SUNDAY SCHOOL 1222

ELIJAH CHALLENGES BAAL WORSHIP

International Sunday School Lesson for May 9, 1954.

Memory Selection: "How long go ye limping between the two sides? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."-I Kings 18:21.

Lesson Text: I Kings 17:1; 18:17-39.

Highly dramatic is the lesson for this week. Spectacular and highstrung are the scenes in the drama enacted from life as they are told to us in living words.

Approximately seventy-five years had passed since the division of the kingdom. Judah had been ruled by several kings and, at this time, by Jehosaphat. Israel had seen several dynasties and seven kings until Ahab's day, and all her leaders had been false to Jehovah. The start toward nation-al heresy began with Jereboam, who set up golden calves for political rea-sons and these had led to idolatry and the abandonment of the worship of Jehovah.

Ahab was even more wicked than his predecessors and had for his mate a Phoenician princess, Jezebel, whose name has been synonomous with evil. She, at least, was vigorous and ardent in the support of her pagan gods and goddesses. Her influence over the king had been such that the priests of Baal were supreme and the priests of Jehovah had been killed, scattered, or were in hiding from the royal wrath. The nation had forsaken its ancient religion, although here and there were those who still secretly clung to their racial faith and worship clandestinely.

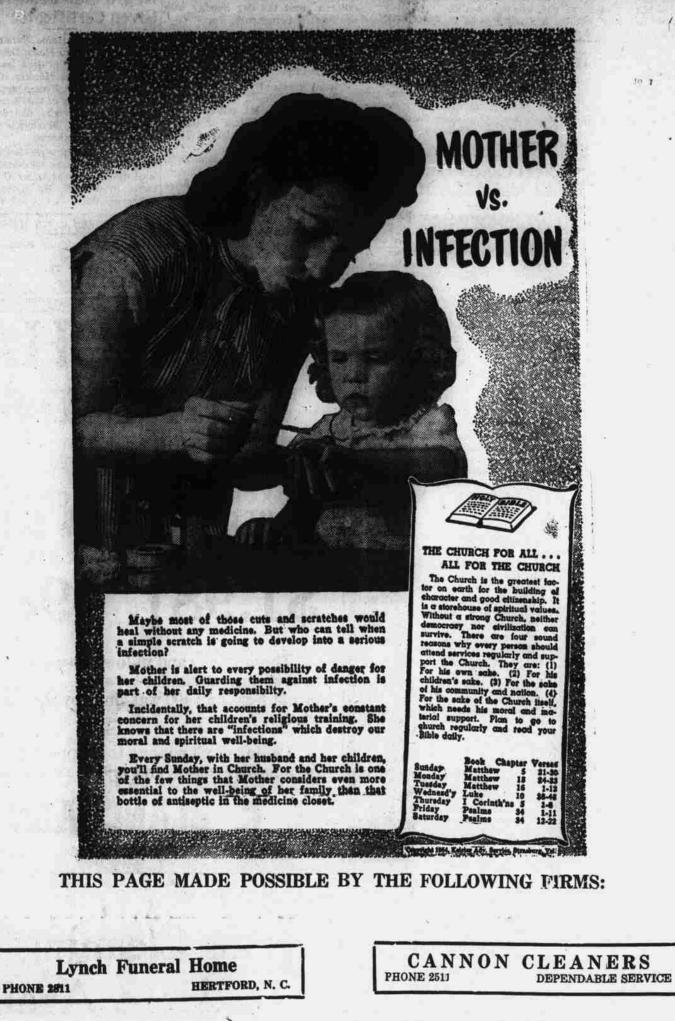
Onto this scene comes a strange, mystic figure-that of a rugged priest emerging out of the wilds east of Jordan, dressed in skins and contrasting sharply with the luxury and vice of the capital. Before the amazed courts in Ahab, Elijah stalks, representative of the ancient Israelitish Jehovah, and, in words which were to be long rein words which were to be long re-membered, foretells the drought of several years: "There shall not be dew nor rain these years but accord-ing to my word." From then on, the land thirsted for water.

During this great drought, Elijah remained in seclusion. In the ravine Cherith first, where he was miraculously fed either by the ravens, or the Arabians—some difference exists as to the correct translation of the original Hebrew. This refuge afterwards suffered from the drought, along with the rest of the country, and Elijah went into Phoenicia, where again by miraculous manifestations, Jehovah testified to the credentials of his prophet. At length the time came for the final act of the play and Elijah went back into Israel.

