

Sabbath School Lessons.

August 13 PAUL AT JERUSALEM.

Lesson, Acts 21: 27-39. Golden Text, Phil. 1: 29. Memory vs. 30, 31. Catechism Q. 73, 74.

Take for the lesson a connected view of Chapters 21, 22, with these verses as a centre.

Last lesson Paul was at Miletus, giving his touching farewell address to the Elders of the Church of Ephesus. Leaving them in sorrow because they should see his face no more, he went on his way to Jerusalem, reaching there in time for the feast of Pentecost. It was his fifth visit since his conversion 20 years before.

Eight years had elapsed since his last visit, when he had gone up from Antioch and reported his work to the great conference there, and received from them the terms decided upon for the admission of the Gentiles to the Christian Church. See Acts 18: 21, 22. In this eight years he had made two long missionary tours, had revisited the churches in Asia Minor, had carried the gospel into Europe, and had founded large churches in leading cities there.

He came to Jerusalem, told what the Lord had done by him and caused joy to the brethren. But, said James, the Jewish Christians here at Jerusalem, are still zealous for the old forms and ceremonies, and they hear that you make light of these. Now if you will take some part in the temple service, it will please them. Paul consented, for the sake of peace, but when he had been in the temple for some days the unbelieving Jews found him out and at once set out to kill him. It was his effort to please the prejudices of the Jewish Christians that led him to fall into the hands of these Jewish unbelievers; but, this was the means of his going to Rome.

I vs. 27-30. *Seven Days*.—The period of the vow which he was to fulfil. *Asia*.—Jewish visitors to the feast, from the Western Province of Asia. Paul would be well known to these Jews and hated by them. *Men of Israel*.—This was a rallying cry that aroused all their bigotry and prejudice. *Teacheth*.—Two charges they laid against him: first, that he taught all men against the Jews, the law, and the temple. This was baseless. *Greeks*.—Into the inner courts of the temple no Gentile dare come on pain of death, and, having seen Paul walking the streets with a young Gentile from Ephesus, they supposed, falsely, that he had brought him into the temple, and raised a cry accordingly. *Moved*.—The appeal had done its work and without waiting to examine into the case, the mob, crazed at the idea of the temple being profaned by a Gentile, and blaming Paul for it, rushed upon him, drew him out of the temple and were going to kill him, for that was the penalty for a Gentile entering there.

II Rescued by the soldiers, vs. 31-36. *Uproar*.—The Jews were turbulent. The Roman garrison did not know what the riot was, but, to quell it as quickly as possible, rushed down. Some cried one thing some another. How like to excited mobs of to-day. v. 35. *Violence*.—The mob so frenzied were seeking to lynch him.

III Permitted to speak, vs. 27-39. *Greek*.—The Captain had supposed him an ignorant brigand, and was surprised to hear a cultured scholar. *Murderers*.—Sicarii from *sica* a dagger. They used to stab people in open day in Jerusalem.

1. We should be careful how we judge. Paul was mobbed on a supposition, a false one at that.

2. Paul defended himself when falsely accused, and if truth demand it we should do so too.

3. How easy to raise a hue and cry, a false alarm, even sometimes with good men, over matters of religion. God reigns, keep calm.

Aug. 20. PAUL BEFORE FELIX.

Les. Acts, 24: 10-25 Gol. Text, 1 Cor. 16: 13. Mem. vs. 14-16. Catechism Q. 75.

This lesson follows closely on the last, one week later, but it was an eventful week to Paul. Read it over carefully and follow him to Caesarea where we meet him to-day, and where he was kept prisoner for more than two years, May, 58 A. D. to midsummer 60, A. D.

The lesson tells of two addresses of Paul before Felix. In the one he defends himself from the Jews, in the other, he preaches of the faith in Christ. The first is from vs. 10-22, the second, vs. 24, 25.

I vs. 10-22. Paul's enemies have engaged a professional advocate against him, and the charges are in effect, (1) that he is guilty of treason, against the Roman Government; (2) that he is guilty of heresy, the ringleader of a sect; (3) that he profaned the temple. The Lawyer finishes his address and sits down well pleased with having the chance to speak before the Roman Governor. The latter gives a sign and Paul rises in defence.

Vs. 10-13. The first charge denied. *Many years*.—Six years, longer than the usual term. How courteously Paul opens and argues his case. *Twelve days*.—So recent that all the facts can be easily proved. *Worship*.—For this he came and not for disturbance.

Vs. 14-16. The second charge denied. *Confess*.—Not a confession of guilt, but, that in his own way, not in their way, he worshipped the same God that they did, believed the same scriptures, held the same hope. *Conscience*.—A grand summing up of faith and life.

Vs. 17-21. The third charge denied. *Many years*.—It was 21 years since his conversion, and 10 years since he had set out on his first missionary journey. *Alms*.—See Rom. 15: 25; 1 Cor. 16: 1-4; 2 Cor. 8: 1-4. How could one who had spent time and labor in such work for his people at Jerusalem, be one to profane the temple. *Asia*.—Jews who had hated him in Ephesus, and when they saw him in the temple raised a cry against him. *Tumult*.—He had raised no tumult. He was quietly worshipping. It was they who raised the tumult. *Ought*.—Roman custom did not judge a prisoner without his accusers face to face. *Or else*.—The charges of Tertullus had been very general. He asks for instances. *Except*.—He is very careful to mention all, and there is no reply.

Vs. 22. The Result. *Knowledge*.—He knew enough of Christianity not to accept the statements of the Jews, and deferred the case until Lysias came, who would be an impartial witness.

11. Second appearance before Felix. Vs. 24, 25; *Drusilla*.—The daughter of Herod Agrippa I. At 15, she had married Aziz king of Hamath. Felix, an old man of 60, born a slave and though now in power, a slave still to sin and vice, induced the young bride to leave her husband. What an audience, and Paul adapts himself to it. *Trembled*.—Was terrified, old in vice as he was, but she was too hardened. *Convenient*.—How many have made shipwreck there.

1. The Christian should be courteous.

2. The enemies of Christ and His church will make false charges.

3. A sufficient answer is, to show the facts and let them speak.

4. Paul before Felix's judgment seat; Felix before the bar of his own conscience, one calm the other terrified.

5. How differently the forgiven and unforgiven can view the judgment to come.

6. Satan's greatest allurements are "a more convenient season."

7. Opportunities lost, come back no more.