

LESSON NOTES

THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE KINGS.

B.C. 910.] LESSON IV. [July 26

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.

1 Kings 17. 1-16. Commit to mem. vs. 5-9.

GOLDEN TEXT.

So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord.—1 Kings 17. 6.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God cares for his own children amid national calamities.

DAILY READINGS.

M. 1 Kings 17. 1-16. Th. Ps. 31. 7-24.  
T. 1 Kings 8. 22-40. F. Ps. 41. 1-13.  
W. Deut. 28. 15-28. Sa. Prov. 3. 1-10.  
Su. Luke 6. 27-38.

TIME.—Elijah appeared to Ahab probably about B.C. 910, in the tenth year of Ahab's reign.

PLACE.—(1) Samaria. (2) The brook Cherith, a gorge opening into the Jordan, but whether on the west, near Jericho, or on the east, in Gilead, is unknown. (3) Zarephath, a town on the Mediterranean, between Tyre and Sidon.

RULERS.—Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, 914-899; Ahab, king of Israel, 918-896; Mesha, king of Moab; Ethbaal, king of Tyre.

THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH was enjoying great prosperity and happiness under a good king, who favored religion and education.

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL was in a sad state of irreligion and idolatry, corrupt in morals, persecuting the servants of Jehovah, so that only 7000 remained true to God and his worship.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. *Elijah*—(1) His name means "Jehovah, my God." (2) He was a native of Tishbe, a town in Gilead, a wild, mountainous country east of the Jordan. (3) His dress was a girdle of skin, and a mantle or cape of sheep-skin. *No dew nor rain*—The fertility of Palestine was greatly dependent on the heavy dews. *But according to my word*—When God should tell him to call for it. The famine lasted three years (1 Kings 18. 1), or three and a half years (James 5. 17), if we count in the dry season previous to Elijah's prediction. 3. *Brook Cherith*—See under *Place*. 7. *After a while*—Probably about a year. Elijah was thus hidden (1) to preserve his life; (2) to avoid the importunity of the people; (3) to be prepared by silent communion with God for his greater work. 12. *As the Lord liveth*—Showing she was not a heathen. *Two sticks—i.e., A fow. Dress it*—Prepare it for eating, cook it. 13. *Make me a little cake first*—A request to try her faith.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The kingdom of Israel under Ahab—Elijah.—The reason for this famine.—The brook Cherith.—Why Elijah was sent there.—The ravens feeding Elijah.—Zarephath.—Why Elijah was sent here.—The teaching of this unfeeling oil and meal.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Who was king of Israel at this time? His character? The state of his kingdom? (1 Kings 19. 10.) Contrast it with the kingdom of Judah.

SUBJECT: TRIALS, AND GOD'S OVERRULING CARE.

I. ELIJAH (v. 1).—Give some account of Elijah; his name; native country; dress; character. Why does God send such men at such times as these?

II. THE FAMINE.—A PUNISHMENT FOR SIN (v. 1).—What did Elijah say to Ahab? What qualities in the prophet does this show? Why did he refer to the God of Israel? Are dews of special value in Palestine? Why was this famine sent? (Deut. 28. 15, 23, 24.) How would it tend to bring the people back to the worship of God? Do you suppose that Elijah had long been thinking and praying over the declension of Israel? (James 5. 17.) How long did the famine last? (1 Kings 18. 1; James 5. 17.) How do you reconcile these two statements?

III. ALONE BY THE BROOK CHERITH (vs. 2-7).—Where was Elijah sent? Where was Cherith? What reasons can you give why Elijah was sent there? How was he fed? Was this a miracle? How long did he remain? What lessons can you learn from these verses?

IV. IN THE ENEMY'S COUNTRY (vs. 8-16). Why did Elijah leave Cherith? Where was he sent? What relation was the king of this country to Ahab? What did Ahab seek to do to Elijah? (1 Kings 18. 8-10.) Would it be a trial of Elijah's faith to go into this country? With whom did Elijah stay? Was the famine here? How was the woman's faith tested? How was it rewarded? What lesson as to giving do we learn from this? (Prov. 3. 9, 10; Ps. 41. 1-3; Luke 6. 38.) What other lessons can you learn from this incident? How long did Elijah remain at Zarephath?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Preachers and teachers need courage, faith, faithfulness, and the Word of God.
2. National calamities follow national sins.
3. Trials are to lead us to God, and fit us for better service.
4. God leads us step by step.
5. We need times of retirement and meditation.
6. God has infinite and wonderful ways of caring for his people.
7. God's blessing abides on those who so trust him as to give to his poor and for his Gospel at the cost of self-denial.
8. God's grace and love in the heart are unfeeling.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in concert.)

14. What prophet was sent to Israel in Ahab's reign? ANS. The prophet Elijah. 15. What did he prophesy to the king? ANS. A famine, to punish them for their sins and to lead them back to God. 16. How long did the famine continue? ANS. Three years and a half. 17. How was the prophet Elijah cared for during the first part of this time? ANS. He lived by the brook Cherith, and was fed by ravens. 18. How was he cared for when the brook ran dry? ANS. By a widow of Zarephath.

B.C. 907.] LESSON V. [Aug. 2

ELIJAH MEETING AHAB.

1 Kings 18. 1-18. Commit to mem. vs. 15-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.—1 Kings 18. 18.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The way to escape the penalty of sin is to repent and forsake the sin.

DAILY READINGS.

M. 1 Kings 17. 17-24. Th. Ps. 27. 1-14.  
T. 1 Kings 18. 1-18 F. Ps. 37. 1-19, 34-40.  
W. Josh. 7. 16-26 S. Jer. 2. 1-13.  
Su. Matt. 4. 1-6.

