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## Sabbath School.

## BIBLE LESSONS.

FROM PELOUBET'S SELECT NOTES.

Third Quarter.
Lesson III.—July 19. 1 Kings 16:29-34.

### OMRI AND AHAB.

GOLDEN TEXT.

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

INTERVENING EVENTS.—1 Kings, chaps. 13-16; 2 Chron., chaps. 13-17.

I. THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH. After a 17 years' reign Rehoboam died, and his son Abijah reigned for three years. He was wicked like his father, but he seems to have been a great warrior, and he assumed the state and pomp of an oriental monarch. He was followed by two good kings,—Asa, who reigned 41 years, and Jehoshaphat, who reigned 25 years. Under them was a great reformation and revival of true religion. Idolatry was checked, the national religion was established in all its splendor and influence, and the kingdom rose to great power and influence.

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL. On the other hand, the kingdom of Israel grew worse and worse. So many of the better people had left it for Judah, on account of the idolatrous policy of the rulers, that the more turbulent elements had too great ascendency. Jeroboam died after a reign of 22 years. His son, who simply repeated his father's sins, reigned two years and then was dethroned, and the whole lineage of Jeroboam was put to death by Baasha, who usurped the throne. He reigned 24 years, and maintained an almost constant war with Asa, king of Judah. His reign too was but a repetition of Jeroboam's sin. Elah, his son, succeeded him, and reigned two short years, when he was slain by Zimri, one of his chief generals. Zimri reigned but seven days, when he was destroyed, having set fire to the royal palace, and burnt himself and all the treasures in the flames. Then Omri, another general of the army, was chosen king by the army, B. C. 929.

I. OMRI'S REIGN.—Vers. 23-28. 23 *In the thirty and first year of Asa.* The fiftieth year of the divided kingdom, B. C. 925. This reign marks the commencement of his possession of the whole kingdom, four years after his first election as king (1 Kings 16:16, 21, 22). *Began Omri to reign.* Omri was the sixth king of Israel, and the founder of the third dynasty, which lasted for three generations and four kings. His father's name and tribe are unknown. He was the commanding general of the Israelite army. *Twelve years.* From his election as king. For four years he held a contested reign with Tibni, whom half the people chose for their king. But Omri had possession of the capital and the army, and at length Tibni died and Omri reigned. *Tirzah,* or delight.

24. *And he bought the hill Samaria.* As Constantine's sagacity is fixed by his choice of Constantinople, so is that of Omri by his choice of Samaria. It combined, in a union not elsewhere found in Palestine, strength, beauty, and fertility. It commanded a full view of the sea and the plain of Sharon on the one hand, and of the vale of Shechem on the other. It stood amidst a circle of hills, commanding a view of its streets and slopes, itself the crown and glory of the whole scene. Politically it was rather more central than Shechem, and probably than Tirzah. In a military point of view, it was admirably calculated for defence. The country round it was peculiarly productive. The hill itself possessed abundant springs of water. Samaria continued to be the capital of Israel as long as the kingdom lasted, and was a marked town even in Christ's time. *For two talents of silver.* Worth in our money $3,285, according to Schaff. But the purchasing power of the money was at least ten times as great then as now. *After the name of Shemer . . . Samaria.* It is not improbable that the vendor bargained that the land should retain his name (cf. Psa. 49:11). The reluctance of the Israelite to part with his patrimony, even to the king, is brought out very strikingly in chap. 21. Shemer, in selling his choice parcel of land for a capital, might well wish to connect his name with it. While naming his city after Shemer, Omri may also have had in view the appropriateness of such a name to the situation of the place. It signifies watch-tower.

25. *Omri wrought evil.* Of Omri it is said that in the eyes of the Lord his conduct on the throne was worse than that of all the kings before him. *In the eyes of the Lord.* In the eyes of men he was rich and prosperous, and may have seemed as good as others. But the Lord knew better, and judged him by the standard of faithfulness to duty. What, without religion, is so-called civilization? The wicked seem to think God does not know what they do. *And did worse than all.* In sin and departure from God there are always gradual advances, just as in godliness and well-doing,—one step follows another, and the slavery of sins is ever increasing (2 Tim. 3:13).

26. *Walked in all the way of Jeroboam.* The other kings had done this, but probably Omri had devoted himself to the new religion with greater earnestness and energy, and conducted it on a grander scale. *Provoke the Lord . . . to anger.* Not passion, but indignation against sin. *With their vanities.* Their idolatries. Idols are vanities because they have no power to help those who trust in them.

