

# CHAPTER 5

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 5

**Ver. 1.** *But a certain man named Ananias*, etc.] A name common among the Jews, the same with Hananiah, (<sup><280></sup>Jeremiah 28:1, <sup><490></sup>Acts 9:10, 23:2) it signifies not the humility of the Lord, or the affliction of the Lord, or the answer of the Lord, as say some, as if it was derived from **hn**[ ; but the grace of the Lord, or the Lord's gracious one, coming from **^nj** : there is no dependence on names; though this man's name signified one that was in the grace and favour of God; he was not so, but a graceless person, as appears by what follows. It is very likely he was a minister of the word, since the account of him follows upon that of Barnabas, and is opposed to it; it may be he was one of the hundred and twenty, on whom the Holy Ghost fell on the day of Pentecost; and yet, though he had great gifts, had no grace. This shows there are hypocrites among men of the greatest names and characters, and in the purest churches; this first and pure church, which, in the preceding chapter, has such large encomiums, was not free from them:

*with Sapphira his wife*; whether this is the same name with "Shiphrah", (<sup><0015></sup>Exodus 1:15) or "Zipporah", (<sup><0121></sup>Exodus 2:21) both which are by the Septuagint called "Sephora", or whether another, and may signify "beautiful", is not very material. Jerom<sup>f194</sup> says, in the Syriac language this name signifies "beautiful"; though he first gives other explanations of it, as "narrantem, literatam, sive librariam", as though it was derived from the Hebrew word **rps**. The precious stone called sapphire seems to come from the same root as this, and to be so called because of its beautiful azure colour. The name "Sappho", which was the name of a famous poetess, the inventress of a kind of verse called "Sapphic" verse, is said to be the diminutive of this name "Sapphira". Drusius observes, it may be read **arypx**, "Tzephira"; which comes near to "Zipporah", and among other things signifies a "she goat"; and it was usual to give women names taken from such creatures. So "Rachel", a "sheep", and "Tabitha", or

“Dorcas”, a “doe”. But whatever her name or person were, her actions were disagreeable:

*sold a possession*; which was their own. So the Arabic and Syriac versions read, “their own field”, or “farm”; find the Ethiopic version, “their own vineyard”: it might be his wife’s dowry or jointure, and so her consent was necessary; or they might be jointly concerned in this sale, to show not only their concord and harmony among themselves; but that they agreed in their devotion and religious actions, and that being both filled with zeal for God, and love to the brethren, sold their estate to support the common cause.

**Ver. 2.** *And kept back part of the price*, etc.] At which the possession was sold; he reserved it for his own use, after he had given out that he sold it for the service of the church:

*his wife also being privy to it*; to this private reserve:

*and brought a certain part*; whether the greater part, or an equal part, half of it, or a lesser part; some little part of it, so the phrase seems to signify, is not certain:

*and laid it at the apostles’ feet*; as the rest did, thereby to make a show of charity, and cover the deceit.

**Ver. 3.** *But Peter said, Ananias*, etc.] Peter, by divine revelation, or by a spirit of discerning, such as Elisha had, who knew what his servant Gehazi had done, knowing what a reserve Ananias had made, calls him by his name, and says to him,

*why hath Satan filled thine heart?* or emboldened thee, given thee so much spirit and courage to act in such an impudent and audacious manner; so the phrase is used in (<sup><7006></sup>Esther 7:5 <sup><2081></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:11) see the Septuagint there, and often in Talmudic writings.

“Says R. Joshua, I never *ybl ynal m*, “filled my heart”; or my heart never filled me to say to a man, go and take the change of these three things, etc. <sup>f195</sup>.”

And says another Rabbi <sup>f196</sup>,

“though I say so, *ybl ynal m al*, “I never filled my heart”, or my heart never filled me to transgress the words of the companions;”

that is, I never durst do so. And again <sup>f197</sup>, it being observed, that Isaiah should say, “hear, O heavens!” it is said,

“who, or what is this, who **wbl wal m**, “hath filled his heart”, or whose heart has filled him to call to the heavens to hear.”

But this instance of Ananias was such, that none but Satan could have put him upon, or emboldened him to have done; who from hence appeared to have the power over him, and to have possessed him, to have great access to him, even to his heart, and great influence upon it, so as to prompt him

*to lie to the Holy Ghost*; who was in the apostles, and by whom they were acted, and to whom he had given a discerning of spirits; so that it was a daring action, and downright madness, to go about to deceive them: or he pretended he had an impulse from the Spirit of God to sell his estate, and give the whole price of it to the apostles, and yet kept back part of it; which was acting contrary to that Spirit he pretended to be influenced by.

*And to keep back part of the price of the land*: that is, he lied against the Holy Ghost, by keeping back part of the price the land was sold for; when he had declared he sold it with this view, to give the whole for charitable uses, and affirmed that what he brought was the whole.

