

## INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

## SECOND QUARTER: THREE MONTHS' STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND EPISTLES.

A. D. 60.]

## LESSON I. PAUL'S VOYAGE.

[April 5.

Acts 27. 1, 2, 14-26. [Commit to memory verses 22-25.]



that we should sail into I-o-ly, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Ju-li-us, a centurion of Au-gus-tus' band.

2 And entering into a ship of Ad-ra-my'ti-um, we launched, mean-while, the ship, by the coasts of A'e-l-a; one Ar-is-tar-chus, a Mac'e-do-ni-an of The's-sa-lo-ni-ca, being with us.

14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Eu-ro-cy-clon.

15 And when the ship was light, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.

16 And running under a certain island which is called Cla-g'da, we had much work to come by the boat:

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the hands, strike sail, and so were driven.

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship;

19 And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

21 But after long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cae-sar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

## General Statement.

At last the order came by which Paul was transferred from the prison at Caesarea to the care of the centurion who should convey him to Rome, the goal of his hopes. There was a farewell with the Church at Caesarea, Philip the evangelist parting with his former persecutor, and the apostle, chained to a Roman soldier, stepped on board the ship. By his side are the beloved Luke, the loyal Aristarchus, and, perhaps, the faithful Timothy. They are in a motley company of soldiers, sailors, merchants, and criminals, in a vessel bound for the shores of the Aegean. They pause for a day at Zidon; they pass in sight of the island of Cyprus, where long ago Paul began those missionary labors which have ended now in bonds and imprisonment; they change ships at Myra, on the shore of Asia Minor, and they pass under the lee of Crete, where their troubles begin. A mighty

tornado sweeps down upon their vessel from the heights of Mount Ida, and it is driven far out of its course. The sails are rent, the mast and rigging are broken, and the creaking ship opens her seams. Day after day the storm continues, night after night no stars are seen. The crew and passengers, huddled together in the leaking craft, are in momentary terror, lest they may either founder in the sea, or dash upon the shallows of the African coast. Hungry, and drenched, and sleepless, they are in the sorest trouble, when suddenly a calm voice is heard, and a confident face shines upon the crowd. It is the apostle Paul, who in the hour of need steps forward as the master of affairs. He gives to them the cheering promise from his Lord that their lives are safe in an Almighty hand, and bids them wait in patience and hope for the promised deliverance.

## Explanatory and Practical Notes.

**Verses 1. And when.** Soon after the events of the last lesson, which related the result of Paul's hearing before Agrippa. **It was determined.** The question was not settled that Paul was to be tried at Rome, before the emperor's court, and the determination was as to the time and manner of the voyage. **They.** The subordinate officials under Festus. **Certain other prisoners.** Some may have been political prisoners of social position, but most of them were doubtless robbers, murderers, and outlaws. In such companionship was the holy and noble-minded apostle compelled to journey. **Named Julius.** He may have belonged to the illustrious Julian family, from which Julius Caesar sprang; and he was certainly a gentleman as well as a soldier, for every reference to him shows kindness, courage, and nobility of character. There is some reason for identifying him with a certain Julius Priscus, who afterward became commander of the pretorian guard at Rome. **To a centurion.** A Roman officer in command of a company consisting, when full, of one hundred soldiers. There are four Roman centurions mentioned in the New Testament, and all referred to in an honorable manner. **Augustus' band.** Augustus was the title of the Roman emperor; and hence this has been supposed to mean "the emperor's body-guard," and to indicate that a company of the pretorian guard at Rome was assigned to the governor at Caesarea.

(1) *The rulers of this world are often the unconscious instruments of God's purposes.* (2) *Saints may wear chains and dwell among criminals, but their hearts are free.*

**2. Entering.** Literally, "embarking," one of the many expressions in this chapter showing Luke's precise acquaintance with nautical terms. **A ship.** The ancient ships were high and broad, propelled by both sails and oars, and steered by two oars fastened to the stern. **Of Adramyttium.** This sea-port, for which the vessel was bound, was on the western coast of Asia Minor, in the province of Mysia. There were no passenger lines of vessels, and travelers took whatever ships were sailing toward their destination. **Meaning**

**to sail by.** The vessel was to pass along the southern shores of Asia Minor, and thence through the Aegean Sea. It is probable that the centurion's purpose was to land at Adramyttium, cross the Aegean, journey through Macedonia, and thence sail across the Adriatic Sea to Brundisium, which was the ordinary route to Rome. But at Myra, in Lycia, they met an Alexandrian vessel laden with wheat, and bound directly for Rome. This changed the plan. The prisoners were transhipped, and the storm soon after overtook them. **Aristarchus.** This was one of Paul's most faithful friends. He had left his home to journey with Paul to Jerusalem, stayed near him during his two years' imprisonment, was now his companion in the voyage, and remained with him at Rome in such close fellowship that two years after this Paul called him "my fellow-prisoner." **Thessalonica.** The largest city in Macedonia, where Paul had founded a Church on his second journey, to which he had written his two earliest epistles. **Being with us.** So the apostolic company probably consisted of at least four persons, Paul, Luke, Aristarchus, and Timothy. (3) *In trouble, nothing is more comforting than the companionship of Christian friends.*

**14.** Notice that eleven verses are omitted from the lesson. They give account of a visit to Zidon, a voyage past Cyprus, a change of ships at Myra, a difficult passage by Crete, and a temporary anchorage at a place called Fair Havens, where Paul urged them to remain and avoid a storm. **Not long after.** After leaving the island of Crete, and sailing westward. **Arose against it.** Rather, as in Rev. Ver., "beat down from it." That is, from the island of Crete. **A tempestuous wind.** In Greek the word is one which implies "a tornado with a whirl." **Called Euroclydon.** Or, in Rev. Ver., *Euraquilo*. A well-known gale in the Mediterranean, now called "a levanter." It resembles our "north-easter."

**15. Could not bear up.** Literally, "could not look the wind in the eye," that is, *face the wind*, as in Rev. Ver., a figure of speech the more vivid because a