

Bible Lessons for 1877.

STUDIES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

SUNDAY, May 13th, 1877.—Jehu the King.—2 Kings x. 20-31.

COMMIT TO MEMORY. Vs. 28-31.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart.” 2 Kings x. 31.

DAILY READING.—Monday, 2 Kings x. 18-36. Tuesday, 1 Kings xix. 13-21. Wednesday, 2 Kings viii. Thursday, 2 Kings ix. Friday, 2 Kings x. 1-19. Saturday, vs. 23; Jeremiah xxxv. Sunday, Romans xii.

ANALYSIS.—I. Festival for Baal proclaimed. Vs. 20. II. The gathered worshippers. Vs. 21-23. III. A guard stationed. Vs. 24. IV. The sacrifice and massacre. Vs. 25. V. Images destroyed. Vs. 26-28. VI. “Sins of omission.” Vs. 29-31.

QUESTIONS.—Upon whose royal house is vengeance now to be executed? By whom was this vengeance first foretold? Who is God’s agent in executing this vengeance? Who informs him that he is to be king? Where was he at this time? Whom does he now kill first? What king of Judah next? What very near relative next? How many of Ahab’s sons does Jehu now kill? How many kindred from Judah? Where were they going?

Vs. 20. What excessive idolatry does Jehu propose to indulge in? vs. 18. What does he proclaim?

Vs. 21. In what spirit did these worshippers come to the festival?

Vs. 23. Who was Jehonadab? What was peculiar to his tribe? Where did Jehu first meet him? 2 Kings x. 12-15. Why this care to have no servants of the Lord in the house?

Vs. 24. Whom does Jehu put on guard? What injunction is put upon them?

Vs. 25. Why does Jehu at first offer sacrifices? Then what happens?

Vs. 26. How is the destruction of Baal-worship further carried out?

Vs. 28. Does it ever appear again in the northern kingdom?

Vs. 29. In what respects is Jehu hereafter a transgressor?

Vs. 30. How does Jehovah reward Jehu for obedience? How long will his dynasty continue? (a. c. 884-773.) From what has the phrase “to drive like Jehu” arisen? 2 Kings ix. 20. In what character do we see Jehu at last? vs. 31.

HISTORICAL CONNECTION WITH JEHU.

The time has now come for taking righteous vengeance upon the bloody and idolatrous house of Ahab, predicted by Elijah fifteen years ago. 1 Kings xxi. 17-19, 23, 24. For Ahab’s humiliation, however, before Elijah, this evil was not brought on his house in his days, but in his son’s days. This son was Jehoram, by Jezebel. Ahab was killed by a bow drawn at a venture in the battle with Syria. 1 Kings xxii. 34. After Elijah came Elisha; after Ahab, his son Jehoram. As we have seen, Elisha was the adviser of Jehoram; “having neither cottage nor foot of land of his own, yet giving orders to kingdoms.” But events move on. Jehoram is at war in Ramoth-Gilead, with Hazael, successor of Benhadad in the kingdom of Syria. The captain of his host, and high in his favor, was Jehu, the grandson of Nimshi. 2 Kings ix. 2. He it was who was destined by the will of the Lord, as made known by Elijah to Elisha (1 Kings xix. 15-17), to be the anointed king of Israel, so founding the fifth dynasty of Israel. Jehoram is at home from war, recovering from wounds, in his palaces at Jezreel; Ahaziah, the king of Judah, is with him for sympathy; and now Elisha, too aged to go himself, sends a young prophet to Gilead, to inform Jehu of his call of God to the kingdom. He is anointed, the only one of all the kings of the ten tribes (2 Kings ix. 1-7); receives serious orders to smite the whole house of Ahab; and at once proceeds to execute this judgment. The whole account should be studied. His first avenging work is political; he slays Jehoram (2 Kings ix. 22-26); Ahaziah (vs. 27-29); painted and haughty Jezebel (vs. 30-37); this in Jezreel, the chief palace of the kingdom. At Samaria, the mother-city, he seeks out and slays Ahab’s seventy sons (ch. x. 1-11); then his kinsfolk, favorites, and priests (vs. 12); then forty-two jolly brethren of Ahaziah, going on a visit to the sons of Ahab. Vs. 13, 14. Now he lights upon Jehonadab, an honest Rechabite, abstemious, austere,

