana was called by the Greeks "the golden flowing." It is the clearest water possible, and singularly bright in color; in the morning a full, deep emerald green, in the evening a sapphire blue. PHARPAR. A less important river than Damascus. BETTER THAN ALL THE WATERS OF ISRAEL. "Truly to the eye of man the Jordan can bear no comparison with the rivers of Damascus. Turbid and discolored from the time when it leaves the clear blue lake of Galilee till it enters the lifeless basin of the Dead Sea. MAY I NOT WASH IN THEM, AND BE CLEAN? Certainly, if there was any healing power in the water itself. But there was no divine word behind that washing, and the bright Abana could not wash away the leprosy. HE WENT AWAY IN A RAGE. Letting his anger overcome even his desire to be cleansed from the leprosy.

13. AND HIS SERVANTS (officers) CAME NEAR, gently soothing Naaman's rage, and seeking to restore him to reason. They were naturally blinded by excitement and anger. HAD DID THESE DO SOME GREAT THING. Some daring exploit, some deed of personal valor, some pilgrimage to a distant and dangerous shrine. HOW MUCH RATHER THAN, etc. The ease and simplicity of the requirement was a reason not for objecting, but for obeying. It removed all excuses. Moreover, he had to cross the Jordan on his way home, and could easily try the experiment.

V. THE COMPLETE DELIVERANCE.—Vs. 14. WENT HE DOWN. His stormy passion subsided and reason and hope again guided his conduct. He obeyed the prophet, and the prophet's word came true. LIKE UNTO THE FLESH OF A LITTLE CHILD. "In striking contrast to its former foul and diseased condition, it now became fresher and fairer than was natural in a full grown man.

The method by which God reveals to us himself is given in the words of Jesus, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Study natural law and learn of the sovereign Ruler of the universe; look out into the stellar spaces and learn of the omnipresent and omnipotent God; meditate upon the designs and adaptations of nature and learn of an all-wise Creator; but if you would learn of fatherhood and all it means of love and sympathy, you must turn your eyes upon Christ. To see him is to see God. To know him is to know the Father. To refuse to know Christ is to live and die without a knowledge of the Fatherhood of God. To all who refuse to know Christ, God is only Ruler and Judge. "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." Paul echoes this truth in the words, "they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." All men are God's off-spring in the sense meant by the heathen poet from whom Paul quoted on Mars' Hill—that is they are the result of a creative act. In that sense they sprang from God, and a study of the word translated "off-spring" confirms this fact. But in no spiritual sense is any man a child of God until he has come into right relation with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ "Ye must be born from above."—A. C. Dixon.

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Be reserved, but not sour; grave, but not formal; bo'd, but not rash; humble, but not servile; patient, but not insensible; constant, but not obstinate, cheerful, but not light. Rather be sweet-tempered than familiar; familiar, rather than intimate; and intimate with very few, and with those few upon good grounds.—Penn.

It is easy to go the way the crowd goes. It is no difficult task to float with the current. It requires aroused and persistent effort to resist public pressure, or to oppose prevalent opinion. But where duty calls, one must not be afraid to be counted singular, or out of date. He should be courageous enough to stand up for principle, and right, and truth.

At Pittston, Pa., the other day, a young lad was entertaining some of his friends with legerdemain. A trick bean, tossed in the air, caught in his month, fell in his throat and choked him to death.

The trial of the North Norfolk election protest ended in the election of Little, liberal, being declared void. The cross petition was dismissed. The North Renfrew election trial opened Tuesday before Justices Street and Moss. The petition was dismissed, each party paying its own costs. After the decision, Dunlop conservative member, announced his intention of resigning his seat. He states he did not want the seat, unless it was legally his. There had been no saw off and no bargaining.

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Notice of Sale.

T. James A. McHale (or McHale) of Halifax in the Province of Nova Scotia Hotel Clerk formerly of the City of Saint John in the Province of New Brunswick and Mary Elizabeth McHale his wife.

Notice is hereby given that under and by virtue of a power of sale contained in a certain Indenture of Assignment of lease by way of mortgage bearing date the second day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and three and made between the said James A. McHale and Mary Elizabeth McHale his wife, of the first part, and Allen O. Earle and J. Roy Campbell of the said City of Saint John Barristers at Law Trustees of the second part and duly registered in the office of the Registrar of Deeds in and for the City and County of Saint John in Libro 84 of Records folio 565, 564 and 565 thereunto referred to, the said James A. McHale and Mary Elizabeth McHale in and to a certain lot piece and parcel of land situate lying and being in Brooks Ward on the western side of the harbor in the said City of Saint John known and distinguished on a plan of that part of the said City of Saint John on file in the office of the Common Clerk of the said City by the number (218) five hundred and thirteen the said lot being fifty feet front on Saint James street and extending back preserving the same breadth one hundred feet more or less and which said lot of land was demised by the Mayor and Aldermen and Commonalty of the City of Saint John to one Mary Campbell by a certain Indenture of lease dated the twenty sixth day of February A. D. 1887 and registered in said office in Libro 50 of records folio 423 to 423 for the term of twenty years; one said last mentioned date next ensuing at the yearly rent of twelve dollars together with the said Indenture of lease and the buildings improvement, privileges and appurtenances to the said lands and premises belonging or in any way appertaining. Dated this twenty second day of August A. D. 1894.

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