

LESSON NOTES.

SECOND QUARTER

A.D. 60-61; LESSON III. [April 19.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Acts 28. 1-17. *Commit to mem. vs. 5-6.*

CENTRAL TRUTH.

He thanked God, and took courage.—Acts 28. 15.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Acts 28. 1-15. Th. Luke 10. 17-24.
T. Matt. 10. 32-42. F. James 5. 13-20.
W. Ps. 91. 1-16. Sa. Rom. 1. 1-16.
Su. John. 1. 1-9.

TIME.—Winter of A.D. 60-61. Paul was wrecked about Nov. 1, A.D. 60, and left Malta for Rome about Feb. 8, A.D. 61, and arrived at Rome about March 1.

PLACE.—Malta, an island near the centre of the Mediterranean Sea, 60 miles south of Sicily, and 200 miles north of Africa. The inhabitants were of Phœnician origin, from Carthage. The island is 17 miles long, and 9 wide.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—In our last lesson Paul and his 275 companions were wrecked off the shore of Malta. They had reached the land to them unknown; the storm had not entirely ceased, for it was raining, but the wind had become less violent. We find them to-day drenched and cold on the shore, with the wreck not far away on the sand-bar.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. *Melita*—The modern Malta. 2. *Barbarous people*—The natives. The Greeks called all who were not Latin or Greek, barbarians. 3. *Paul gathered*—He did his part of the work like any good man. *A viper*—A small deadly serpent concealed in the wood. The heat warmed it into activity. 5. *Felt no harm*—As Christ had promised, Mark 16. 18. 7. *Chief man*—Probably the governor. 8. *Fever*—And dysentery. *Prayed*—To receive the favour if God willed, and to show them the source of his power. 9. *Others*—The rest, all the sick who came to him. God did this probably to endorse Paul as a true man of God; for he came to them as a prisoner, and they had no means of knowing his character. He doubtless preached the Gospel at this time. 11. *Whose sign*—The designation of the vessel, and showing that they trusted on these heathen divinities of the sea. Castor and Pollux were twin brothers, sons of Jupiter, whose goodness was said to be rewarded by placing them in the sky as a constellation. 12. *Syracuse*—80 miles from Malta. The chief city of Sicily. 13. *Rhegium*—At the southern point of Italy. *Puteoli*—A town at the head of the Bay of Naples, 140 miles from Rome. 14. *Went toward Rome*—By land, chiefly by the famous Appian Way. 15. *Appii Forum*—A place 40 miles from Rome. The next delegation came as far as *The Three Taverns*, 30 miles from Rome.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The escape.—Malta.—Paul gathering sticks.—The viper.—God's promise fulfilled.—Paul's miracles at Malta.—Why more here than at other places.—The journey to Rome.—The disciples coming out to meet him.—His need of encouragement.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where did we leave Paul and his companions in our last lesson? How many escaped? Was the storm over?

SUBJECT: ENCOURAGEMENT.

I. PAUL ENCOURAGED BY THE KINDNESS OF THE PEOPLE (vs. 1, 2).—In what country were the shipwrecked company? In what state of need were they? What people inhabited this island? How did they help those who were cast among them? Why were they called "barbarous"? What lesson do we learn from their kindness?

II. ENCOURAGED BY GOD'S CARE OVER HIM (vs. 3-6).—What did Paul do to help the company? Was this worthy work for an apostle? What happened to him? What did the natives think of this? How far were they right in thinking that special suffering was a proof of sin? What was the effect on Paul? What promise was fulfilled for him? (Mark 16. 18.) Will God always do this for us? How is the promise sometimes fulfilled? (Rom. 8. 28.) What did the natives now think of Paul? How far were they right in this opinion? How would this incident help Paul to preach the Gospel to them?

III. BY GOD'S WONDER-WORKER THROUGH HIM (vs. 7-10).—Who entertained Paul? How was his kindness rewarded? What other miracles were wrought by Paul? Is there any other account of Paul's working so many miracles? What reason can you think of why so many were wrought now? What is a miracle? How do they attest the truth? Did Paul preach the Gospel in Malta? How long did he remain there?

IV. BY BRINGING HIM SAFELY TO HIS JOURNEY'S END (vs. 11-14).—When did Paul leave Malta? Trace the journey on the map. Give a brief account of the places named. How long was he in reaching Rome?

V. BY THE LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS OF THE CHURCH AT ROME (v. 15).—What two delegations came out from Rome to meet Paul? How far did they go? Along what famous road? How did their coming encourage Paul? Why did he thank God for what men did?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. God often blesses us more by letting trouble come upon us, and then saving us from it, than he would by preventing it altogether.
2. God rewarded the unselfish kindness of the people, both in their bodies and in their souls.
3. The commonest service for love's sake is worthy of the greatest man.
4. As Paul shook off the viper, so should we all sin.
5. The danger of misjudgments of men, by looking only at outward circumstances.
6. God uses worldly wealth, commerce, inventions, as this heathen ship, for spreading the Gospel.
7. Sympathy and expressions of love bring great encouragement.