**Ver. 4.** *Whiles it remained, was it not thine own*, etc.] Before it was sold, it was his own proper estate; he had the sole propriety in it, and could have kept it, or disposed of it as he pleased: he was not obliged to sell it, he might have kept it as his own property; for selling of possessions at this time was a voluntary thing; it was what no man was forced to; it was a pure act of liberality, and what was not enjoined by the apostles; every man was left to his liberty.

*And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?* that is, the price for which it was sold: before he had declared that he sold it, in order to give the whole of it to the church, had brought it to the apostles as the whole; it was in his own power to dispose of, as he pleased, whether to give the whole, or a part of it, or it. He might have kept it all if he had thought fit, or have given what portion he pleased.

*Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?* for though Satan had an hand in it, and greatly solicited him to it, and spirited him up to do it, yet in conjunction with his own heart; and perhaps it began there, which Satan helped forward. It was not so of Satan as to excuse the wickedness of his

heart. It was owing partly to the sin of covetousness, which reigned in him, and partly to a desire of vain glory, and being thought a very religious man, that he acted such a part, and was so notoriously guilty of lying and hypocrisy.

*Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God*; that is, not to men only, for he had lied to the apostles; but to God also, to the Holy Ghost, who is truly and properly God, of which this passage is a full proof; and it was owing to his omniscience, which is a peculiar attribute of deity, that this wicked man, and this fraud of his, were discovered.

**Ver. 5.** *And Ananias hearing these words*, etc.] Of Peter's; by which he found his sin was detected, and by which he was convicted of it: and which set forth the evil nature of it, with its aggravated circumstances; and such power went along with them, and they cut so deep, as that immediately

*he fell down and gave up the ghost*; which is an instance of what the Jews call death by the hand of heaven: and this was done either by an angel; or rather by an extraordinary gift bestowed on Peter, being such an one as the Apostle Paul had, and used, when he smote Elymas the sorcerer with blindness, and delivered the incestuous person, and Alexander and Hymeneus to Satan.

*And great fear came upon all them that heard these things*; both upon the members of the church, and so was of service to make them careful of their words and actions, and cautious and circumspect in their lives and conversations; and upon those that were without, and might be a means of making them fearful of speaking against them, or mocking at them, or of joining themselves to them, without being thoroughly satisfied that they should, and had a right, and were meet for it.

**Ver. 6.** *And the young men arose*, etc.] The younger brethren of the church, who were robust, and strong, and fit for the following service: these rose up from their seats at once, not willing that such an awful spectacle should lie long before them:

*and wound him up*; in linen clothes, as was the manner of the Jews:

*and carried him out*: of the house where they were, and out of the city; for the burying places of the Jews were without the city:

*and buried him*; which was all done in a very short time, as appears by what follows.

**Ver. 7.** *And it was about the space of three hours after*, etc.] The death of Ananias. So much time was taken up in burying of him; and in less time it could not well be, since the burying places of the Jews were without the city, as before observed: and if they were as distant from other cities, as they were from the cities of the Levites, they were, as Dr. Lightfoot shows from Maimonides <sup>f198</sup>, above a mile and half off: though there is a Jewish canon which runs thus <sup>f199</sup>;

“they put carcasses, graves, and tanners, fifty cubits from a city.”

So that to go thither, open the grave, inter the dead, and return, must take up so much time; and so much time his wife had to reflect upon what she and her husband had done, but seems not to have had any thought about it, at least not any remorse of conscience for it:

*when his wife, not knowing what was done*; she knew that her husband kept back part of the price of the land, and how much it was, and what he brought to the apostles; but she did not know that the fraud was detected, nor what followed; as that her husband was immediately struck dead, and was carried out and buried; which it is pretty much she should not in this time, when the thing was awful and shocking, the news of which must fly apace all over the city: but it looks as if the company of the saints was not broke up all this while, and that no one went out to carry it abroad, but the young men that went to bury him. Sapphira therefore, being ignorant of the whole affair,

*came in*; to the temple or house where the apostles were, expecting to see her husband among the apostles, and chief men, in great honour and esteem for what he had done; and that he would be on equal foot with Barnabas and others, who had sold all they had, and brought the whole price of their possessions into the common stock.

**Ver. 8.** *And Peter answered unto her*, etc.] Who might be inquiring for her husband; though such a way of speaking was common with the Jews, when nothing goes before to which the answer is made; of which there are frequent instances in the sacred writings:

*tell me whether ye sold the land for so much*; naming the sum of money which Ananias had brought; though the historian does not mention it. The

Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, “tell me, O woman”, etc. not calling her by her name, as he did her husband, (~~48B~~ Acts 5:3)

*yea, she said for so much*; just that sum, and no more.