Encountering Obadiah, a member of

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Perguimans Church Services HERTFGRD BAPTIST CHURCH C. W. Duling, Pastor Sunday School, 9:45 A. M. Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock. Evening Worship, 8 o'clock. Mid-week Services, Wednesday at BETHLEHEM CHURCH OF CHRIST Joe Brickhouse, Pastor First Sunday 11 A. M. and 8 P. M. BURGESS BAPTIST CHURCH W. E. Thompson, Pastor Church services second and fourth Sundays at 11 A. M. Sunday School at 10:00 A. M. PERQUIMANS CHARGE CHURCHES H. M. Jamieson, Pastor First Sunday: New Hope Church, 11:00 A. M. Oak Grove Church, 7:00 P. M. Second Sunday Winfall Church, 11:00 A. M. Cedar Grove Church, 10 A. M. Woodland Church, 7:00 P. M. Third Sunday Oak Grove Church, 11:00 A. M. New Hope Church, 7:00 P. M. Fourth Sunday Cedar Grove Church, 11:00 A. M. Woodland Church, 10 A. M. Winfall Church, 7:00 P. M. Fifth Sunday Woodland Church, 11:00 A. M. Prayer Meeting each Wednesday at Winfall Church, 7:00 P. M. ANDEBSON'S METHODIS'I CHURCH C. H. Beale, Pastor Church School, 10:00 A. M. Morning Worship, 11:00 A. M., second and fourth Sundays. WOODVILLE BAF"IST CHURCH Harvey L. Coppidge, Pastor Church Services on second and fourth Sundays at 11 A. M. First and Third Sundays at 7:45 P. M. Sunday School 9:45 A. M. UP RIVER FRIENDS CHURCH James Rahenkamp, Pastor Sunday School, 9:45 A. M. Church Services 11 A. M., - 7:30 P. M. Christian Endeavor, 6:30 P. M. Prayer Service, Wednesday 7:30 P. M. BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH Rev. J. D. Stoner, Pastor Sunday School 10 A. M. Morning Worship 11 A. M. Evening service 8 P. M. PINEY WOODS FRIENDS CHURCH D. Virgil Pike, Pastor Church School 10 A. M.

Morning Worship 11 A. M. Young People's Meeting 7 P. M.

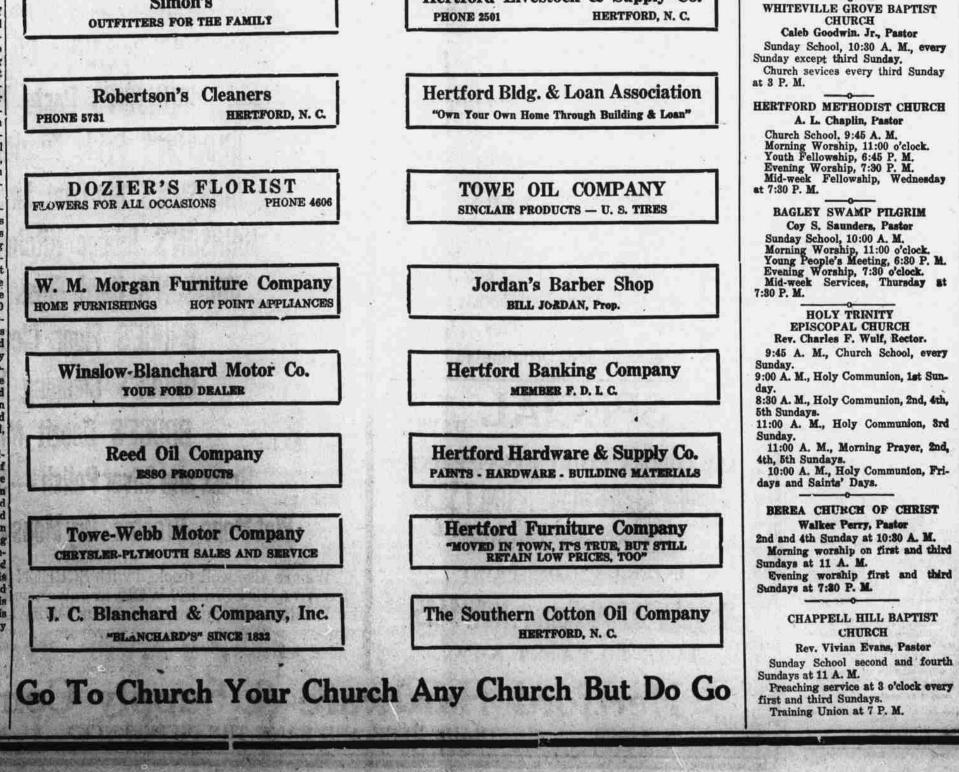
the court circle but who had remained a faithful though timid believer in Jehovah, Elijah sent word to Ahab to meet him. The king came, greeting the prophet with the question: "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Howoften do human beings attribute their suffering to unreal causes! How human it is to try to relieve our own selves from responsibility for disas-ter! But Elijah points to the real trouble: "I have not trouble Israel, but thou and they father's house in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord."

Elijah, great prophet and courageous spokesman for righteousness, was not afraid to contest with the forces of evil, and he proposed to the king that the false priests of Baal be summoned to Mt. Carmel, where a contest could demonstrate which god was the greatest. The king agreed and, on the appointed day, there gathered 450 priests of Baal to oppose the lone pro-phet of Jehovah. What a climax this scene represents! Evil enthroned and in power but about to be defeated by one brave, faithful, and daring servant of Jehovah. Elijah placed the issue squarely up to the assembled people: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow him," otherwise, if Baal be god, follow him.

The test was carried out. Two al-thoroughly wet but in answer to his prayer that Jehovah demonstrate his power, the fire strikes from the sky (Continued on Page Eight) GO TO SOME CHURCH

NEXT SUNDAY

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