

## Ahab's Covetousness.

FEBRUARY 8. B.C. 899 1. KINGS 21: 1-16.

*Golden Text, Luke 12: 15.*

**A**BOUT seven years had passed, since Elijah's journey to Horeb. He had returned to his reforming work, assisted by Elisha; ch. 19: 20. God had preserved him from the rage of Jezebel. Ahab, although the Lord had delivered him, from the Syrians, ch. 20: 13, had not repented of his evil ways, but kept "working wickedness, in the sight of the Lord." v. 25. V. 1. *Jezebel*—a city twenty miles N. of Samaria. V. 2. *Give*—Although the proposals of Ahab, may seem fair enough to us, Naboth was not at liberty to accept them. The Levitical law forbade him selling his homestead, Lev. 25: 14-28. This explains his emphatic refusal in v. 3. V. 4. *heavy-displeased*—Sin makes a man unhappy. Ahab's pride was hurt, and his covetousness disappointed, Prov. 13: 15. V. 5. *Jezebel*—This wicked woman, saw in her husband's anger, an opportunity to get rid of one more servant of the God she hated, and at the same time to obtain his vineyard for nothing. She took the whole matter in her own hands. V. 7. *Dost thou . . .* She showed some contempt for the King's weakness, acted independently, writing in his name, sealing the letters with his seal. Ahab knew, that she would not stop at any crime, yet let her do as she pleased. This was not showing himself, "a King in Israel." V. 9. *a fast*—With fiendish cunning, Jezebel used religion as a cloak, for her intended crime Comp. Matt. 26: 65. *On high*—in a foremost place. V. 10. *Sons of Belial*—A Hebrew expression for a very wicked man 1 Sam. 2: 12. *two*—Deut. 17: 6. *God and the King*—The same kind of accusations, were made by the Jewish priests against Jesus, Mark. 14: 64, Luke 23: 2. *Stone him*—the penalty of blasphemy, Lev. 24: 16. V. 11. *the elders . . . did*—They should have resisted the orders of the queen, but being afraid of her, carried out her instructions to the letter. Naboth was condemned, led out of the city, Num. 15: 35, and stoned to death. V. 16. *Take possession*—Ahab had his wish. He went down to look at the vineyard, but unexpectedly met Elijah there. By the Lord's command, the prophet announced to him, the utter ruin of his house, and the miserable death of both Jezebel and himself, v. 17-25. This was fulfilled to the letter, 1. Kings 22: 37, 38, 2 Kings, 9: 33. His sin found him out, Num. 32: 23. Sin always brings punishment. Its wages is death, Rom. 6: 23. Mark how one sinner makes many. Ahab's covetousness suggested to Jezebel, her criminal plotting. Beware of covetousness. Godliness with contentment is great gain, 1. Tim. 6: 6-9. All we can acquire of property, in this world, will not prolong our life, and may not make it happier, Luke 12: 15. If we get riches, get them by right, Jer. 17: 11.

## Elijah Taken to Heaven.

FEBRUARY 15. B.C. 896. 2 KINGS, 2: 1-11.

*Golden Text, Gen. 5: 24.*

**A**HAB was dead. His son, Ahaziah, succeeded him, and walked in the same wicked ways, 1 Kings 22: 52, but God cut his life short, 2 Kings 1: 17. Jehoram, who was now King, effected some partial reforms, yet did not turn to God, with all his heart, 2 Kings 3: 2. Elijah, who had during seventeen years prophesied in Israel, knew by the Spirit of God, that his task was about to end. V. 1. *Heaven*—God's dwelling place. There God's people will dwell with Him forever, 1 Thess. 4: 17. *Gilgal*—Near Jericho, six miles from Jordan, Josh. 4: 19. *Bethel*—Jeroboam had set up one of his golden calves there, but Elijah had established a school of prophets, 1 Kings 12: 29. Elisha knew he was about to lose his master, v. 3. *Tarry*—Knowing how God was taking him to Heaven, Elijah's humility made him wish to be alone. Three times he begs his friend to remain behind, but Elisha would not hear of it. V. 3, *hold your peace*—Their talking thus only increased his grief. V. 7. *Fifty men*—Evidently, the school was a large one. God would not be left, without witnesses in Israel, when Elijah was no more. V. 8. *divided*—near the same place, where they parted once before, Josh. 3: 3. V. 9. *before*—not after, for then he could not have heard him. It is useless to pray to the dead. *A double portion*—desiring earnestly the best gifts, not for his own glory, but to carry on worthily, the great work of reformation, yet before him. V. 10. *A hard thing*—God alone could do it. By his prophetic power, he gave Elisha a sign, to let him know if the wish was granted. V. 11. *a chariot of fire*—bright as fire, Rev. 1: 14, Psalms 104: 4. *Whirlwind*—with wonderful swiftness. Only two men are known to have escaped death, the common lot of all. Enoch, Gen. 5: 24, and Elijah. They were types of Christ, who also ascended up to Heaven, for death could have no power over him, Acts 2: 24. Many centuries after, Elijah stood with Jesus and Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration, showing that neither of these great servants of God was lost, although no man ever found Moses' sepulchre, and Elijah disappeared in the remoteness of the skies, Deut. 34: 6, Luke 9: 30. Mark how a fallen world treats eminent servants of God. Elijah, like the apostles and like Jesus, met with more enmity than friendship, more persecution than kindness. The darkness comprehends not the light, John 1: 5, and men love darkness more than light, because their deeds are evil, John 3: 19. Although we may not hope to escape death, as Elijah escaped it, it will have no terrors for us, if all our trust is in the Lord Jesus. For a believer, to die is to go to Jesus, "which is far better." Phil. 1: 21, 23.