**Ver. 9.** *Then Peter said unto her, how is it that ye have agreed together*, etc.] For husband and wife to agree together in what is good, in things civil, honest, and lawful, and in religious matters, is very commendable; but to agree in a fraud, in a lie, is very dreadful:

*to tempt the Spirit of the Lord*; to try whether the apostles had the Spirit of the Lord, or not; and whether the Spirit of the Lord that was in them was omniscient and omnipotent, would take any notice of it, and inflict punishment for it:

*behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door*; which Peter knew either by hearing the sound of their feet, as Ahijah the prophet heard the sound of the feet of Jeroboam’s wife, as she came in at the door, (~~114B~~ 1 Kings 14:6) or by the same spirit as Elisha knew that Gehazi ran after Naaman, and received money and garments from him, (~~128B~~ 2 Kings 5:26) and shall carry thee out; of this house dead, and bury thee, as they have thy husband.

**Ver. 10.** *Then fell she down straightway at his feet*, etc.] In like manner, and by the same hand of God as her husband before:

*and yielded up the ghost*; died directly:

*and the young men came in and found her dead*; the young men who had been to inter her husband came into the house at that instant, and found her dead upon the floor, at the feet of the Apostle Peter:

*and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband*; as it was usual with the Jews to do. So they say <sup>f200</sup>, that in the cave of Machpelah were buried Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah.

**Ver. 11.** *And great fear came upon all the church*, etc.] Which was still more increased by this instance of Sapphira’s death:

*and upon as many as heard these things*; who were not of the church; (See Gill on “~~408B~~ Acts 5:5”).

**Ver. 12.** *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought*, etc.] That is, by their means, or by them as instruments, or through the imposition of their hands on persons, many miraculous and wonderful cures, as well as other extraordinary actions, were performed:

*among the people*; the common people, who attended in great numbers on their ministry, when the chief men and rulers of the nation despised them.

*And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch*; which is to be understood not of the whole church, nor of the hundred and twenty disciples, but of the twelve apostles, who met in this place to preach the Gospel to the people; and they were agreed in their doctrine and practice, and were united in their affections to one another. Of Solomon's porch, (See Gill on "~~48023~~ John 10:23"). These words, with what follow to the 15th verse, are to be read in a parenthesis.

**Ver. 13.** *And of the rest durst no man join himself to them*, etc.] By the rest are meant, either those that were without the church, and those either the profane and persecuting sort, who durst not come nigh the apostles to touch them, or say one word to them, for fear of being struck dead; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "and then there was no more any man that durst restrain them", or go about to hinder them from preaching: or the better sort, such who attended on the word, and were either real believers or hypocrites, who durst not, one nor the other, join themselves to them, because of what happened to Ananias and Sapphira; which not only deterred hypocrites from coming into the church, but also kept off such who were really converted persons; but this sense seems to be contradicted in the following verse. Rather therefore by them are meant those within the church, and not only the private members of it, but the ministers of the word, of which number Ananias might have been; these, the rest of them, durst not come nigh the apostles, or familiarly converse with them, much less put themselves upon an equal foot with them, but with great reverence of them kept their distance from them:

*but the people magnified them*; both the ministers of the word, as Barnabas and others, who showed such a respect to the apostles, they having extraordinary gifts, and extraordinary things also being done by them, and especially the twelve apostles; these the people in general spoke well of, praised and cried up as marvellous men, because of what was done by them.

**Ver. 14.** *And believers were the more added to the Lord*, etc.] That is, to the church, as in (~~41B1~~ Acts 2:47) over which Christ was Lord and head; for they were added to the Lord before, by believing in him, when they gave up themselves to him, to be saved by him; and now to the apostles, and the church by the will of God; and this case of Ananias and Sapphira was so far from hindering persons from coming into the church, that there were greater additions made to it than before, even of such as were true believers in Christ. The Ethiopic version reads, “and many were added who believed in our Lord”; the Arabic version, “they that believed in the Lord increased”; the Syriac version, “and they more increased who believed in the Lord”; and so the Vulgate Latin version, “but the multitude of them that believe in the Lord were the more increased”; all of them reading the phrase, “the Lord”, not in construction with the word “added”, but with “believers: multitudes both of men and women”; the weaker sex were not intimidated any more than the men, such power went along with the word, and such grace was bestowed upon them. This church must now be prodigiously numerous, for before these additions, eight thousand had been added to the hundred and twenty; such success the Gospel had, and such progress it made in the hands of such mean and contemptible persons, notwithstanding the opposition of the chief men of the nation to it.

**Ver. 15.** Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, etc.] These words are to be read in connection with the former part of the twelfth verse. Such miraculous cures being wrought by the apostles, the people who had sick persons in their houses, hearing of it brought them out; either “into the streets”, as we render it, and as the Alexandrian copy reads; or “in every street” in Jerusalem, waiting for the apostles as they came, to receive a cure from them:

*and laid them on beds and couches*; for the better conveniency of carrying them to the apostles, or for their lying upon them until they came by that way:

*that at the least, the shadow of Peter passing by, might overshadow some of them.* The Vulgate Latin version adds, “and be delivered from their infirmities”; but this is not supported by any copy, nor is it in any other version. Peter is only mentioned because he was most known, he being the chief speaker and actor. Who these were that fancied there was such a virtue in Peter’s shadow, and whether any were cured by it, is not certain. However, it is a vain thing in the Papists to conclude from hence the

primacy of Peter, the worshipping of images, and that the Pope is Peter's shadow, and has his power.

