

LESSON IV—April 25th, 1897.

Peter Delivered from Prison. ACTS 12: 5-17.

(Commit to memory verses 7-9, and read chapter 12).

GOLDEN TEXT: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Ps. 34: 7.

PROVE THAT—The Lord delivers his servants in trouble. Ps. 41: 2.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 98. *What is prayer?* A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies. Quest. 99. *What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?* The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called *The Lord's Prayer*.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 160, 161, 228, 40.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Peter delivered from prison. Acts 12: 1-10. *Tuesday.* Peter delivered from prison. Acts 12: 11-19. *Wednesday.* God's power to save. Ps. 33: 10-22. *Thursday.* The Lord's angel. Ps. 34: 1-10. *Friday.* Refuge of the godly. Ps. 91. *Saturday.* Able to deliver. Dan. 6: 15-23. *Sabbath.* Helping by prayer. 2 Cor. 1: 1-11. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. While Paul and Barnabas were ministering to the Corinthian church, certain prophets from Jerusalem foretold a general dearth soon to be experienced throughout the empire. Immediately the Antioch christians determined to send relief to their brethren in Judea. Their gifts were conveyed to the elders at Jerusalem by Barnabas and Saul. A pleasing testimony to the unity of the church and the strength of its brotherly love. Again, however, persecution broke forth. Herod Agrippa I. the grandson of Herod the Great, took up the *role* of Saul, as arch-persecutor and, to ingratiate himself with the Jews, put to death James, the brother of John, and imprisoned Peter, intending to make him the next victim as soon as the solemnities connected with the passover were finished. Time A. D. 44. Pass-over April 1st to 8th.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Apostle's Peril. vs. 5, 6. II. The Angel's Help. vs. 7-11. III. The Praying Church. vs. 12-17.

5. Without ceasing—R. V. "earnestly" They had meetings for prayer, but their hearts were praying all the time. It was a trial of strength between the power of Herod and the power of prayer. **6. Bound with two chains—**Each wrist was chained to that of a soldier—his right wrist to the left of one, and his left to the right of the other. His slightest movement would usually wake them. Then there were two sentries outside. Peter was calmly sleeping, although he believed it to be his last night on earth. He knew that living or dying he was the Lord's. (Ps. 34: 19; 41: 1, 2; Luke 21: 18; Matt. 10: 29-31). **7. An angel of the Lord—**It was not the first time that Peter had been delivered by an angel (ch. 5: 19). None of the soldiers were conscious of the angel's presence. **8. Bind on thy sandals—**The angel would not do for Peter what he could do for himself. **9. Wist not that it was true—**Wist is an old word for "knew." Peter perhaps remembered his vision at Joppa. He was evidently not expecting to be delivered from death. **10. Forthwith the angel departed—**The angel went with Peter until he was

quite safe and knew where he was. Then he left him to the guidance of his own judgment, he needed no more help. **11. When Peter was come to himself—**Peter had been confused by the rapid succession of wonders and did not, for a few moments, realize where he was. **12. Mary the mother of John—**Mary's house had been a familiar place of meeting and he was sure of a welcome. Mary's son, John Mark, was the writer of the second gospel under Peter's supervision. Here was an all-night prayer meeting. **13. A damsel came to hearken—**As we would say "to answer the door." There were some young people at that prayer meeting, evidently. **15. It is his angel—**The Jews believed that everyone had a guardian angel and that Peter's had now come to announce that he was slain. **16. They were astonished—**Yet this was just what they had been praying for. **17. James—**He was the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1: 19) and recognized head of the church at Jerusalem, but he was not an apostle. Peter probably went into concealment for a time.

LESSONS. 1. Earnest united prayer will call down a blessing. 2. Chains and prison bars are useless when God wishes to interfere. 3. God's angels are always ready to help us. 4. Our prayers are answered sooner than we expect. 5. We should tell what God has done for us.