of the manners of the Bedouin race (1 Chron. ii. 55; Judges iv. 11); pledges with him friendship; takes him into his chariot; reveals to him his second work of vengeance, of a religious character. This he executes with cunning by no means to be commended, justifying his cold regard in history. This introduces the lesson.

EXPOSITION.—Verse 20.—Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. Compare Lev. xxiii. 36; Num. xxix. 12. From his youth, Jehu had been in the army (ix. 25; 1 Kings xxi. 19). He was a subtle, crafty man (vs. 1), and hence had kept to himself his preference for the worship of Jehovah instead of Baal. He had exterminated the old reigning house, including Jezebel herself, who had introduced, promulgated and upheld Baal-worship.

Verse 21.—All the worshippers of Baal came. Having not the least suspicion of foul play, trusting perfectly the king’s word, not only without fear of evil, but exultant in the prospect of continued and increased power. They came into the house of Baal. Into the temple, which evidently consisted of a building surrounded with ample courts to accommodate the multitudes, built by Ahab at the beginning of his reign at Samaria, the capital. 1 Kings xvi. 32, 33. Was full from one end to another. There must have been thousands, for Baal-worship continued to receive favor and support of the reigning house till Jehoram’s death at Jehu’s hand.

Verse 22.—Him that was over the vestry. A room in which were kept the robes in which the Baal priests officiated.

Verse 23.—Jehonadab the son of Rechab. This, Jehonadab, or “Jonadab,” a Kenite (1 Chron. ii. 55; Gen. xv. 19) and the founder of the sect of Rechabites, so named probably by the founder himself, in honor of his father—was a kindred spirit with Jehu. Jer. xxxv. Search, and look that there be here, etc. The joint injunction of Jehonadab and Jehu, intended to be taken as evidence of extraordinary zeal for Baal.

The deception of the call of the assembly is thus kept up skillfully to the last. Verse 24.—When they went in, etc. The priests. (vs. 21), when the hour of making the offering had arrived. Four score men. His own body-guard and trusted officers (vs. 25), on whom he could rely to keep his secret and execute his order. If any of the men. The completeness of the destruction. Vs. 19, 28. Whom I have brought into your hands. Put quite at their mercy, like a flock of sheep, penned in together and helpless.

Verse 25.—As soon as he, etc. Not Jehu but their high priest. Prompt execution. With the edge of the sword. The Hebrew idiom is “the sword’s mouth,” as though it were a horrid beast of prey devouring its victims. Cast them out. destroy, as by violent casting down and dashing to pieces. The city of the house. The temple proper as distinguished from the courts.

Verses 26, 27.—Images. Or pillars. Evidently of wood, and apparently in honor of deities regarded as subordinate to Baal, since Baal’s statue is mentioned in the next verse, and was evidently grander and of stone.

Verse 28.—Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel. A very striking way of saying that he destroyed the worship of Baal. That of Ashtoreth, of course, was destroyed with it. The destruction was according to the Levitical law, which seems to have been recognized in some sense as the fundamental law of the kingdom; but the lying and treachery involved in the process cannot be commended, and never was commended.

Verse 29.—Howbeit. An implied approval of his destruction of Baal, but not necessarily of his method of doing it. So in the express approval. Vs. 30. Every man’s good conduct is more or less tainted with evil. Jehu’s was sorely tainted. The sins of Jeroboam. Explained in what follows, and considered fully in one of our former lessons. He retained the worship of Jehovah, but corrupted the form of worship. The sin came short of Ahab’s, which was the substitution of Baal for Jehovah; but nevertheless it was sin.

