

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIRST QUARTER—STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

MARCH, 1883.

NOTE.—The Scripture verses to be committed to memory are indicated by an index [*28*] at the side.

A. D. 30.

March 4.

LESSON IX.—PERSECUTION RENEWED.

Acts 5. 17-32.

17 Then *a* the high-priest rose up, and all that were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees, and were filled with *a* indignation,

a Chap. 4. 1. 2.—*a* Or, envy.

18. And *b* laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

b Luke 21. 12.

19 But *c* the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

c Psa. 34. 7; Acts. 12. 7; chap. 16. 26; Heb. 1. 14.

20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people *d* all the words of this life.

d John 6. 68; 17. 8; 1 John 10. 11.

21 And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught.

e But the high-priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

e Chap. 4. 5, 6.

22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

24 Now when the high-priest *f* and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

f Luke 22. 4; chap. 4. 1.

25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, The men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: *g* for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.

g Matt. 14. 5; 21. 26.

28 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high-priest asked them,

28 28 Saying, *h* Did not we straitly command you, that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood *j* upon us.

h Chap. 4. 18;—*i* Chap. 2. 23; 3. 15; 7. 52.—*j* Matt. 23. 35; 27. 25.

29 29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, *k* We ought to obey God rather than men.

k Gal. 1. 10.

30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged *l* on a tree.

l Chap. 10. 39; Gal. 3. 13; 1 Peter 2. 24.

31 Him *m* hath God exalted with his right-hand to be *n* a Prince and a *o* Saviour, *p* for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

m Chap. 2. 23; Phil. 2. 9; Heb. 2. 10; 12. 2.—*n* 1-a, 9. 6; Ezek. 34. 24; Dan. 9. 25; chap. 3. 15; Rev. 1. 5.—*o* Matt. 1. 21.—*p* Eph. 1. 7; Col. 1. 14.

32 And *q* we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

q John 15. 26.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

Two results followed God's judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira: the standard of purity was raised in the Church, so that no man dared to unite with it from selfish motives; and at the same time there was an increase of power over the world, as men realized that the Gospel was under a divine protection. The twelve apostles were held in honour, and multitudes thronged around them to listen to their words, and to receive their healing influence. Such throngs gathered day by day in Solomon's Porch, that the rulers again became uneasy and alarmed. A brief consultation was held by the leaders; the apostles were suddenly seized, and thrust into the common prison of the city for the night, until action should be taken on the morrow. But that night, while rulers and guards were both asleep, there was a rustle of wings over the prison, noiselessly the iron doors swung open, the chains fell off, and the apostles walked forth free. At daybreak their voice was heard once more in the temple proclaiming the words of eternal life. The council of the Jews met in their hall; the officers were sent for their prisoners, but returned in terror, declaring that while they found the doors shut and the keepers on guard, within they saw no man. A strange terror, a deep consciousness began to grow in the minds of the rulers that they were fighting against God's plan, and they feared what the result might be, yet would not confess themselves guilty of their Redeemer's blood, and seek his mercy. Suddenly appears in their presence a man just from Solomon's Porch, bringing news that the men who but yesterday were committed to prison are there preaching to the people. The captain of the temple and his guards surround the place, and arrest the twelve, but in no rough manner, for they are warned by the ominous looks of the people that the persecution is unpopular. The apostles are now in a body before the council of the Jewish people. Again the high priest,