

LESSON NOTES.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

A.D. 58.] LESSON VI. [Feb. 8.

PAUL ASSAILED.

Acts 21. 27-40. Commit to mem. vs. 30-33.

GOLDEN TEXT.

I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.—Acts 21. 13.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Earnest Christians may suffer persecution, but even this will help to spread the Gospel.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Acts 21. 27-40. Th. 2 Cor. 4. 1-18.
T. Acts 19. 30-41. F. Ezek. 44. 1-18.
W. Acts 6. 7-15. Sa. Luke 23. 10-25.
Su. Heb. 12. 1-12.

TIME.—Tuesday, May 23, A.D. 58, five days after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, the temple area. His abode was at the house of Mnason, in the city.

PERSONS.—Paul, aged 56. Luke and Trophimus, his companions. Josephus, the historian, aged 20.

RULERS.—Nero, emperor of Rome. Felix, governor of Judea. Claudius Lysias, Roman commander at Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION.—In our last lesson we left Paul joining with four Jews, who had taken the vow of the Nazirite in their closing ceremonies. It was done to answer the false stories which had been circulated about him: The answer satisfied the Christian Jews, but awakened the opposition of the unbelieving Jews. The events of this lesson took place during the seven days of these ceremonies.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—27. *The seven days*—Which it took to complete the vow (Num. 6. 19). This was the fifth day. *Jews of Asia*—The small province of Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital. The Jews had opposed Paul in Ephesus for three years; knew him and hated him. *In the temple*—The court called "the court of the women," because women went no further. Here was the usual place of worship, and the room for the Nazirites. 28. *Brought Greeks also into the temple*—i.e., into the inner courts, beyond the court of the Gentiles. On the low balustrade which separated the court of the Gentiles from the court of the women, were inscriptions declaring it to be death for a Gentile to pass beyond it. 29. *Trophimus*—Who had come with Paul as a delegate to bring the contributions of the Churches (Acts 20. 4). 30. *Drew him*—Dragged. *Out of the temple*—The court of the women. *The doors were shut*—The great doors of the Gate Beautiful, 60 feet high, and made of Corinthian brass. This was to keep the sacred place free of the mob. 31. *The chief captain*—Claudius Lysias (Acts 24. 26). He was captain of 1000 men, which is the *band*, or cohort. This was stationed in the Castle of Antonia, which adjoined the temple; and was the Roman guard of Jerusalem. 32. *Centurions*—Captains of a hundred men. 33. *Bound with two chains*—By the hands, to a soldier each side of him. 35. *The stairs*—Which led up from the court of the Gentiles to the roof of the corridor leading to the castle. 38. *That Egyptian*—An Egyptian false prophet, who, about two months before, had gathered together 4000 assassins, and a multitude of 30,000, upon the Mount of Olives. They were dispersed by the Romans, but the Egyptian escaped.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The seven days.—The Jews from Ephesus, and why they led in this mob.—A description of the temple and its courts, and the location of these events.—The charge against Paul.—Trophimus.—The chief captain.—The Castle of Antonia.—"That Egyptian."—The language Paul spoke.—Tarsus.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Why was Paul in Jerusalem? With whom did he lodge? What slanders were uttered against him? How did he try to refute these slanders? When did the events of this lesson occur?

SUBJECT: SUFFERING FOR JESUS' SAKE.

I. PAUL ASSAULTED BY A MOB (vs. 27-30).—What seven days are referred to in v. 27? (Num. 6. 19.) Why was Paul in the

temple? In what part of the temple? Had he a night there? Who noticed his presence here? Were these Christian Jews or unbelievers? It is probable that the Christian Jews were satisfied with Paul's answer to the slanders against him? How would these Ephesian Jews know Paul? Why would they hate him? What was the first charge they made against him? Was it true? What was the second charge? Was it true? Into what part of the temple were the Gentiles forbidden to enter? What was the penalty for entering? How does their conduct illustrate one of Christ's sayings? (Matt. 23. 23, 24.) What did they do to Paul? (v. 32.) What did they propose to do? Where was he taken? What doors were shut?

II. THE RESCUE (vs. 31-36).—Who guarded the temple? In what castle did they have their barracks? The name of the chief captain? (Acts 24. 26.) How did he rescue Paul? How was Paul bound? What questions did Lysias ask? What answer did he get? Where did he take Paul? What did the mob now do? Up what stairs was Paul carried?

III. PERSECUTION SPREADING THE GOSPEL (vs. 37-40).—What favour did Paul ask of Lysias? In what language? Whom had the chief captain supposed Paul to be? What can you tell about this Egyptian? What was Paul's description of himself? Was permission granted Paul to speak? What language did he use? Why? Who were Paul's audience? Could he, except thus guarded by the Romans, have preached the Gospel to the Jews? What promise was here fulfilled? (Rom. 8. 28.) Which of the Beatitudes did he now enjoy? Did this suffering make him love Jesus more? Do we ever suffer for Jesus' sake?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Many good persons are slandered by imputing to them our own impressions and inferences from what they do.
2. We should have the real virtue, which these Jews distorted, of preserving our holy places from pollution.
3. They should have been more careful to keep out bad thoughts and passions than Gentiles.
4. The world notices the company we keep.
5. The Lord enables his people to be calm even in a stormy mob.
6. Envy, hatred, persecution, call the attention of the world to the truth.
7. Blessed are they that are persecuted for Christ's sake.