Verse 30.—Thy children of the fourth generation. This dynasty, the longest reigning in Israel, continued one hundred and eleven years, and closed, as here promised, with the great-grandson of Jehu. xv. 8. It consisted of Jehu, Jehoahaz, xii. 1; Joash, xiii. 9; Jeroboam xiv. 16, and Zachariah. This was a temporal reward for an act which accomplished what the law required.

Verse 31.—Jehu took no heed, etc. Asserting what we would gather from his conduct as studied by us, that he was destitute of true piety.

—Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, May 20th, 1877.—Jonah at Nineveh.—Jonah iii. 1-10.

The Story of the Lesson.

FOR THE PRIMARY CLASS.

As Jehu was on his way to Samaria, to be king, he met a man named Jehonadab, who was not an Israelite, but worshipped the Lord. Jehu asked him to get up into his chariot, and see what he was going to do for the Lord. When he came into Samaria, he gathered all the people together, and said, “Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu shall serve him much.” Then he appointed a day for a great sacrifice to Baal, and sent men all through the land to tell the worshippers of Baal; for he said all who did not come should be killed. None were missing. The house of Baal was filled from one end to the other. The king had the clothes that were kept there for the priests brought out. Jehu and Jehonadab told the crowd to search out whether any of the servants of the Lord were there, and found none. Jehu had done all this slyly, that he might destroy them; and, just as a great sacrifice was being offered to baal, eighty soldiers, with swords, rushed in and killed them all. They also burned all the images of baal, and destroyed the house. God said that, because Jehu had destroyed so many idolaters, he should have the throne for his great grandson. But though he had done this, he still worshipped the golden calf, and did not love God in his heart.

Select Serial.

From The Day of Rest.

DORA’S BOY.

BY MRS. ELLEN ROSS.

CHAP. XV.—MATTHEW’S BENEVOLENCE.

With a strange feeling in his heart Matthew went down stairs and sat by his fire again, waiting for Hughie to go to bed. Although he had no regard for religion, he felt very glad that he had refrained from sneering at the boy for wanting to say his prayers.

‘If it had been my own boy growed up, he’d ha’ bin sayin’ his prayers sure enough,’ said Matthew to himself, as he sat meditatively gazing into the fire, and twirling his thumbs. ‘Yes,’ he went on, ‘Patty’d be sure to have her boy say his prayers, and learn heaps o’ good things. And then, like enough, I shouldn’t ha’ forgot everything decent, and be such a old heathen as I am. But there, I’m right enough, and I ain’t goin’ to upset my mind at fifty-eight about these things.’

He sat so long in his reverie that, when he went upstairs, he found Hughie fast asleep. He stood gazing at him for some time, saying to himself, ‘What a beautiful, little chap, he is, to be sure! He looks jest like a pictur’ lying there so peaceful. Eh! what a good job it is that I’ve got a bit of a place o’ my own, and nobody to interfere with me, so as I can save him from the workus! It’d be a thousand pities to send him there amongst low rough folk. He’ll be a handsome one, when he grows up, won’t he now? And then, like enough, he’ll forget old Matthew, though I’ve got it in my art to do many a thing for him, now and in the futur’, if we’re both spared. Why, only see these poor bits o’ rags, Matthew went on to himself, lifting up the boy’s old jacket and trousers, which he had left folded on a chair. ‘They’re kept mended certinly, as well as that poor dyin’ critter could; but they ain’t worth two brass farthings to any body but the owner. And these poor broke-out shoes, too: he shan’t be troubled with the sight o’ them much longer. It’s a mighty good thing now, as old Matthew Pedder have got a few pounds put by, he can spend one o’ em this road if he likes, without anybody interferin’. We’ll have a trot-out together to-morrow and see what old Moses’ll turn out of his stores for the little chap, when I shows him a few shillins. Them’s a pitiful handful o’ rags to put on such a beautiful boy, and a well-disposed un, too, he seems. Why, he’d set off the very best as could be bought; and there’s many a lonely fine lady as’d be proud to dopt such a boy as that!’ A sudden thought striking him, Matthew added, ‘Eh! but I hope if he and I gets on well together, that none of his relations’ll turn up to take him off me: I don’t know how I could abear that, if I once took to him strong! It’d be better to live by myself all along as I have done, than to take in a bright little chap like

this for a bit, and then lose him. Why, it’d be a most as bad as a death!’ And Matthew’s eyes grew moist as he looked almost fondly at the sleeping child.