**Ver. 16.** *There came also a multitude out of the cities round about,* etc.] The fame of the apostles' miracles spread in the cities round about Jerusalem; those that were at some distance as well as near, and large numbers of people came from thence,

*unto Jerusalem;* where the apostles were: the Syriac version adds, "unto them", that is, to the apostles; and the Arabic version, "with them"; along with those of the city of Jerusalem, who brought out their infirm persons into the streets to be cured:

*bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits;* with devils, by whom they were not only possessed, but greatly harassed and afflicted: sometimes tearing and convulsing them, and sometimes throwing them on the ground, and bruising them; or into fire and water, of which there are some instances in the evangelists:

*and they were healed everyone;* none went without a cure, which served greatly to confirm the Gospel preached by the apostles, and to irritate and provoke their enemies, as appears by what follows.

**Ver. 17.** *Then the high priest rose up,* etc.] Annas, or rather Caiaphas; (See Gill on "~~400B~~ Acts 4:6") he having heard what miracles were wrought by the apostles, and what additions were made to them, rose up from his seat and went out of the sanhedrim, in great haste, and in much wrath and passion:

*and all they that were with him;* in council, that were of his kindred or his party, as John and Alexander, and others, (~~400B~~ Acts 4:6)

*which is the sect of the Sadducees;* who denied the resurrection of the dead; which doctrine the apostles preached; and this made the high priest and his party very uneasy; whence it seems that the then high priest was a Sadducee, and also the sanhedrim at that time, and which was sometimes the case. Great care indeed was taken of an high priest, that he should not be a Sadducee; on the eve of the day of atonement they always swore the high priest, lest he should be a Sadducee, that he would make no innovation in what was ordered him; and particularly that he would not put the incense upon the fire without, and then carry it in a censor into the most holy place, as the Sadducees understood <sup>f201</sup>, (~~400B~~ Leviticus 16:3). But

notwithstanding all their care, sometimes they had a Sadducee for an high priest; we read of one John, an high priest, who ministered in that office fourscore years, and at last became a Sadducee<sup>f202</sup>. And sometimes a sanhedrim consisted only of Sadducees: hence we read of *yqwd[ I ç `yd tyb*, “a sanhedrim of Sadducees”<sup>f203</sup>; and such an one was this; and therefore it is not to be wondered at what follows,

*and they were filled with indignation*; or “zeal”, for Sadducism; and which was a blind zeal, and not according to knowledge: or “with envy” at the apostles for the miracles done by them, and because of the success that attended them; fearing lest, should they go on at this rate, their religion and authority would come to nothing. Sadducism now seemed greatly to prevail among men in power; and the Jews say<sup>f204</sup>,

“the son of David will not come until the whole government is turned to the opinion of the Sadducees.”

**Ver. 18.** *And laid their hands on the apostles*, etc.] That is, laid hold on them, and took them, and carried them away; at least their servants did so, by their orders:

*and put them in the common prison*; where malefactors were put; and this both for greater security, and for greater disgrace.

**Ver. 19.** *But the angel of the Lord*, etc.] Or “of God”, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, whether Michael, as some have thought, or Gabriel, or what particular angel, is not material to know. However, it was a good angel, an elect angel, one of those ministering spirits sent by God to minister to the heirs of promise; one of those angels that excel in strength, as appears by what he did: for he

*by night opened the prison doors*; where the apostles were put, and which had more doors than one, and these strong and close shut, and guarded by keepers; but were easily opened by the angel. It was very likely at, or towards the evening, when the apostles were taken, and therefore they were committed to prison, there to lie all night, till next morning, when the sanhedrim would meet together to consult what to do with them:

*and brought them forth*; out of the prison, leading them out at the doors he had opened for them:

*and said*; the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions add, “to them”; that is, to the apostles, as follows.

**Ver. 20.** *Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people*, etc.] They were not delivered out of prison, in order to go and secure themselves from danger; but to go about the work they were called to, to preach the Gospel “in the temple”, the place of worship; and a proper place to meet with persons to preach to, being a public place, whither the Jews always resorted; and there they were to stand, and continue with courage and intrepidity, not fearing the reproach and wrath of men, seeing they had both Christ and truth on their side; and there declare it “to the people”, the common people, the multitude, even all that came to hear: the Gospel is to be preached to all; the Spirit of God makes it effectual to some, and others are rendered inexcusable: the substance of what they were to speak follows,