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

6. What was Paul doing in the temple? Ans. Offering the sacrifices of his vow. 7. Who saw him there? Ans. Some Jews from Ephesus. 8. With what did they charge him? Ans. With preaching against the Jewish religion, and polluting the temple. 9. What did they do? Ans. They stirred up the people to kill him. 10. Who rescued Paul? Ans. Claudius Lysias, the commander of the Roman guard.

A.D. 58.] LESSON VII. [Feb. 15.

PAUL'S DEFENCE.

Acts 22. 1-21. Commit to mem. vs. 12-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And I said, What shall I do, Lord?—Acts 22. 10.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Conversion to Christ is the great need of all men.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Acts 22. 1-21. Th. John 1. 1-16.
T. Acts 9. 1-18. F. Rom. 9. 1-8.
W. Gal. 1. 1-24. Sa. Rom. 10. 1-21.
Su. 1 Tim. 1. 1-17.

TIME.—Tuesday, May 23, A.D. 58, the same day as the last lesson. Paul was converted in the midsummer of A.D. 37.

PLACE.—Jerusalem; the temple area; on the stairs that led from the court of the Gentiles to the Castle of Antonia.

PAUL.—Now aged 56, converted when 35 years old.

RULERS.—Nero, emperor of Rome. Felix, governor of Judea. Claudius Lysias commander of the Roman guard at Jerusalem.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—Paul had been mobbed in the temple area, and rescued by the Roman guard. Having been brought to the head of the stairs leading to the Castle Antonia, Paul had received permission to address the people. To-day's lesson is that address.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. *Brethren, fathers*—These, and many other expressions, would tend to conciliate the Jews. 3. *Gamaliel*.—A most famous and strict Jewish teacher. 4. *This way*—The Gospel,—the way of life. 5. *The high priest*—Theophilus, still living when Paul spoke. *Estate of the elders*—The Sanhedrim, of which Paul was once a member. 6. *A great light*—In which he saw Jesus himself (ch. 9. 7; 22. 14). 9. *Heard not the voice*—i.e., Did not understand it as language, though they heard a sound (9. 7). 11. *Could not see*—He was blind three days (9. 9). 14. *That Just One*—Jesus. 16. *Wash away thy sins*—Baptism was a sign of this cleansing. 19. *And I said*—Paul here gives the reason why he wanted to remain and preach to the Jews.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Reconcile the apparent differences in the different accounts of Paul's conversion.—Paul's early life.—His character before conversion.—The various steps in his conversion.—The change his conversion wrought in him.—v. 16.—Paul's mission.—Expressions in the lesson used to conciliate the Jews.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where did we leave Paul, in our last lesson? Give a brief account of the mob and its causes. What led him to make the address in this lesson? In what language did he speak? Why? Its effect on the mob?

SUBJECT: PAUL'S CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

I. HIS LIFE PREVIOUS TO CONVERSION (vs. 1-5).—Where was Paul born? What do we know of his parents? (Acts 22. 28; Phil. 3. 5.) Where was Paul educated? What trade did he learn? What was Paul's character before conversion? Did it need changing? What was its great lack? (1 Cor. 13. 1-3.) How did he show his zeal? Who could bear witness to what he said?

II. HIS CONVERSION (vs. 6-16).—Where was Paul converted? How old was he at this time? How was he first convicted of sin? Whom did he see in the great light? (v. 14; ch. 9. 17.) How does seeing Jesus as he is, convict men of sin? What did Jesus ask Paul? What was the next step in his conversion? (v. 10.) Where was he sent for help? Why? How long was he blind? (9. 9.) What struggle probably took place at that time? What did Ananias do for him? What blessing came with this? (9. 17.) What motive was presented to Paul? (v. 15.) How did he confess Christ? What did his baptism signify? What more did Paul do? Note the various steps in Paul's conversion. What change did his conversion work in his life and character?

III. HIS LIFE WORK (vs. 17-21).—How long after his conversion did Paul go up to Jerusalem? (Gal. 1. 18.) Why? (Rom. 9. 1-3.) Who appeared to him then? In what place? What was to be Paul's life work? Was it a worthy and blessed work? What is your life work? How did Paul plead to remain and preach to his brethren?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. A Christian experience is the best argument against opposers.
2. If Paul needed conversion, we all need this change.
3. The greatest power for convicting men of sin is seeing Jesus as he is.
4. Both divine and human agencies are employed in converting men.
5. We get much help from the experience of others.
6. God has some special work for each converted person to do.

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

11. What request did Paul make of the Roman commander? Ans. That he might speak to the people. 12. From what place did he address them? Ans. From the castle stairs. 13. What was the subject of his address? Ans. His own experience in becoming a Christian. 14. What was he before conversion? Ans. A strict Jew, self-righteous, zealous for the law. 15. What did he become? Ans. An earnest, faithful, loving Christian, full of good works.

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