

The Lesson Word Studies

NOTE.—These Word Studies are based on the text of the Revised Version.

THE REIGN OF AMON.—The wicked King Manasseh was succeeded on the throne of Judah by his equally wicked son, Amon. The two parallel accounts of his reign are found in 2 Chron. 33, 20-25 and 2 Kings 21, 18-26. Although his reign was short it is of special interest to us, since his name occurs in the genealogical table of the house of David (1 Chron. 3, 14), and in that of the ancestry of our Lord also (Matt. 1, 10). It is also mentioned in connection with his son Josiah in Jer. 1, 2; 25, 3; and Zeph. 1, 1. Amon ascended the throne in the year 641 B. C., at the age of twenty-two years, and reigned two years, being succeeded in 639 by his son Josiah. During his short reign Amon repeated all the idolatrous practices of his father's earlier years. The sad state of affairs during his reign may be inferred partly from the statement that "he walked in all the ways that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshiped them," 2 Kings 21, 21, and partly from the state of affairs which his successor, Josiah, found and sought to change by a thorough reformation. Amon was the victim finally of palace intrigue, being slain by conspirators who, in turn, were brought to justice by the people, and his youthful son placed on the throne.

Verse 1. Josiah—King of Judah from B. C. 639 to B. C. 608; the son of Amon, the grandson of Manasseh. Ascending the throne at the age of eight years, the early part of his reign during the years of his minority was evidently characterized by idolatrous practices such as had been introduced and fostered under both his father and grandfather. When at last he took the reins of government definitely into his own hand he introduced and carried to a successful issue a national reform which became epoch-making (comp. lesson text). The main features of this reform were the cleansing and thorough renovation of the temple, the centralization of worship at Jerusalem, and the removal of local sanctuaries throughout the kingdom. Concerning the years which followed the reformation little is known. These seem to have been years of peace and prosperity. Finally in B. C. 608 Josiah entered upon the ill-advised campaign against the king of Egypt, who had invaded Syria, and as a result lost his life in the battle of Megiddo (comp. 2 Kings 23, 29).

3. In the eighth year—At the age of sixteen.

He began to seek after the God of David—During all the years of national decline and idolatry there had been a small reform party of faithful worshippers of Jehovah, and this party, doubtless, included some men high in station and official position. Whether, therefore, the king of his own initiative sought after God and determined on reform measures, or whether he had had the good fortune to come under the influence of members of this reform party during the early years of his life, is not certain.

And in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem—This would be at the age of twenty; but see Introductory Note on CHRONOLOGY in Word Studies for next Sunday's lesson.

High places—Local sanctuaries on hilltops in different parts of the land. Their introduction into Israel was in imitation of the customs of surrounding heathen nations. The worship at local sanctuaries tended to an adoption of many other heathen practices and even to the fostering of the belief in local divinities. The centralization of worship in one place among the Hebrews was a great help in maintaining in its purity the belief in one God.

Asherim—The masculine plural of Asherah as Asheroth is the feminine plural of the same word. The Asherim were wooden poles of great size planted beside the local altars as a symbol of deity. On them was sometimes engraven the name, the image, or the symbol of the god or goddess worshiped at that particular shrine. It is quite possible that many of these Asherim were planted beside altars at which Jehovah only was worshiped.

Graven images—Those carved in wood and stone; that is, engraved.

Molten images—Images made from molten metal and cast in molds.

4. Baalim—Compare Word Studies on lesson for July 2.

5. Burnt the bones—The disinterred remains of buried priests. Thus desecrating the altars in the sight of all the people by bringing in contact with them that which was dead. It was also an act that tended to bring in dishonor the priests.

6. In the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon, even unto Naphtali—That Josiah was able to extend his reform measures beyond the boundary of his own kingdom into Samaria, then an Assyrian province, indicates the practical independence from Assyria which Judah at this time enjoyed. The explanation of this state of affairs is that the Assyrian empire though not yet overthrown was at this time greatly weakened.

In their ruins—The Hebrew of this

phrase is obscure. Authorized Version, axes, seems

7. Sun image of the sun by Kings 23, 11. dedicated to the ing been removed. The worship of mentioned by particular form among the orig and among the l all probability i

8. Shaphan a scribe.

The record chronicle.

9. And they priest, and de account in 2 K sent to Hilkiah "sum," that is, money collected of the repairing reminds one stron carried out by Jo Jehoiada the prie

A BAD I

What surprises being descended fr grandfather, was worse. Our second only a good boy, strength to manhe to the end of l to expect that a down sooner or l hereditary foundat sound, that there weakness in the fr will certainly give inevitable pressure to have had a sound tests of many year places—which requi carefully about the give up the idea fatality. In some may dominate the l cases personality i heredity.

THE MO Besides, in the s not leave out anoth the mother element. have good wives, and may have good mo