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

11. On what island was Paul wrecked? Ans. On the island of Malta. 12. How did God encourage Paul, and aid the Gospel here? Ans. By saving Paul from harm by a viper. 13. In what other way? Ans. By working many miracles of healing through him. 14. How long did he remain here? Ans. Three months, and then he went on to Rome. 15. How was he encouraged again? Ans. By Roman Christians coming 40 miles to meet and greet him.

A.D. 61.] LESSON IV. [April 26.

PAUL AT ROME.

Acts 28. 16-31. *Commit to mem. vs. 28-31.*

GOLDEN TEXT.

The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles.—Acts 28. 28.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Acts 28. 16-31. Th. Matt. 13. 1-17.
T. Phil. 1. 1-24. F. 2 Tim. 1. 1-18.
W. Eph. 3. 1-21. Sa. Rom. 11. 1-36.
Su. 2 Tim. 4. 1-18.

TIME.—Paul arrived at Rome about the first of March, A.D. 61, and remained a prisoner two years.

PLACE.—Rome, in Italy, the capital of the Roman empire, the central city of the world.

PAUL.—Aged 59.

RULERS.—Nero, emperor of Rome (8th, 9th.) Festus, governor of Judea till Nov. 20, A.D. 61. Albinus, his successor. Seneca and Burrhus, the best statesmen of the age. Burrhus dies and Seneca retires early in A.D. 62.

INTRODUCTION.—In our last lesson we left Paul on the Appian Way, drawing near to Rome. To-day we welcome him into the city.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—16. *The centurion*—Julius. *Soldier that kept him*—He was chained to a soldier all the time by one hand. 20. *For the hope of Israel I am bound*—Because he preached the Messiah the Jews hoped for, and the kingdom they expected, and this Messiah would bring the triumphs which they hoped for. 23. *Persuading out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets*—He laid the predictions of their Scriptures beside the life of Jesus, and showed that Jesus exactly fulfilled the prophecies. 25. *Esaias*—Greek form of Isaiah. 27. *For, etc.*—Their prejudices and sinfulness would not let them understand the real meaning of the words they read and heard. 30.Hard heart.—He was probably sustained by the Christians. 31. *From being the kingdom*—He was protected from the Jews. Soldiers were always with him and would hear the truth, and many would come to visit the note prisoner.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Rome—a place for preaching the Gospel.—Paul's relation to the Jewish religion.—Why he sent for the Jews.—Proving that Jesus was the Messiah.—The meaning of the words quoted from Isaiah.—What hinders people from becoming Christians.—Paul's two years in Rome.—How his position helped him to preach the Gospel.—His subsequent life.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where was Paul in our last lesson? Who were accompanying him? When did he arrive at Rome? By what road?

SUBJECT: THE LAST DAYS OF A GREAT AND GOOD MAN.

I. PAUL'S ARRIVAL AT ROME (v. 16).—What account can you give of Rome at this time? Where was Paul taken when he arrived there? What special favour was granted him? How would this help his work? How was he guarded?

II. PAUL'S FIRST INTERVIEW WITH THE JEWS (vs. 17-22).—What was Paul's first work after his arrival? Why did he hold this interview? What misrepresentation might have been made? How did he speak of those who had treated him so hardly? What was "the hope of Israel"? How was this the occasion of his being a prisoner? Had the Jews heard any report of him? What did they say of the Gospel? Why was it everywhere spoken against? Is this true still?

III. PAUL'S SECOND INTERVIEW WITH THE JEWS (vs. 23-29).—Where was the second interview held? For how long? What was the object? How did Paul try to convince the Jews? What was the result? Why did some refuse to believe? What explanation does Paul give? Do Paul's words about Isaiah prove that he was an inspired prophet? How can people see and not perceive? Does such a thing occur in our day? What would have been the result if they had believed? To whom did Paul preach from that time?

IV. PAUL'S LIFE AT ROME (vs. 30, 31).—How long was Paul a prisoner at Rome? How long was it since he was first imprisoned? Where did he live these two years? What was he doing? In what way would his position help him to preach the Gospel? What Epistles did Paul write during these years?

V. SUBSEQUENT HISTORY.—When was Paul released? How many years did he live after this? Where did he go? When was he imprisoned a second time at Rome? What letter did he write during this imprisonment? How was he martyred? When? What great event took place soon after?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. God brings good out of evil; every trial and event aided Paul in preaching the Gospel.
2. Paul practised his own law of charity in speaking of his countrymen.
3. The best things will be evil spoken of by wicked men.
4. God desires all men to turn and be saved.
5. If any are not saved, it is because they will not see and believe.
6. If we cannot reach some men, let us go after others.
7. "God buries his workmen, but carries on his work."

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

16. Where did Paul live when he reached Rome? Ans. In his own hired house, guarded by soldiers. 17. How long was he a prisoner? Ans. For two whole years. 18. What was he doing? Ans. Preaching the Gospel to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles. 19. What letters did he write in prison? Ans. The Epistles to the Ephesians, the Colossians, the Philippians, and to Philemon. 20. When was he released? Ans. About March, A.D. 63. 21. How long did he live after this? Ans. Three or four years, spent in missionary work. 22. What were his last days? Ans. He was again sent a prisoner to Rome, and beheaded for Christ's sake.

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