The next morning at breakfast he spoke on this theme: he could not rest until he had sounded the boy concerning his feelings towards himself. So when they had nearly finished breakfast Matthew said, ‘Well, my lad, d’ye think as how you’ll feel contented and comfortable with me after a bit?’

‘Oh, I do now,’ exclaimed Hughie in a thankful tone.

‘But maybe you’ll be wantin’ to run away from me by-and-by, specially if anybody offered ye a good place, or if ye found that grandmother o’ yours as ye was talkin’ about. And ye know,’ added Matthew, with a softer light in his eyes, which the boy was quick to perceive, ‘ye know I mightn’t like to lose ye.’

Hughie got up from his chair with affectionate impulse, and, putting his hand on Matthew’s knee, looked up in his face and said, ‘No, you’ve been so kind to mother and me, that I shan’t want to leave you. I’ll stay with you as long as ever you want me, and if I find grandmother I’ll ask her to let me stay with you.’

Matthew looked more than pleased at these words, and made an awkward attempt to stroke the boy’s head. But he was so unused both to giving and receiving caresses that it was indeed awkward, though altogether kindly.

‘Now I can wash up these things for you, please, sir,’ said Hughie. ‘I will do them just as you did last night.’

‘So you shall, my lad; and I needn’t go for to tie an apron on ye to keep ye from spoilin’ your clothes, cos there ain’t nothin’ to spoil. But we shall see about what we shall see by-and-by,’ said Matthew, trying to be facetious. ‘And while you’re at that, I’ll be takin’ my shettlers down, and let such daylight as there is in on to my birds.’

‘I can help you presently to give them fresh seed and water and to clean their cages,’ said Hughie. ‘I know how to do it: mother had a little bird once, and I used to watch her do up its cage every morning. She gave it away when we got very poor.’

‘Yes, you shall help; but it ain’t much titivatin’ as they gets from me: there’s too many of ‘em to keep in tip-top order, and some of ‘em isn’t worth the trouble. Now, when I’ve put things in Monday-mornin’ fashion, I want to run out on an errand, and you shall try yer hand at mindin’ shop,—you and Tom: my old Tom is a first-rate shopman, and understands the vally of birds, don’t ye now, Tom?’ And Matthew perched the black fellow up on his shoulder, and looked up in his face for an answer, which puss gave by purring loudly, and bending down his head to rub it against his master’s bald crown.

‘I thought cats would kill birds and eat them,’ said Hughie, looking with admiration at this exhibition of good feeling on the part of Matthew and his cat.

‘So they will, it’s their natur’ to,’ replied Matthew; ‘but my Tom’s been trained; he has, and he knows his dooty as well as a Christian, ay, and does it a deal better than many a one. He wouldn’t touch a bird in the shop, no, not if every one o’ em was turned out o’ their cages this minute,—he’s that knowin’ and decent in his ways.’

Having so far lauded him, Matthew made him spring from his shoulder to the floor, and then went out into the cold and fog to take down his shutters. He then gave about an hour’s attention to his live stock, looking more carefully than was his wont to see which among them needed water and food. He dusted his ‘artistic’ cases of birds, and put things generally in order.

Hughie had long since finished his little job, and was now in the shop watching Matthew, and pitying and admiring in turns the different specimens of live and stuffed birds.