27. *Now the rest of the acts of Omri, Book of the Chronicles.* Not the Books of Chronicles in our Bible, but something of the nature of public annals, giving an account of the events of each reign. They were the materials of history.

28. *Slept with his fathers.* The customary formula in speaking of the death of the kings, whether good or bad (1 Kings 2:10; 11:43; 14:20; 15:8, etc). No conclusive inference can be drawn from it respecting the belief in a future state.

II. AHAB'S REIGN.—Vers. 29-33. This reign occupies all the rest of the First Book of Kings. It owes this distinction to the ministry of the great prophet Elijah. It may be that "every age thinks itself a crisis," but no one can fail to see that this was one of the veritable turning-points of Jewish history. One of the real "decisive battles of the world,"—that between the Lord and Baal—was then fought out. No wonder that our historian felt constrained to chronicle at length the transactions of a reign so pregnant both with good and evil for the people of the Lord, and for the faith with which they had been put in trust.

30. *And Ahab . . . did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him.* The same words are used of his father in ver. 25. It is not difficult to see in what way Ahab's rule was worse even than Omri's. The latter had gone beyond his predecessors in the matter of the calf-worship. But the calf-worship, however it may have deteriorated in process of time, was nevertheless a cult, though corrupt and unauthorized, of the one true God. Under Ahab, however, positive idolatry was established and fostered,—the worship of foreign and shameful deities. In the long catalogue of royal transgressors, the name of Ahab stands unenviably prominent. "There was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord." Moral weakness was his undoing.

31. *And he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal.* The weakness and the sin of Ahab is seen in his putting himself deliberately in the strongest temptation to forsake God, by marrying such a heathen as Jezebel. That person is already more than half fallen who deliberately rushes into temptation. *Jezebel,* or chaste. It is the modern name Isabel. This woman came of a fierce and profligate family, and united in herself stern religious fanaticism with the luxurious dissoluteness of an oriental queen. Her strong and fierce character soon acquired resistless influence over the weak Ahab, and introduced untold mischief into the kingdom, and even into the kingdom of Judah, through the marriage of Athaliah to Jehoram. The name Jezebel became and is to this day, the synonym for female wickedness, especially that of a ferocious type. The marriage of Ahab and Jezebel took place before he ascended the throne, and was probably the work of Omri. In Jezebel we vainly look for one womanly relenting, one gentle weakness, to soften the hard lines of more than masculine firmness. *And went and served Baal and worshipped him.* Baal and Ashtoreth, or Astarte,—whence our word star,—were the chief Phœnician deities, male and female respectively. The sun was regarded as the emblem of Baal, and the moon, or the planet Venus, as that of Ashtoreth. Hence the worship was connected with that of the heavenly bodies.

32. *He reared up an altar for Baal.* Besides this altar, Ahab erected a column or pillar (2 Kings 10:27) in the temple of Baal, probably like the pillars in the great temple at Tyre (Menandr. Fr. 1; Herod. iii. 44). *The house of Baal.* A temple, we can hardly doubt, of considerable splendor. Jezebel would not be satisfied with less.

33. *And Ahab made a grove.* Rather, a wooden pillar which represented the Phœnician goddess Astarte. The worship of Astarte was simply licentiousness under the guise of religion.

III. THE REBUILDING OF JERICHO.—Ver. 34. The restoration of this city as a fortification upon which Joshua had pronounced a curse (Josh. 6:26), is mentioned as a proof how far ungodliness had progressed in Israel; whilst the fulfilment of the curse upon the builder shows how the Lord will not allow the word of his servants to be transgressed with impunity.

34. *In his days did Hiel the Bethelite* (a native of Bethel). A few miles northwest of Jericho. He was, undoubtedly, a man of wealth and station, instigated by Ahab. *Build Jericho.* Jericho, on the border of the tribe of Ephraim (Josh. 16:7), which was allotted to the Benjamites (Josh. 18:21), had come into the possession of the kingdom of Israel, and formed a border city of that kingdom, through the fortification of which Ahab hoped to secure to himself the passage across the Jordan. *He laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born.* In exact accordance with the word of Joshua's curse, he lost his first-born son when he began to lay anew the foundation of the walls, and his youngest when he completed his work by setting up the gates. We need not suppose that Jericho had been absolutely uninhabited up to this time. The contrary is implied in 2 Sam. 10:5, and perhaps in Judges 3:13. But it was a ruined and desolate place, without the necessary protection of walls, and containing probably but few houses. Hiel re-established it as a city, and it soon became once more a place of some importance (see 2 Chron. 28:15).

