HEROD AGRIPPA I., grandson of Herod the  
Great,—son of Aristobulus and Berenice.  
Having gone to Rome, to accuse Herod  
the Tetrarch (Antipas), and fallen under  
the displeasure of Tiberius for paying open  
court to Caius Cæsar (Caligula), he was  
imprisoned and cruelly treated; but, on  
the accession of Caligula, released, and at  
once presented with the tetrarchy of Philip  
(Trachonitis),—who had lately died,—and  
the title of king. On this, Antipas, by  
persuasion of his wife Herodias, went to  
Rome, to try to obtain the royal title also,  
but was followed by his enemy Agrippa,  
who managed to get Antipas banished to  
Spain, and to obtain his tetrarchy (Galilee  
and Peræa) for himself. Finally, Claudius,  
in return for services rendered to him by  
Agrippa, at the time of Caligula’s death,  
presented him with Samaria and Judæa  
(about 41 A.D., Jos. Antt. xix. 5. 1), so  
that he now ruled (Jos. ibid.) all the  
kingdom of Herod the Great. His character, as given by Josephus, Antt. xix.  
7. 3, is important as illustrating the present  
chapter. He describes him as munificent in  
gifts and very ambitious of popular favour,  
making himself conspicuous by lavish expenditure; and a great observer, for popularity’s  
sake, of the law and customs of the Jews.

This character will abundantly account for  
his persecuting the Christians, who were  
so odious to the Jews, and for his vain-glorious acceptance of the impious homage  
of the people, ver. 23.

**2. James the  
brother of John**] Of him we know nothing  
besides what is related in the Gospels.  
He was the son of Zebedee, called (Matt.  
iv. 21) together with John his brother:  
was one of the favoured Three admitted  
to the death-chamber of Jairus’s daughter  
(Mark v. 37), to the mount of transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 1), and to the  
agony in the garden (Matt. xxvi. 37). He,  
together with John his brother (named by  
our Lord ‘Boanerges,’ ‘sons of thunder’),  
wished to call down fire on the inhospitable  
Samaritans (Luke ix. 54),—and prayed that  
his brother and himself’ might sit, one on  
the right hand and the other on the left,  
in the Lord’s kingdom (Matt. xx. 20–24).  
It was then that He foretold to them their  
drinking of the cup of suffering and being  
baptized with the baptism which He was  
baptized with: a prophecy which James  
was the first to fulfil.—*This is the only  
Apostle of whose death we have any certain record.* With regard to all the rest,  
tradition varies, more or less, as to the  
place, or the manner, or the time of their  
deaths.—Eusebius relates, from a work of  
Clemens, who had received it by tradition  
of those before him, that the accuser of  
Jamesm struck by his confession, became a  
Christian, and was led away with him to  
martyrdom. As they went to execution,  
he asked the Apostle’s forgiveness. After  
a moment's thought, he replied “Peace be  
to thee,” and kissed him: and so both  
were beheaded together.

**with the  
sword**] Probably according to the Roman.  
method of *beheading*, which became common among the later Jews. It was a  
punishment accounted extremely disgraceful by the Jews.

**3.**] See the character of Agrippa above.

**the days of  
unleavened bread**] Wieseler regards the  
whole of the following narrative as having  
happened on one and the same day and  
night, viz. that of the 14th of Nisan (April  
1), A.D. 44. He takes the words in the  
strict meaning: that it was the *very day*of the passover, and that “*after the passover*” means, after the eating of the passover on the evening of the 14th of Nisan,  
and that Herod was intending to bring  
Peter forth on the next morning. He  
finds support for this in the four quaternions of soldiers, the guard for one night  
(see below), and maintains that the expression **the Passover** cannot apply to the  
whole festal period, which would have been  
“*the feast*” or “*those days.*” But Bleek  
calls this view most arbitrary and even  
unnatural; and I own, with all respect  
for Wieseler’s general acumen, I am disposed to agree with this criticism. The  
whole cast of the narrative,—the use of  
**days**, not “*day*,” as in St. Luke’s own  
expression in his Gospel, xxii. 7,—the intimation of *enduring custody* in the delivering him to the soldiers to keep him,  
the delay implied in the word **intending**,—the specification of **that same night** presupposing more nights preceding,—all this  
would be unaccountable in the precise historical diction of St. Luke, unless he had  
intended to convey an impression that  
*some days elapsed*. But still more decisive  
is his own definition of *the Passover* Luke  
xxii. 1, “*the feast of unleavened bread  
which is called the Passover.*” So that  
“*after the Passover*” may well be equivalent to “*after the feast of unleavened*