‘By-and-by, when you gets more used to the place, you’ll be able to sell for me when my back’s turned; but if anybody comes in to buy this mornin’ while I’m out o’ the way, jest say that Matthew Pedder’s gone out walkin’, and they may call again.’ He rolled his apron round his waist, put on an old slouch hat, and walked off in a lordly and independent manner, like a man who has the world under his feet.

He was absent not much more than

half-an-hour, and when he returned he had a small package under his arm. He was rather surprised to find that Hughie was not alone: he was standing just inside the shop-door talking to a little girl. Matthew was still further surprised when he recognized in the boy’s companion no less a personage than the fiery little body who had rated him about his birds—Lisa Maurice.

In a few words Hughie explained how it was, she came into the shop, and what they had been talking about.

CHAP. XVI.—HUGHIE’S NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

Matthew had not long left his shop that morning, before Hughie, having familiarized himself with most of the objects in it, ventured to open the door and look up and down the street. There was not much to see, for the fog was rather thick, and he was about to turn in out of the frosty air, when he caught sight of a little girl, emerging from the fog a little distance off, whom he thought he had seen before. She stopped short when she found herself by Matthew’s window, and looked about at the birds with quick, inquisitive eyes, humming a tune all the time. She had not then perceived Hughie; but as she was passing the door, there he was standing within, and her steps were arrested as if a hand had been laid upon her.

She stood still for a few moments, as if trying to decide whether she should speak to him or not, and then stepped back to look at the window again. Hughie wished she had spoken, and he peeped out to see how far she had gone; but she was standing there, and as his eyes met hers she gave a little nod. Her feminine curiosity was so much aroused by seeing him there, that she was determined to speak first herself if he did not, and to know how it was he was there with old Matthew, who, as everybody round about knew, had no relations or friends, and was altogether a queer old fellow that nobody cared to have anything to do with.

So as Hughie’s only response to her nod was a faint smile, after which he drew back a little in the doorway, she went and peeped round the door-post, and said rather timidly, ‘Are you living at Matthew Pedder’s house, and that lady as sings hymns so nice?’

‘Yes, I’m living here; but not my mother that you heard sing on Saturday night,’ said Hughie.

‘Where’s she, then?’ asked Lisa.

‘She’s dead,’ he replied sadly, yet scarcely able to realize the truth of what he was saying.

‘Dead? gone to heaven? what, already?’ Lisa demanded, breathlessly, with her eyes wide open. ‘Why, when ever did she go?’

‘On Saturday night,’ answered Hughie. ‘What! when she had done singin’ my hymn? No! she woke up after that I saw her go with you into that room there; but I couldn’t stay to see if she came out again. Did she die there, then?’

‘No; she died at home at our lodgings, and she’s there now; but I’m come to stay with Matthew Pedder,’ said Hughie.

‘What! and you’ve gone and left her somewhere dead?’ exclaimed Lisa, after a few moments’ silence. ‘Oh, dear! how could you?’

‘You want me to tell you all about it, don’t you?’ said Hughie, perceiving that nothing but the truth and the whole truth would satisfy this curious little maiden. ‘Well, then, just come inside,’ he added, with a considerateness which he had learned from his mother; ‘it’s too dreadful cold for you to stand out there without shoes on; and this board floor is much warmer.’

‘But where’s the old Matthew?’ asked Lisa, cautiously, as she peered into the shop and the room beyond. She had not forgotten his threatened shower-bath of a few weeks previously, and she was not wishful to confront him again just at present.

‘Oh, he’s out!’ replied Hughie. ‘But I’m sure he wouldn’t mind you standing just inside while I tell you about mother. He’s very kind, and is sorry for those that have to go without shoes and proper clothes and food.’

‘Oh, is he?’ said Lisa, rather doubtfully. ‘But I don’t think he’d be sorry for my feet bein’ without shoes: he don’t like me, cos I was saucy to him one day. Shall I tell you?’ she added, confidentially, yet rather shyly.

‘Yes, if you’ll stand just inside,’ replied Hughie.