PRACTICAL.

1. The tendency of sin to grow worse and worse. He who once begins to sin never knows where it will lead him.

2. Frequently the sins of the parents are "visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those who hate God."

3. Vers. 24, 25. A man may be skilful and useful to himself and others in all material and worldly things, whilst in spiritual and divine things he works only mischief and destruction. What, without religion, is so-called civilization?

4. Architectural splendors and military victories are not proofs of national prosperity.

5. Evil men are generally seducers of others to sin.

6. It is a terrible thing to sin against God. It is more awful to lead others into sin.

7. Ahab's whole life is a mournful illustration of resisted and scorned warnings,—slighted messages of remonstrance and mercy. The God he rejected strove with him to the last.

8. Ver. 31. Ahab's marriage with Jezebel. Show from this (1) how one wrong step leads to another. This marriage to the establishment of idolatry. (2) How companionship influences character. The stronger moulding the weaker. "A companion of fools shall be destroyed." (3) How personal fascination may cause men to swerve from rectitude. Jezebel's fascinating power was regarded as witchery, and became proverbial (Rev. 2:20). (4) How young people should be warned against unholy alliances. Marriage makes or mars character, hope, and blessedness (2 Cor. 6:14). "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

9. God is angry with the wicked every day.

10. Ver. 34. Hiel lived in Bethel, the city where one of Jeroboam's calves was set up. Like Lot in Sodom, men are contaminated by their surroundings and companions.

Omri not only sinned, but led others into sin. Why do bad men wish to make others bad? (1) Because they love company in sin. (2) Those who refuse to sin with them are a reproof. (3) Each sinner sanctions the others with his approval. (4) Because people think it safer to sin in company. (5) Because they want others to be as bad and unhappy as they are.

Dwell largely on the effects of bad companions. Jezebel was the ruin of Ahab. He was too weak to withstand her fascinations.

ILLUSTRATION. Compare Jezebel with Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth. Note what the Scriptures say of bad companionship.

David's warnings (Psalms 1:1; 26:4, 5; 101:7).

Solomon's warnings (Prov. 1:15; 4:14, 15; 12:11; 13:20; 22:24, 25.

### Lost.

It is of a young man—one who two years ago looked with pure, truthful eyes into the face of stranger and friend, we write that sad word—*lost.* He did not go down in the terrible storm that wrecked scores of precious lives; he was not harmed in the fearful disaster that overtook his train; he did not sicken when the plague swept over his place of abode.

This young man walks the streets of his native city to-day with little change of outward manner; but if you stop and look into his face, looking deeper for what the man's soul says of itself through his countenance, you will understand in what sense we use the saddest of all terms—*lost.* The clear pure expression is clouded; the fair innocence of brow and lips gone. He is still as courteous, and almost as winning as before; our hearts warm towards him, and then we go away with a deep, heavy sadness that the apostles words about "evil communications" are true of our friend. We had hoped and expected better things of him—of him whom we had admired and trusted, and followed through many dangers with our prayers.

It was, apparently, a small temptation to which he yielded at first, one that appealed to curiosity rather than to desire; but, when was ever a soul safe in looking in curiosity upon a wrong. Curiosity indulged opened the door to further temptation, and then the man followed step by step until his strength to resist gave way, and he walked hand in hand with the sins.

When one once becomes the companion of impure thoughts the moral downfall is speedy: nor does it take long for such companionship to write its record upon a young man's fall; and they who love him best are quickest to read the signs.

Oh, if there is a cause for sorrow upon earth it is to see one we love, with talent and promise for truth and goodness, turn away from purity and from God. Death is a light affliction when compared with this; *lost* has a cheerful meaning when it signifies change of state and not change of character.

If angels could weep such a loss as this would open the fountain of their tears. If saints redeemed and glorified look back upon the world they have left, this view of a soul knowing its duty, its privilege, its destiny by a given course, turning from uprightness to folly and wickedness, must excite all the grief, all the indignation heavenly spirits can feel.

