

Annas, sternly rebukes them for their conduct in proclaiming the forbidden name, and with man's lips declares, "Ye intend to bring this for his brethren that they are but the messengers of the God of Israel, who has raised his Son they dare not withhold the message of their King. The enraged council are ready to order them to death, but calmer counsels prevail; the apostles are beaten, but not slain, and bear the pain and shame with joy, glad to bear testimony for their Master.

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 17. The high-priest.** Probably Annas (as in Lesson VI.) who was regarded by the Jews as the true high-priest, though his son-in-law Caiaphas held the office. **Rose up.** An expression meaning that they were aroused to action by the prominence which the new gospel was obtaining, and the power which it was exerting. **All they that were with him.** Not all the Sanhedrin or supreme council, but those leaders who were in sympathy and affiliation with the high-priest. **Set of the Sadducees.** The smaller in number of the two Jewish sects, but more largely represented in the office-holding class than the Pharisees. They were rationalists, denying the resurrection and the future life, and hence were offended at the preaching of the apostles. **Indignation.** Angry both at the fact of the apostles preaching after they had forbidden them; and at the doctrine which they preached. 1. The boasted liberality of skeptics is a myth. None are more bigoted than unbelievers.

**18 Laid their hands.** Seized them roughly, by their police. **On the apostles.** Probably all the twelve were this time arrested. **In the common prison.** In the public jail of the city, in company with the lowest and vilest criminals; and, according to Oriental usage, left to starve unless supplied by their friends with food. 2. But souls may be free while bodies are chained.

**19. The angel.** Rather, as in Revised Version, "an angel." It is evidently related as a supernatural event, though some writers suppose that it was through the agency of a friend among the guard. If God could work one miracle, why not another? 3. God's angels are ever at work in behalf of his people. **Opened the prison doors.** 4. Lock and walls are no barrier in the way of God's purposes. **Brought them forth.** The purpose of the miracle was to arrest attention, and to quicken the conscience of the rulers, by making them see that they were fighting against God. And the miracle was not without its effect in the milder treatment of the apostles.

**20. Go, stand and speak.** The angel opens the prison and bids the disciples preach, but does not preach himself. It is the divine plan that men, and not angels, shall call their fellow-men to repentance. 5. We have a privi-

lege higher than belongs to the angels of God. **In the temple.** The post of duty, the place where they had been arrested, and the very centre of the opposition to the Gospel. **All the words of this life.** "Life" here means not the present nor the future life, but the spiritual life, the new life in Christ, which was the theme of apostolic preaching.

#### 21. They entered into the temple.

The place was probably Solomon's Porch, on the east of the court of the Gentiles. Ver. 12. **Early in the morning.** Rev. Ver., "about daybreak." They went at once, as soon as released, and were there in time for the morning sacrifice, at sunrise. On account of the heat of the climate in Palestine work begins with the first light, in the cool of the morning, and the hot noon time is taken for rest. **High-priest came.** For the purpose of holding the trial of the apostles, in the hall Gazith, the session-room of the Sanhedrin, in the courts of Israel and of the Priests, in the temple. **They that were with him.** His immediate friends and partisans, who had called the meeting of the entire council. **The council.... and all the senate.** The two words mean about the same, the repetition being for the sake of emphasis. **Sent to the prison.** Where they had committed them on the day before, and supposed them now to be.

#### 22, 23 When the officers came.

The civil officers of the Sanhedrin, who were to execute its orders. **The prison.... shut.** The heavenly visitant had not only opened the doors, but closed them again, and so quietly that the escape of twelve men had been unnoticed. **Keepers standing without.** In the East the guards stand outside the entrance to the jail. **No man within.** They may have been the only prisoners, or the words may mean "no man of those whom we were seeking."

**24. Captain of the temple.** The chief of the Levite police in the temple quarter. **Chief priests.** The leaders of the priestly order, whether from rank or force of character. **Doubted of them.** "Were much perplexed concerning them," Rev. Ver. They could not understand the events nor their cause; and perhaps a fear and awe of the supernatural arose in their minds. **Whereunto this would grow.** They feared the results that might come to pass, in the strengthening of the Gospel, and the loss of their own influence. 6. God's ways are ever a marvel to men.

**25, 26. Then came one.** From Solomon's Porch into the Hall Gazith, within the area of the temple. **Standing in the temple.** "Near at hand, in this very building." **Teaching the people.** Showing thereby no intention of obeying the orders of the council. **Brought them without violence.** The apostles making no resistance, and the officers being careful not to treat them roughly. **Feared the people.** The people were friendly to the apostles, on account of their character, their good works, and the interest of