

## THE QUARTERLY REVIEW

## For Bible Classes: JUDAH'S DECLINE AND FALL

The Golden Text is Psalm 34:14,—“Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.” The two months' Lessons under review deal with the decline and fall of Judah, resulting from the failure of its people to obey the teaching of this word of wisdom.

It would be well to have a chart prepared, outlining the story of Judah from the invasion of Sennacherib (Lesson I.), and including the tale of Manasseh's wickedness and penitence (Lesson III.) and the account of Josiah and his three sons who succeeded him,—Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah (see 2 Kgs., chs. 22-24). The important purpose of the Review is to illustrate the place of God's will in national history, and in the lives of individuals. Drill in the outstanding facts will fix them in the mind. The following are the main points to be covered:

1. *The unfolding will of God in national affairs.* In Lesson I. bring out by questioning the reality of God's presence in His world, determining national history, protecting those who do His will and overthrowing their foes. Emphasize the testimony of the Lesson incident to the power of prayer. Dwell on the relation of God's power to natural agencies in the fulfilment of His will. Discuss the manner in which the surrounding nations were used to carry out purposes unknown to themselves. Emphasize the truth that in modern times, as well as in days long past, God is exercising His control over human affairs, and according to the same laws.

2. *How individuals are under God's care and control.* Refer to the important place rulers filled in the destiny of God's people, and show how they were also held responsible for individual conduct and judged accordingly. Lesson III. reveals the will of God at work in an individual life and character. When Manasseh was rebellious, he faced retribution; when he repented, he found mercy. Ask for illustrations of how punishment follows sin with absolute certainty,—for example, in the case of the drunkard. Use Lessons IV. and V. as an illustration of loyal devotion to God, zeal for the services of His house and obedience to His will as revealed in His holy Word. Over against Lessons IV. and V. may be placed Lesson VI., with its account of Jeremiah's faithful warnings, which made a powerful impression on the national leaders, but resulted in no real amendment in king or people, and Lesson VII., with its daring defiance of God's warnings and its impious attempt to destroy God's Word.

3. *The outlook for Judah into the future.* Under this heading take up, first, Lessons VIII. and IX. Dwell on Jeremiah's constant and courageous prediction of the doom that would surely come upon Jerusalem and Judah for the sin of their people and the fulfilment of that prediction in the fall of the holy city, the sad fate of Zedekiah and the captivity that followed. Emphasize the teaching that the punishment which thus came upon the chosen nation was meant, not to destroy it, but to purge it from sin. This will lead up to Lesson II., which should be made the climax of the Review, with its glorious promises of the coming Messiah, the Saviour, not of the Jews only, but of the world.

Apply the Lessons throughout to the life of individuals and the nation to-day. God is warning and teaching us, and His great purpose is to lead us to yield to the sway of the Saviour King of His own appointing.

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