But now, no we who weep, or angels who stand to guard, or saints redeemed from their sin can feel as the Saviour who died for this man's transgressions feels an the sight of his folly and his loss. Better than we all he knows what sin costs the sinner, and the infinite price at which alone it may be stoned.

We have written of this youth the dread word *lost*; there is another word we long to inscribe on heart and page, *saved.* He has not gone down so far but that Christ and his own manhood may bring him up. Perhaps the last would fail; but we know that the other has almighty power. We have seen worse ills than his cured by the great Physician.

There was once a man who, against light, and knowledge, and conscience, went far astray from virtue and from God.

At length he stopped to think what he was doing, and where these ways would lead. Led by the spirit of God to repent and he resolved to break the dreadful spell that bound him. For a time it was a hard struggle as he wrestled with long habits of shame and sin, calling with strong prayers and tears upon Christ, in the hour of temptation to save him.

Through Christ he conquered; and he stood redeemed and renewed in the purity and integrity of his manhood, a monument of the power and faithfulness of Christ to hold all who desire to be kept from falling. We have heard the testimony he gave of what Christ had been to him; of the debt of love and gratitude and obedience he could never repay.

"I have known," said he "much of this world; I have felt much in my own experience of its good and of its evil. And I do most earnestly and solemnly believe that no man once fallen from his standard of moral purity can rise up again by his own effort, or sustain of himself his aspiration for a new life. He can be renewed in spirit or in life only by Christ taking possession of his heart; by Christ dwelling within and above, and around him, when he goes out and when he comes in. It is Christ abiding with the repenting sinner that makes and keeps him safe. This is my assurance, my testimony, my joy, that Christ is sufficient for my greatest and most difficult need."

### Dangerous Companions.

When a young man has made up his mind to walk on the edge of a precipice for the sake of seeking prospects, he always finds plenty of company. There are abundance of people with strong heads who, having walked these paths until they are quite certain of their foothold, are ready to go out with new beginners. If these accidently lose their heads and fall over, whose fault is that? Not theirs, of course; they never fall. They look where they step, and their heads do not turn.

It is not the drunkards and thieves who are dangerous companions to boys. O dear, no! It is your respectable young men that have learned to sip discreetly in all sorts of forbidden fountains, and nibble here and there carefully of the forbidden fruit. They drink, but are never drunk. They have the knack of knowing all that is to be known in the ways of wickedness, and yet keeping even step with the righteous. They are never going to hurt themselves, they tell you, but they believe in a certain freedom. They could never see the sense of temperance pledges. For their part they don't need them, and if there is anything they abominate, it is your radical straight-laced people, who keep always in the dusty turnpike for fear the precipice. But sometimes men get too near the edge of the precipice, and then—what then?

Young man, take counsel of the wise, and walk safely.

"Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go; keep her; for she is thy life. Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

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| Truro Accommodation, | 4.45 p. m. |
| Express for St. John and Quebec, | 6.10 p. m. |

On Monday, Wednesday and Friday, a Pullman car for Montreal will be attached to the Quebec Express, and on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday a Pullman car for Montreal will be attached at Moncton.

TRAINS WILL ARRIVE AT HALIFAX.

| | |
|---|---|
| Truro Accommodation, | 8.30 a. m. |
| Express from St. John and Quebec, | 9.15 a. m. |
| Pictou Accommodation. | 1.48 p. m. |
| Day Express, | 7.45 p. m. |

All trains are run by Eastern Standard Time.

D. POTTINGER,
Chief Superintendent.

Railway Office, Moncton, N. B.
May 26th, 1885.

## Windsor and Annapolis Railway.

1885. SUMMER ARRANGEMENT. 1885.

| Miles. | TRAINS GOING EAST. | Exp. dy. A M | Acc. M W F. A.M. | Acc dy P.M. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Halifax,—leave, | 7 00 | | 2 30 |
| 1 | Richmond, | | 7 15 | 2 33 |
| 34 | Windsor Junction, | 7 38 | 8 25 | 3 30 |
| 40 | Newport, | 8.53 | 10 50 | 5 35 |
| 46 | Windsor, | 8.55 | 10 50 | 5 35 |
| 53 | Hantsport, | 9 17 | 11 20 | 6 03 |
| 64 | Wolfville, | 9 49 | 12 19 | 6.48 |
| 66 | Port Williams, | 9 55 | 12.22 | 6 55 |
| 71 | Kentville—Arrive | 10 08 | 12 45 | 7 10 |
| | Do—Depart, | 10.25 | 1 15 | |
| 78 | Berwick, | 10 51 | 2 07 | |
| 88 | Aylesford, | 11 04 | 2 30 | |
| 95 | Kingston, | 11 19 | 3.15 | |
| 102 | Middleton, | 11 34 | 3 43 | |
| 116 | Bridgetown, | 12 10 | 4 45 | |
| 130 | Annapolis—arrive | 12 50 | 5 40 | |