*all the words of this life*; all the doctrines of the Gospel; none of them are to be dropped or concealed, but to be spoken out, fully, freely, and faithfully, with all boldness and constancy; though they cannot be comprehended by reason, and are rejected by learned men, and the majority of the people; though charged with novelty and licentiousness, and attended with reproach and persecution: and these may be called, “the words of life”, even of eternal life, as in (~~the~~ John 6:68) because they show the nature of it, and point out the way unto it; not by the law, and obedience to that, but by Christ and his righteousness; and are the means of quickening dead sinners, of reviving drooping saints, and of nourishing them up unto eternal life: and also the words of “this” life; not of this present frail, mortal, and sinful life; but of life by Christ, which is begun to be enjoyed now, and will be perfectly enjoyed hereafter: and particularly the doctrine of the resurrection unto life may be intended; in opposition to the Sadducees, who denied it, and were the men that, being filled with indignation against them for preaching it, had seized them, and put them into prison; and being now delivered from prison, they are bid to go and preach this same doctrine again, in the most public manner: though some think there is an hypallage in the words; and so the Syriac version renders them, “all these words of life”; and the Ethiopic version, “this word of life”; meaning the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, they had in commission to preach, and for which they were reproached and persecuted.

**Ver. 21.** *And when they heard that*, etc.] Or “his word”, as the Arabic version supplies; that is, the word of the angel, the orders enjoined them by him, to go to the temple, and there preach the Gospel; this clause is left out in the Syriac version:

*they entered into the temple early in the morning*; they were obedient to the command of the angel, believing him to be a messenger of God, who declared his will, which they readily complied with, and were indeed eager of doing it; and therefore early in the morning, as soon as ever the temple doors were opened, and there were any people got together, they went in:

*and taught*; as the Ethiopic version adds, “the people, this word of life”; the doctrine or doctrines of the Gospel which the angel had bid them teach:

*but the high priest came, and they that were with him*: as before, to the place where the sanhedrim used to meet; either the chamber Gazith, or the shops, or some other place in Jerusalem; (See Gill on “<sup><4015></sup>Acts 4:15”).

*and called the council together*; the sanhedrim, consisting of seventy one, which usually met at the time of the morning daily sacrifice; perhaps on this occasion they might be called together sooner, and everyone of them summoned to attend; for otherwise it was not necessary that every particular member should be present, but when there was any business of importance which required it, they were all gathered together <sup>f205</sup>:

*and all the senate of the children of Israel*; or the elders, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, the rest of the elders of the city, besides those of the great sanhedrim. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that the two other sanhedrim, or courts of judicature in Jerusalem, which consisted of twenty three persons apiece, are designed; and who, as he rightly observes from Maimonides <sup>f206</sup>, sat the one in the gate of the court, the other in the gate of the mountain of the house; so that all the courts in Jerusalem were called together at this time; and if they all met, they made up a hundred and seventeen men:

*and sent to the prison to have them brought*; that is, “the apostles”, as the Syriac version reads. The sense is, that the high priest, and those that were with him at the same time that they convened all the courts of judicature in Jerusalem together, sent their officers to the prison, to fetch the apostles; or else the sanhedrim, and senate of Israel being met, they ordered their officers to go to the common jail, and bring the apostles before them, to be examined, tried, and judged by them.

**Ver. 22.** *But when the officers came*, etc.] The Arabic version adds, “to it”; that is, to the prison;

*and found them not in the prison.* The Vulgate Latin version reads, “the prison being opened they found them not”; when they came to the prison, they opened the doors of it, or the keepers for them; for though the angel had opened them for the apostles, yet he shut them again, as he brought them out; for these men found the doors shut, as the following verse shows, and who upon opening them and searching the prison, for the apostles, could find none of them in it; wherefore they returned; the Arabic version reads, “to them”; to the sanhedrim:

*and told*; that is, them, as both the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read.

**Ver. 23.** *Saying, the prison truly found we shut with all safety*, etc.] Locked, barred and bolted;

*and the keepers standing without before the doors*; both inner and outer in their proper places, diligently discharging their office:

*but when we had opened we found no man within*; that is, none of the apostles, for there might be other prisoners in it, who were not released by this means.

**Ver. 24.** *Now when the high priest*, etc.] Or “the priests”, as it is read in most copies; the Complutensian edition reads, “the high priest”; and he is certainly designed, since he is distinguished from the chief priests after mentioned: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, leave out this word; as does also the Alexandrian copy:

*and the captain of the temple*; the same versions read in the plural number; (See Gill on “<sup><22:4></sup>Luke 22:4”), (See Gill on “<sup><22:52></sup>Luke 22:52”), (See Gill on “<sup><4:1></sup>Acts 4:1”).

*and the chief priests heard these things*; which the officers related, that the prison doors were shut and sure, and the keepers upon their watch, and yet the apostles gone:

*they doubted of them, whereunto this would grow*; they did not doubt of the truth of the things their officers told them, but they were amazed at them, and hesitated in their minds about them, and were anxiously thoughtful; what this would, or should be, or how this should be done; that the prison doors should be shut, and yet the prisoners gone; they were in

suspense and anxiety of mind, what to impute it to; whether to a divine and supernatural power, or to magic art; and were uneasy in their minds what would be the issue of so strange and surprising an event.