TIME.—B.C. 907. Three and a half years after Elijah's first appearance to Ahab.

PLACE.—The country northwest of Jezreel, near the base of Mt. Carmel.

RULERS.—Ahab, king of Israel; Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—In our last lesson, we left the prophet hidden in the house of Zarephath. Only one incident of his abode here is mentioned, that of his healing the widow's son. After remaining here more than two years, God summoned him to complete his work begun with the famine.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. *In the third year*—From his coming to Zarephath. *Go shew thyself unto Ahab*—The famine had done all it could to bring the people to repentance. It tended (1) to make the people see their sin; (2) lead them to repentance; (3) to disbelieve in the power of idols who could not bring rain; (4) to believe in God, who was fulfilling his word. (Deut. chs. 28-30.) 3. *Governor of his house*—Steward, general overseer. *Feared the Lord*—Not was afraid of, but revered and obeyed. He was deeply religious. 4. *Prophets*—Those who preached and prayed and taught the true religion. *Bread and water—i.e., Food and drink*. 5. *Grass to save the horses*—The people could seek water and food for themselves. Still Ahab seemed to think more of his horses than of his people. 6. *Obadiah went another way*—Probably Ahab went southward, and Obadiah northwest, the direction from which Elijah would come from Zarephath. 7. *He knew him*—Being governor of Ahab's household, he probably saw Elijah on his first visit there. 9. *To slay me*—For deceiving him. 13. *Was it not told my lord, etc.*—He refers to this to show that it was not fear or

want of devotion to God which made him hesitate. 17. *Art thou he that troubleth Israel*—Elijah no more troubled Israel than a doctor brings the disease he cures, or a lighthouse causes the wreck. 18. *But thou, etc.*—Their sins made it necessary for God to punish them. (1) He kept his word (Deut. chs. 28-30). (2) Sin unless punished would have ruined the nation. (3) God did it for their salvation.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Ahab,—Obadiah,—Elijah (their characters as shown in this lesson).—The length of the famine.—Its effect in leading the people to repentance.—Ahab's charge upon Elijah.—How Ahab had brought this trouble on himself and people—The necessity that sin be punished.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—How long after our last lesson are the events of this? Who was king of Judah? Who was king of Israel? Where was Elijah? Why was he there? What incident is related of Elijah's stay at Zarephath?

SUBJECT: NO WAY OF ESCAPE FROM THE PENALTY OF SIN EXCEPT THROUGH REPENTANCE.

I. THE WORK OF THE FAMINE DONE (vs. 1, 2).—How long did Elijah remain at Zarephath? What command was then laid upon him? What qualities would it require to obey? What is said of the famine? How long had it continued? (James 5. 17.) Why was the famine sent? What good was expected to result from it? (Deut. 8. 2; Ps. 78. 34, 35; 107. 9-15; Heb. 12. 10, 11.)

II. A VAIN SEARCH FOR RELIEF WITHOUT REPENTANCE (vs. 3-6).—What plan did Ahab form to obtain relief from the drought? Did he care more for his horses than for the people? From what place did they probably start? (1 Kings 18. 46.) How might Ahab have been relieved from the famine? (2 Chron. 7. 14; Ps. 34. 18; 103. 13-18; Isa. 55. 7.) Can men escape from the penalty of their sins in any other way? In what ways do they sometimes try?

III. OBADIAH AND ELIJAH (vs. 4, 7-16).—Where did Obadiah meet Elijah? Did he recognize him? What did Elijah ask him to do? Why did he hesitate? How did he show that his hesitation did not arise from fear or indifference to religion? (v. 13.) What great good deed had he done? Why would this require piety and courage? What is said of Obadiah's religion? (v. 3.) Why should Ahab have such a man for the chief of his household? Are those who are truest to God most likely to be truest to men? How could he be so religious in the idolatrous court of the king? In what other palaces of bad men do we know of saints? (Dan. 6. 1-23; Phil. 4. 22.) If people could be good in such circumstances, are any circumstances a good excuse for not being Christians?

IV. ELIJAH AND AHAB.—THE REAL CAUSE OF THEIR TROUBLE REVEALED (vs. 17, 18).—How did Ahab greet Elijah when he met him? Why did he charge the prophet with causing the famine? Are sinners apt to think that God, or circumstances, or other people are the cause of their troubles? What was Elijah's reply? How had Ahab troubled Israel? How did this show him the way of escape? Was there any other way?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. *Obadiah*: (1) His early piety a blessing through life; (2) his deep piety; (3) great piety needed to overcome great temptations; (4) his piety shown in good works; (5) circumstances no excuse for neglect of God; (6) be faithful wherever God puts you; (7) compel even wicked men to honor and trust you as a child of God.

2. *Ahab*: (1) Chastisements hardening the heart; (2) his vain attempt to escape the punishment while keeping the sin; (3) sinners charge their troubles on others; (4) their own sins the real source of their calamities.

3. *Elijah*: (1) Victorious faith meets new conflicts; (2) faith is obedient; (3) faith is courageous in duty; (4) faith testifies for God.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in concert.)

1. How long did Elijah remain at Zarephath? ANS. More than two years. 2. What was he then commanded to do? ANS. To go to Ahab, and tell him the famine would soon end. 3. Who met Elijah on the way? ANS. Obadiah, the governor of Ahab's house. 4. What did Ahab say to Elijah when they met? ANS. Art thou he that troubleth Israel. 5. What did Elijah reply to Ahab? (Repent v. 18.)

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