

Lesson VII.

THE SECOND PERSECUTION

February 16, 1902

Acts 5: 33-42. Study Acts 5: 25-42. Commit to memory vs. 40-42. Read ch. 5: 12-24.

33 ¹ When they heard *that*, they were cut to the heart, and ² took council to slay them.

34 ³ Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in ⁴ reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little ⁵ space;

35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves: what ye intend to do as touching these men.

36 For before these days rose up Theudas, ⁸ boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were ⁹ scattered, and brought to nought.

37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the ¹⁰ taxing, and drew away ¹¹ much people

Revised Version—¹ But they, when they heard this; ² Were minded; ³ But there stood up; ⁴ Honour of; ⁵ Men; ⁶ While; ⁷ As touching these men, what ye are about to do; ⁸ Giving himself out; ⁹ Dispersed, and came; ¹⁰ Enrolment; ¹¹ Some of the; ¹² Scattered abroad; ¹³ Be overthrown; ¹⁴ Is; ¹⁵ Will not be able to overthrow them; ¹⁶ Be fighting; ¹⁷ Unto them, they beat them and charged them not to; ¹⁸ They therefore; ¹⁹ Dishonor for the Name; ²⁰ Every day; ²¹ And at home; ²² As the Christ,

after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were ¹² dispersed.

38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this council or this work be of men, it will ¹³ come to nought:

39 But if it ¹⁴ be of God, ye ¹⁵ cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to be ¹⁶ fight against God.

40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, ¹⁷ and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41 ¹⁸ And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer ¹⁹ shame for his name.

42 And ²⁰ daily in the temple, ²¹ and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus ²² Christ.

EXPLANATION

Connection—Many miracles were wrought by the apostles, and the Church prospered greatly (5: 12-16). Her rapid growth awakened enmity, a second persecution followed through the envy of the High Priest and his fellow Sadducees, and all the apostles were arrested and put in prison (vs. 17, 18). Being set free by an angel that night, early in the morning they returned to the Temple, to the utter astonishment of the rulers (vs. 19-24), who, hearing that the apostles were in the Temple, sent officers to bring them without violence, fearing "he people would



A Pharisee

mob the officers, for the apostles were popular (vs. 25, 26). In the Council they reminded them that they had been forbidden to preach about Jesus (4: 18), but that instead of obeying they had been preaching all through the city, and would bring Christ's blood upon them, which was an admission of their guilt and fear (vs. 27, 28). But Peter again replied that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was Lord and Saviour, and they must be loyal to his command. (Vs. 29-32. Compare 4: 19, 20.)

33. Cut to the heart; literally, "were sawn asunder with rage," to which a guilty conscience gave added pain. Took counsel; to kill them, as they had killed Jesus, their Master.

34. Then stood there up one; a remarkable man. A Pharisee. The Pharisees were a zealous, self-righteous Jewish sect. They were not so opposed to the disciples as were the Sadducees, the other great Jewish sect. They opposed Jesus because

He opposed their political views; but they did not see anything political in the teaching of the disciples. But the Sadducees disliked the teaching of the resurrection (23: 8). Gamaliel; the grandson of the famous Rabbi Hillel, and the teacher of Paul (22: 3). He was afterwards president of the Sanhedrim. A doctor; a teacher or expounder of the Mosaic law. Had in reputation; esteemed for his learning and good sense. To put the men forth (Rev. Ver.). A Rabbi would hardly call them "apostles" as in the Authorized Version.

35-37. Take heed; be careful what you are doing and act with due deliberation. Before these days, etc. He cites from history to show the need of caution. Theudas. Nothing is certainly known of this wild insurgent leader. Insurrections of this character were common. To be somebody; possibly the Messiah Himself (compare Acts 8: 9). Judas; a Galilean or Gaulonite (Josephus), who headed a rebellion in the early years of our Lord. The days of the taxing; the famous enrolment of Luke 2: 2. It was made with a view to taxation.

38. Refrain from these men; do not try to suppress them by force. Council; by derivation means to consult together "council" called together. Come to nought; just as the hair-brained attempts of Theudas and of Judas came to nothing.

39, 40. If it be of God; then nothing can prevent its success, and opposition to it would be opposition to God. Haply; perchance. Beaten them. It was a compromise. They were afraid to put them to death because the people favored them (v. 26). The victim of scourging was tied to a pillar of the synagogue. The scourge had three lashes, and selected portions of the Mosaic law (Bible texts) were read between the strokes.

41, 42. They departed . . . rejoicing. They had imbibed the spirit of Matt. 5: 11, 12. Daily in the temple, etc. They heeded not the command of the rulers (v. 40), but went everywhere teaching and preaching. Jesus as the Christ (Rev. Ver.). This was the Gospel for the Jews, for they had long been looking for the promised Christ (Messiah).