**Ver. 25.** *Then came one and told them, saying,* etc.] Who this man was, is of no consequence to know; it can hardly be thought that he was one of the number of the disciples, or a member of the church, or a professor of the Christian religion; but rather an enemy, and one that sought his own interest, and to obtain the favour and affection of the chief priests and elders, and therefore very officiously came to them, and reported as follows:

*behold, the men whom ye put in prison,* last night,

*are standing in the temple;* openly and publicly, and without fear;

*and teaching the people;* in the name of Jesus, which the sanhedrim had forbid them to do.

**Ver. 26.** *Then went the captain with the officers,* etc.] That is, the captain of the temple, who had the command of it; he went thither attended with the officers and servants of the chief priests, the same that had been sent to the prison, to fetch the apostles:

*and brought them without violence;* they did not lay hold upon them, and drag them away in a violent manner; but gave them good words, and allured them, and entreated them to go along with them, and perhaps promised them, that no hurt should come to them, and that they should have full liberty to speak for themselves; the Ethiopic version renders it, “they brought them, behaving themselves mildly towards them”; they used no forcible, but gentle methods; they did not seize them in a violent way, and bind them, and carry them away by force:

*for they feared the people;* who had them in great esteem, because of the miracles done by them, and the benefit they received from them, both for their souls and bodies:

*lest they should have been stoned;* by the populace, who had they used them in a severe and cruel manner, would have risen upon them, and stoned them to death; the Ethiopic version renders it, “because they feared the people, they did not stone them”; as if the captain of the temple, and

the officers would have stoned the apostles, but that they were afraid of the people.

**Ver. 27.** *And when they had brought them*, etc.] From the temple, to the place where the sanhedrim sat, which, by this, seems to have been not in the room Gazith, nor in the shops, which were both in the temple, but in some part of the city of Jerusalem:

*they set them before the council*; whereby was fulfilled what Christ had foretold, (<sup><D007></sup>Matthew 10:17) “they will deliver you up to the councils”; they placed them before the whole sanhedrim; in the midst of it, (see Gill on <sup><A007></sup>Acts 4:7”); and as the Ethiopic version here reads:

*and the high priest asked them*; though he was not president of the council, but Gamaliel, after mentioned; yet being in so high an office, and a principal member of the council, took upon him the examination of the apostles.

**Ver. 28.** *Saying, did not we straitly command you*, etc.] Or give you strict orders, with severe threatenings,

*that you should not teach in this name?* the Ethiopic version reads, “in the name of Jesus”; which is what is meant, but was not expressed by the sanhedrim; (see <sup><A007></sup>Acts 4:17)

*and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine*; they disregarded the council, and its orders, its commands and threatenings, and preached the doctrines of the Gospel; and particularly that concerning the resurrection of Christ, and through him the resurrection of all the dead; and with such success, that great part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem received it; at least there were great numbers in all parts of the city which attended to it, and embraced it: and this they represent as a novel doctrine, devised by the apostles, and peculiarly theirs; and which Moses, and the prophets, were strangers to:

*and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us*; by charging us with the murder of him, and representing us as guilty of shedding innocent blood, and so stirring up the people, and the Romans against us, to take vengeance on us for it: this, as if they should say, seems to be the intention and design of your ministry, particularly in asserting, that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, is now risen from the dead, and was a holy, innocent, and righteous person, as his resurrection shows; and therefore, as

we have been guilty in shedding his blood, the punishment of it will, one day or other, be inflicted on us; as it accordingly was, and as they themselves imprecated in (~~4175~~ Matthew 27:25). It is to be observed, that they do not mention the name of Jesus, only by way of contempt, call him “this man”, as it is usual with the Jews to do, when they speak of him. So a commentator <sup>f207</sup> on (~~0273~~ Genesis 27:39) says of some,

“they believed in a man whom they set up for God; and Rome believed, in the days of Constantine, who renewed all that religion, and put upon his banner the form **awhh çyah**, “of that man”.”

and so another of their writers <sup>f208</sup> uses the phrase several times in a few words. Judah ben Tabai fled to Alexandria,

“that they might not make him president, and in the way, with one disciple; as it happened to Joshua ben Perachiah, with **çyah wtwa**, “that man”; and ye may receive it for a truth, that “that man” was his disciple — and the truth is, that “that man” was born in the fourth year of the kingdom of Jannai the Second.”

So an heretic is said to be one that confesses “that man”; and heretics are the disciples of “that man”, who turned to evil the words of the living God <sup>f209</sup>. Thus blasphemously and contemptuously do they speak of Christ.

