

Lesson VI. Paul Assailed. Acts 21. 27-40.

1. These unlovely Jews were of a people especially beloved of God, and cherished by him, ver. 27. Dent. 4. 37; 10. 15, with Rom. 11. 28; Exod. 33. 16; Num. 23. 9; Deut. 7. 8; 23. 5; Jer. 31. 3; Psa. 105. 15; Zech. 2. 8.

2. God, however, often severely punished his beloved people for their transgressions. Isa. 65. 3-7; Rom. 11. 30; Jer. 11. 10; Matt. 23. 37, 38; 27. 25; Isa. 1. 4, 7; 24. 5, 6; Deut. 32. 21; Ezek. 30. 27, 30.

3. The state to-day into which it has brought these favorites of heaven. Deut. 28. 64; Ezek. 6. 8; 36. 19; 36. 3; Deut. 28. 49-52; Luke 21. 24; Hos. 3. 4; Matt. 23. 38; Jer. 16. 13; 50. 17.

4. God will yet save, and restore to their own land his favorite people. Psa. 98. 3; Isa. 49. 15, 16; Ezek. 30. 20; Rom. 11. 25; 2 Cor. 3. 14-16; Hos. 3. 5; Zech. 12. 10; Isa. 11. 15, 16; 14. 1-3; Jer. 16. 14, 15; Ezek. 36. 24; 37. 21, 25; Luke 21. 24.

5. Some of the leading things that Paul did teach, ver. 28. Acts 9. 30, with Rom. 8. 1-18, 22, 29, with Rom. 6. 11; 13. 10, 15-43, 45, 46, with Rom. 8. 35-39; 14. 7, with 1 Cor. 1. 22, 23, 15-18, 22, with 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18.

6. At this time Paul, doubtless, remembered his distinguished predecessors in the experience of this initial or preliminary martyrdom, vers. 30, 31. Acts 6. 9-15, 8. 1-4; Matt. 26. 36, 47, 31, 57, 69; 27. Luke 23. 6; John 19. 15; Psa. 118. 22; Mark 15. 15.

7. The civil ruler of Judea at this time, and its authority through its governors, ver. 32. Luke 3. 1; Acts 23. 24; 25. 1; 26. 32; 25. 11, 16; John 18. 31, 39; 19. 10; Gen. 49. 10; Ezek. 21. 27.

8. Let it ever be borne in mind that these inflammable Jews were by no means inexperienced in tumults of this description. 2 Sam. 20. 1; 1 Kings 12. 16; Matt. 27. 21; Psa. 65. 7; 74. 23; Acts 14. 5; 17. 5; 18. 12; 19. 24.

9. Public teachers of the Pauline severity of precepts and spirit are not to-day, with the world, popular. John 16. 33; 15. 19, 21; 2 Tim. 3. 12; John 17. 14; 16. 2, 3; Matt. 10. 23; 24. 9; Luke 21. 12; Acts 4. 3; 5. 18.

10. Paul in all of these laborious services, and personal exposures of life and health for Christ and his brethren, was only doing his whole duty as a faithful minister of the Lord Jesus. Matt. 28. 19; Rom. 1. 1; Phil. 1. 7; 2 Cor. 1. 10; 6. 4; 2 Tim. 2. 24; 1 Cor. 9. 27; Gal. 1. 10; 1 Thess. 2. 4; 2 Tim. 2. 3.

Lessons:

1. Persecutors are always bitterest when they are most conscientious, ver. 27.

2. The masses of people are most easily aroused to violence when their religious faith, or historical traditions, in which they each take personal pride, are assailed.

3. Religious persecutions rarely appeal to the calmness and justice of civil law in their behalf, ver. 30.

4. More than once has military power been necessary to control the religiously riotous, ver. 32.

5. Military leaders as a rule have been just and humane in their use of power, ver. 34.

6. There is always, and naturally, great discrepancy of opinion among a multitude of persecutors, ver. 34.

7. How natural is self-defense, even oratorically, ver. 37.

8. It is commendable, even religious, to be proud of a noble citizenship, and it ought to be pleaded when politically, or even personally, traduced, ver. 39.

9. The power of oratory, under the inspiration of superb conscientiousness, to control, or at least to quiet, a turbulent mass of rioters, ver. 40.

Lesson VII. Paul's Defense. Acts 22. 1-21.

