

BREAD OF LIFE

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS - TEACHINGS FROM THE WORD

2nd Quarter

This is the second quarterly in the series of Bible studies called "Teachings From The Word." Covering the Bible in one year, this study emphasizes the doctrinal truths found in God's Word. It follows the historical narrative of the Bible and presents the doctrines as they appear in that sequence. The period of history covered in this quarterly runs from the division of the land of Canaan to the Babylonian captivity of Judah.

A secondary purpose of this particular series of lessons has been to follow the historical narrative of the Bible by using the lesser known and studied characters and events of the Bible. Thus, for example, Caleb and Othniel are used to cover the conquest and division of Canaan. Similarly, the period of the early kingdom of Saul and David is studied from the standpoint of Jonathan and Joab. Studies on Caleb, Othniel, Ruth, Eli, Jonathan, and Joab are covered in the first five lessons of this quarterly.

A recent survey in a large Sunday school in which teachers were asked to list the subjects they most would like included in a curriculum revealed a strong partiality to Proverbs. In a surprising response teacher after teacher listed Proverbs first or second in interest. No other single subject or book received such demand in the survey. This is quite natural since Proverbs is one of the most practical books of the Bible. Many make it a practice to read Proverbs through once each month taking one of its thirty-one chapters each day of the month.

At the point in Bible history when the reign of Solomon would be covered, four lessons are inserted which give teachings taken from among the most famous of his writings — his Proverbs. The subjects covered are "The Fear of the Lord," "Wisdom," "Abomination to the Lord," and "The Tongue," Proverbs does not present each of these subjects in a separate section. Random references to any one of these subjects will be found throughout the book. An excellent method of studying a particular subject is simply to write out each and every statement made in Proverbs or any other book of the Bible about that subject. With a good concordance such an approach takes less time than Imagined and this comparing of Scripture with Scripture is quite illuminating.

The last four lessons of this quarterly are entitled "Prophets and Kings," Each covers a different segment of the period of history known as the time of the "divided kingdom." Since prophets played a dominant role in this portion of history, they are studied right along with the kings in whose reigns they ministered.

The prophetic books belong to the dark ages of God's people. Instituted in Samuel's time, the period of the prophets covered about five hundred years. In about the fourth century B.C. the voices of the prophets were silenced until John the Baptist, the greatest of all prophets. The prophets spoke fearlessly to kings and people alike of their sins and failures.

There are seventeen prophetic books in the Old Testament. Five are called "major" prophets and twelve are called "minor" prophets. This distinction is not made because of their importance but because of the amount of material written in each of them. Two of the major prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah, are included in these lessons. The prophetic ministry was not limited to those men whose names appear on their books in the Bible. It will be seen from these lessons that there were many prophets in Israel and Judah who spoke God's Word.