**Ver. 29.** *Then Peter, and the other apostles, answered and said,* etc.]

Peter began, as the mouth of the apostles, being the eldest man, and very bold and zealous; and the rest followed, or joined, with him in what he said:

*we ought to obey God rather than men*; this is said in answer to the charge of disobedience to the orders and commands of the council: men, civil magistrates, and ecclesiastical rulers, are to be obeyed in things which are not repugnant to the will of God; but in things that are, God is to be obeyed, and not men. God had commanded by an angel, that the apostles should go to the temple, and there preach the doctrines of the Gospel; the sanhedrim had forbid them to speak and teach in the name of Christ; who were now to be obeyed? God, and not men: from whence it appears that the apostles were to be justified in disregarding the council, and neglecting its orders; and which is no ways contrary to that obedience and submission, that is to be yielded to those that are in authority, in things civil and lawful.

**Ver. 30.** *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus*, etc.] Not from the dead, though this was true; but called him to the work and office of a Saviour, inverted him with that office, and sent him to perform that work; so that this refers rather to the incarnation of Christ, in consequence of the ancient council and covenant of grace: and this the apostles attribute to God the Father, under the character of “the God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob”, as in (<sup>4013</sup>Acts 3:13), to show that they did not bring in and worship any strange God; nor introduce any novel doctrine; or speak of any other Saviour or Redeemer, than he whom the God of their fathers had appointed, and who was made known to them, whom they looked for and believed in, and were justified and saved by:

*whom ye slew and hanged on a tree*; this is said in defence of themselves, being charged that they intended to bring this man’s blood upon them; they therefore insist upon it that they had slain Jesus whom God raised up, inasmuch as they had condemned him to death in their sanhedrim, and had urged and importuned Pilate to crucify him, and had imprecated his blood upon them and on their children; and were not content to put him to any kind of death, but insisted on his being crucified, or hanged on a tree; that is, stretched out upon the cross, which was both a painful and shameful death, to which they were manifestly accessory, and therefore justly charged with it.

**Ver. 31.** *Him hath God exalted with his right hand*, etc.] Not at his right hand, though he is exalted to it, and is set down at it, but with, or by his right hand; that is, by his power: for being by him raised from the dead, he was exalted to the highest heavens, and placed in human nature at the right hand of God, on the same throne with him, crowned with glory and honour; and having a name above every name, and all power and authority both in heaven and in earth given him,

*to be a Prince and a Saviour*: being made and declared both Lord and Christ, Lord of lords, and Prince of the kings of the earth, the Prince of life and peace, the Head of the church, and over all things for the sake of it, and the Saviour of his body the church, of all the elect of God; not with a temporal, but a spiritual and eternal salvation, of which he is become the author by his obedience, sufferings, and death; and is an able and willing, a suitable and an only Saviour: and some of the branches of his power and grace are

*for to give repentance to Israel*; to the Israel whom God has chosen for himself, and Christ has redeemed by his blood, and whom the Spirit calls by his grace: these being sinners, as well as others, stand in need of repentance; and whereas this is not in any man's power, but is the free gift of God's grace; for though he should give men time and space to repent, and afford them the means of it, yet if he does not give them grace to repent, they never will, such is the hardness of man's heart; Christ is appointed to give this grace to the chosen ones, which he does by sending his Spirit to convince of sin, and to take away the stony heart, and give an heart of flesh:

*and forgiveness of sins*; free and full forgiveness of all sins; which being obtained by his blood, is applied by his Spirit to all that truly repent of them; for these two always go together; where he gives the one, he also gives the other: the manifestations and applications of pardoning grace are only made to repenting sinners; and there are none that truly, and in an evangelical way, repent of sin, but who have some views, or, at least, hopes of pardoning grace; and none ever mourn more over sin, than those that see it in the glass of forgiving love.

**Ver. 32.** *And we are his witnesses of these things*, etc.] Of the incarnation of Christ, of his crucifixion and death, of his resurrection from the dead, of his exaltation by the right hand of God, and of his offices as a Prince and a Saviour, and of the influences of his grace, in giving repentance and remission of sins to his people; and even to many of the Jews, who had been his crucifiers, and who were now converted under the ministry of the apostles:

*and so is also the Holy Ghost*; in his descent upon the apostles, through the miraculous gifts bestowed upon them, and the wonderful works done by them, and the mighty power accompanying their ministry to the conversion of sinners:

*whom God hath given to them that obey him*; that hearken to his Gospel, and believe in Christ, even to all private Christians, as well as ministers of the word; if not in his extraordinary gifts, yet in the ordinary measures of his grace.

**Ver. 33.** *When they heard that*, etc.] This defence of the apostles, in which they still insisted upon it, that they had been the crucifiers of Christ, and yet

that he was raised from the dead, and exalted in heaven, and was a spiritual Saviour of men:

*they were cut; to the heart*, as if they had been cut asunder with a saw; the Ethiopic version renders it, “they were angry”, and “gnashed with their teeth”, as if a saw was drawn to and fro; they were filled with rage and madness:

*and took counsel to slay them*; not in a legal and judicial way, but in a private manner, or by force; stirring up the zealots to rise up against them, and dispatch them at once, as blasphemers and heretics.