1. Instead of being treated thus, Paul as a true minister of the Lord Jesus was entitled to: 1 Cor. 4. 1; Gal. 4. 14; Mal. 2. 7; Heb. 13. 7; Phil. 2. 29; 2 Cor. 8. 7; Rom. 15. 30; 2 Chron. 31. 4; Gal. 6. 6; 1 Tim. 5. 17.

2. We should be impressed and educated by Paul's dignified and brotherly way of opening his public addresses, ver. 1. Acts 13. 16, 46; 14. 15; 17. 22, 23; 19. 2; 20. 18, 19; 21. 13, 19; 23. 1, 5; Exod. 22. 28; Acts 24. 10, 14, 25; 25. 10, 11; 26. 2, 3; 27. 17, 23.

3. When our faith is assailed, and, sometimes, when personal reputation is imperiled, either through misapprehension or slanderously, we should in person, and boldly, defend, ver. 3. 1 Pet. 3. 15; Psa. 119. 46; Matt. 10. 18, 19; Acts 5. 40; 2 Cor. 11. 24; Acts 26. 2, 3; Phil. 2. 15; Psa. 116. 10, with 2 Cor. 4. 13.

4. How comforting the reflection that Paul, notwithstanding all his persecutions, was safe until his work was done, and so are all other Christians! Psa. 37. 28; 140. 7; 75. 6, 7; 39. 5; Matt. 10. 30; Gen. 24. 48, 56; 50. 20; Isa. 51. 5; 63. 12; Prov. 20. 24; Acts 17. 26; Exod. 15. 9-11.

5. Observe what must have been the exceptional character of Paul's ecclesiastical preceptorship, or he would not have referred to it at this time so approvingly, ver. 3. Luke 2. 46; 5. 17, 21, 30; Acts 5. 31; Matt. 6. 5; 5. 31, 43; 23. 23; Luke 18. 12; John 7. 48, 49; 8. 9; 3. 1.

6. The character of the real source of this opposition to Paul. Matt. 9. 11; 23. 5; 12. 2; 19. 3; 6. 2, 5; 23; Luke 16. 14; Matt. 15. 1-6; 22. 35; Mark 12. 28; 1 Cor. 1. 20.

7. Notice Paul's way of making his defensive public addresses recitals of personal religious experience, vers. 3-21. Acts 14. 17; 20. 18, 19, 21, 33; 23. 1, 6; 24. 10-21; 26. 1-19; 27. 23, 23; 28. 23, 26, 27; Jas. 1. 3, 13; Rom. 5. 1-6.

8. Paul's education was abundant at least for self-defense in the laws of Moses, current Hebrew learning, and the Greek language and literature. Acts 26. 24; Gal. 3. 24; Acts 26. 5, 30, 1; 15. 35 to 18. 1; 17. 28; 1 Cor. 15. 33; Tit. 1. 12.

9. Paul was among the first to encompass the claim of Christianity as a universal and exclusive religion, and hence, unlike some of his fellow-workers he never sought to Judaize his converts. Isa. 11. 10; 42. 1; 49. 6; Luke 2. 32; Rom. 2. 9, 10; 3. 9; 15. 1; 1 Cor. 12. 13; Gal. 3. 7, 28; Rom. 10. 12.

10. Paul in our lesson refers to one of the eleven occasions on which Christ, after his resurrection appeared to numerous witnesses, ver. 8. 1 Cor. 15. 8; Acts 9. 17; John 20. 18, 19, 24, 26; 21. 1; Matt. 28. 9, 16, 17; Luke 24. 13-31, 34, 51; 1 Cor. 15. 6, 7.

Lessons:

1. May we not justly observe in this defense the bold, courteous, convicting, and persuasive impressiveness of associated eloquence and conscientiousness in public address?

2. The "holy" language addressed to the "holy" people in the "holy" temple by the "unholy" Paul instantly quieted all turbulence, ver. 2.

3. How natural and pardonable it is to quote a powerful citizenship and scholarly tuition? ver. 3.

4. Spiritual culture is promoted by frequent penitential and public confessions of sin.

5. Man is able to identify as such the Supernatural and so to communicate with him, ver. 8.

6. In presenting the Gospel, as preachers, Sunday-school teachers, or parents, you must yourself first see and know in a full experience, ver. 15.