| Miles. | GOING EAST. | Acc. dy. A.M. | Acc. T.T.S. | Exp dy. P.M. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Annapolis—leave | 5 30 | | 1 30 |
| 14 | Bridgetown, | 6 25 | | 2 10 |
| 28 | Middleton, | 7 25 | | 2 47 |
| 35 | Kingston, | 7 51 | | 3 05 |
| 42 | Aylesford, | 8 33 | | 3 20 |
| 51 | Berwick, | 8.55 | | 3.33 |
| 59 | Kentville—arrive | A.M. 9 45 | | 4 00 |
| | Do—depart, | 5 40 | 10 40 | 4.15 |
| 54 | Port Williams, | 6 00 | 11 00 | 4 28 |
| 66 | Wolfville, | 6 10 | 11 10 | 4 34 |
| 77 | Hantsport, | 6 58 | 11.55 | 5 06 |
| 84 | Windsor, | 7.10 | 12 45 | 5 30 |
| 90 | Newport, | 10 36 | 3 10 | 6 50 |
| 116 | Windsor Junction, | 10 00 | 3 10 | 6 30 |
| 129 | Richmond, | 10 42 | 3 51 | |
| 130 | Halifax—arrive, | 10 45 | 3 55 | 7 35 |

N. B.—Trains are run on Eastern Standard Time. One hour added will give Halifax time.

Steamer 'Empress' leaves St. John every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 8.00 a.m. for Digby and Annapolis, returning from Annapolis same day.

Steamer "Evangeline" leaves Annapolis every Monday, Wednesday and Friday p. m. for Digby.

Steamer 'Dominion' leaves Yarmouth every Saturday evening for Boston.

International steamers leave St. John, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8 00 a. m. and all rail line trains daily at 6 30 a. m. and 3 30 p. m. except Saturday evening and Sunday morning.

Through tickets by various routes on sale at all stations.

P. INNES,
Kentville, 1st June, 1885. General Manager.

1884. 1885.

INTERNATIONAL STEAMSHIP CO'Y.

SUMMER ARRANGEMENT.

Four Trips a Week

ON and after MONDAY, MAY 18th, and until further notice, the new and beautiful Steamers STATE OF MAINE and CUMBERLAND will make THREE TRIPS A WEEK, leaving St. John every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday Mornings at 8 o'clock, (local time) for Eastport, Portland and Boston, connecting at Eastport with steamer "Charles Houghton" for St. Andrews, Calais and St. Stephen.

Returning will leave Commercial Wharf, Boston same days at 8 o'clock, and Portland at 5 o'clock, p. m., for Eastport and St. John.

Commencing June 27th, the favorite Steamer NEW BRUNSWICK will leave St. John every SATURDAY at 8 p.m. for Boston direct arriving at Boston Sunday Evening.—Returning, leaving Boston every Thursday, at 5 p. m., arriving at St. John Friday evening.

Through Tickets can be procured at this office and R. Chubb & Co's to all points of Canada and the United States.

No claims for allowance after Goods leave the Warehouse.

Freight received Wednesday and Saturday only, up to 5 o'clock, p. m.

H. W. CHISHOLM,
Reed's Point, Agent.

SHOW CASE!
FOR SALE.

One Show Case, Nickel Frame, 10 feet long.

WILL BE SOLD LOW FOR CASH.

E. A. Powers,
92 Germain Street.

BUFFALO ROBES
SELLING AT
A Very Small Advance on Cost.

SLEIGH ROBES.
200 GENT JAPANESE ROBES,
100 BLACK JAPANESE ROBES.
Selling this season at lower prices than ever before. C. & E. EVERETT, Furriers,
11 King Street.

JUST RECEIVED!
Florida
Oranges.

TAYLOR & DOCKRILL,
84 King Street.