

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FOURTH QUARTER: STUDIES IN LUKE'S GOSPEL. A. D. 29. LESSON VIII. JUDAISM OVERTHROWN; or, The Saints Forewarned. Luke 21, 8-21. Nov. 24.

EXPLANATORY. Verse 8. And he said, The disciples had called his attention to the solid and massive walls of the temple. Christ in return told them that the time was near at hand when those strong towers would be overthrown, even to their foundations. They connected his prophecy with the end of the world, which they supposed would take place at the same time, and asked him when it was destined to occur. 1. 'There is great tendency to see in our own troubles those of the whole world, and to suppose that the breaking up of our affairs indicates the end of the world. From the wars of Titus to those of Von Moltke, every year has been supposed to forebode the destruction of human society. Be not deceived. He warns them against the mistake of confounding the destruction of Jerusalem with the final consummation of all things. Come in my name. That is, claiming to be the promise and expected Messiah. They were not to look for a golden age at once; rather a period of trouble, of false doctrine, and of darkness. Beware, I am Christ. It is a fact that in the closing years of the Jewish commonwealth many pretenders arose, claiming to be the Messiah, all of whom, however, soon came to naught. The time draweth near. The time of preachers and of persecution. The lifetime of many among the apostles lasted long enough to witness all these terrible calamities. Go ye out. They were not to be swayed from their faith in Christ by any manifestations, however plausible. 2. 'We can be forewarned against that trouble against which we are forewarned.' 3. 'Where a knowledge of coming danger will help the church to prepare for it, the Lord gives warning; where it would only serve to alarm, he withholds it.'

9. Wars and commotions. The threatened invasion of the Romans, which were long in preparation before actually realized; and the riots, disturbances and massacres of the period just before the final siege of Jerusalem. In one slaughter according to Josephus, fifty thousand Jews were slain. He not terrified. They were to trust that Christ would care for his own, and watch over the interests of his church. 4. 'Whatever happens in the world, God's people are safe and secure, under the shadow of his wings.' By and by. An expression which at the present time means 'after awhile,' but in the time when the Bible was translated meant 'immediately.' They were not to expect the destruction of the world to accompany the overthrow of the Jewish State.

10. 11. Nations shall rise. There were revolutions and changes of imperial succession following each other rapidly at Rome, and riots, bloodshed, and disturbances throughout the empire, during the era just before the destruction of Jerusalem. Earthquakes. The historian Tacitus mentions many earthquakes in the reigns of Claudius and Nero, in which Laodicea, Colosse and other cities were destroyed. Divers places. 'Place for place,' that is, not in one place only, but successively in various districts. Zuzimes. One prophesied by Agabus. (Acts 11, 28) occurred A. D. 48. Pestilences. Which often follow as the result of famine, from insufficient and unwholesome food. Fearful sights and great signs. Josephus relates, among the omens that foreshadowed the fall of the city, that a strange star hung over it, and a comet was visible in the heavens for a year; that a gate of the temple, which twenty men could scarcely move, opened of its own accord one night, that horses, chariots and warriors were seen marching in the sky; that a mysterious voice was heard in the temple, saying, 'Let us depart hence;' and that a peasant from the country wandered, for seven years, throughout the city, continually crying, 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem,' until after the siege began, when, while saying 'Woe, woe to myself also,' he was killed by a missile from the enemy.

12. Before all these. Previous to the destruction of Jerusalem the persecution of the Christians was commenced, first in Judea by King Herod, afterward at Rome by the Emperor Nero, and throughout the cities of the empire. To the synagogues. The councils of Jewish leaders in provincial places were often held in the synagogues, as the Great Council of Sanhedrin was held in the temple, and the scourging of Herod, Felix, Festus, and the Emperor Nero, before whom Paul was tried. For my name's sake. 5. 'Those who bear Christ's name must also suffer his reproach.'

13, 14, 15. For a testimony. That is, their endurance of persecutions would become the testimony or proof of their fidelity to Christ. 2. These trials would afford them a glorious opportunity to bear testimony to the cause of Christ and the truth of the Gospel. It is well known that the constancy and cheerfulness of the Christians under persecutions won multitudes of converts. 6. 'He who rules the universe compels even the wrath of men to minister to his praise.' Settle it. Resolve, or determine. Not to meditate before. This was a direction for general emergency and trial, not a general precept. The answer shall be supplied when a question is asked; but there is no promise for those who undertake to deliver the message of the gospel without forethought. Gainsay. 7. 'A man who has truth on his side is always stronger than his foes.'

13, 17, 18. Ye shall be betrayed. In every persecution, from Nero to Bloody

Mary, the ties of religion have been found stronger than those of blood. Some of you. They had been looking for offices, honors and emoluments under this new dispensation. Christ warns them that their crowns shall be those of the martyr, and their riches shall not be earthly. Put to death. Several, if not most, of the apostles, including James, Peter and Paul were slain. John was the only one who is believed to have died a natural death. 8. 'Those whom the Saviour loves the most are sometimes called upon to suffer the most.' Hated of all men. It seems strange that the pure doctrines and innocent lives of the early Christians should win for them a general enmity, but such was the fact. Tacitus, the Roman historian, calls them 'the enemies of the human race.' Because they refused to worship idols they were considered atheists. Nero falsely charged them with the burning of Rome, and caused thousands to be put to death with the most horrible tortures. 9. 'Even the best and purest may be misunderstood and wronged in the opinions of their fellow-men.' Not a hair of your head perish. 'When at last you come to cast up your accounts, you will find that you have lost nothing, and your enemies shall find that they have gained nothing.' Pool. 10. 'The saint meeting with persecutions gains a hundred fold in this life, and a thousand fold in the life to come.'

GOLDEN TEXT: And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it. Luke 19, 41. DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION: The divine foreknowledge. The next lesson is Luke 22, 10-20.

PREACHING DOCTRINES.—It is the merest mockery to constantly iterate the invitation, 'Come to Christ,' or to repeat perpetually, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,' without at the same time telling who Jesus is, and explaining what is meant by believing on Him or having faith in Him. But to do this involves also involve doctrine. Even beneath the clamor itself there is the doctrine that is no matter what a man believes, so long as he is resting in Christ. But doctrinal preaching is not confined to the evangelical ministry alone. They who teach that Christ is but a man, or that his death is but the death of a martyr, are equally teaching or preaching a doctrine. The truth is, that if men would preach that there is any significance whatever in the Gospel, it is impossible to escape the use of doctrine.—Wm. M. Taylor, D.D.

A CHILD'S OPINION.—A FACT.

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