**Ver. 34.** *Then stood there up one in the council*, etc.] Or “in the sanhedrim”, which the high priest had called together; this phrase is left out in the Syriac version: yet certain it is, that the great council was now assembled, and the disciples were now before them, and this man, who was one of the members of it, stood up in it; for it seems to have been the custom, that though they usually sat, yet when anyone had anything to say, or made a speech, he rose up from his seat.

*A Pharisee named Gamaliel*; he is described by his sect of religion, a Pharisee; of which, (See Gill on “<sup><4187></sup>Matthew 3:7”) and by his name Gamaliel: he was the son of Rabban Simeon, the son of Hillel the great; which Simeon is, by some, thought to be the same that took Christ into his arms, (<sup><4125></sup>Luke 2:25) and this Gamaliel was also the master of the Apostle Paul, (<sup><4218></sup>Acts 22:3). This was a very ancient name in Israel; the prince of the children of Manasseh, that offered at the dedication of the tabernacle, was of this name, (<sup><4074></sup>Numbers 7:54) and perhaps this man might be of the same tribe. He is further described by his profession,

*a doctor of law*; he was one of the Misnic doctors, one of the fathers of tradition, that received the oral law from those before him, and handed it down to others; and was the five and thirtieth of this sort, as the Jews say <sup>f210</sup>, from the giving of the law at Mount Sinai; or, as others <sup>f211</sup>, the thirty first:

*had in reputation among all the people*; and therefore his advice was the more likely to take place, without giving offence, or exposing to danger, seeing he was highly esteemed, not only in the sanhedrim, but among the common people; and that not only because he was a Pharisee, and a very strict one, the glory of that sect, insomuch that it is said <sup>f212</sup>, that

“when he died, the glory of the law ceased, and purity and pharisaism died;”

that but because of his years, dignity, and place also; he is called commonly Gamaliel, <sup>^qzh</sup>, “the elder”, because he lived to a great age <sup>f213</sup>. He died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem <sup>f214</sup>, and was had in veneration to the last. It is said of him <sup>f215</sup>,

“he ordered, before his death, that they should carry him to his grave in linen; for before this time they used to carry out the dead in silk; and this was more grievous to his relations than his death itself;”

because they thought he was not interred honourably enough. And it is also reported, that Onkelos, the proselyte, at his death, burnt as much for him in goods and spices, as came to seventy Tyrian pounds <sup>f216</sup>. He was also commonly called by the name of Rabban, which was a more honourable title than that of Rabbi or Rab; and his father Simeon was the first that had it <sup>f217</sup>; and he was now president of the sanhedrim: and hence he used that authority which is expressed in the next words,

*and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space*; he ordered the apostles to be put out of the sanhedrim for a little while, that they might not hear what he had to say, and take encouragement from it; and that he might more freely speak his mind without giving them any countenance. The Alexandrian copy reads, “the men”, instead of “the apostles”; and so the Vulgate Latin version.

**Ver. 35.** *And said unto them, ye men of Israel*, etc.] This he said after the apostles were put out, when the council was by themselves; and he addressed them as “men of Israel”; not as distinct from the priests and Levites in the council, but because they were all of the stock of Israel; for this council did not consist of Israelites only, as distinct from priests and Levites, as appears from (<sup><del>4152></sup> Acts 5:21,27). A sanhedrim commonly consisted of each of these; though if only of Israelites it was a lawful one. Maimonides says <sup>f218</sup>,

“they did not use to appoint any in the sanhedrim, but priests, Levites, and Israelites, that were genealogized and fit to be married into the priesthood — -and that it was a command, that in the great sanhedrim there should be priests and Levites; as it is said, “thou

shalt go to the priests and Levites”; but if they are not found, if they are all Israelites, lo, this is lawful,”

or a proper sanhedrim. His speech to them follows,

*take heed to yourselves*; consider well, do not act a rash and precipitant part; do not give way to passion and wrath, and hastily lay hands on these men, and destroy them; lest ye bring yourselves into disgrace and danger, and bring upon yourselves the ill-will and resentment of men, and the wrath of God: take time to consider of the matter, and deliberately consult

*what ye intend to do as touching these men*; what punishment to inflict upon them, whether imprisonment, scourging, or death; do nothing rashly.

**Ver. 36.** *For before these days rose up Theudas*, etc.]. There is one of this name Josephus<sup>f219</sup> speaks of, who set up for a prophet, and drew a large number of people after him; pretending, that if they would follow him to the river Jordan, and take their goods along with them, he would but give the word, and the waters would divide and leave them passage to go over dryfoot; but Cuspius Fadus, who then had the administration of Judea, sent out some troops of horse, before they were aware, and killed many of them, and took divers others, and brought them in triumph to Jerusalem, with the head of Theudas. This account agrees with this instance of Gamaliel, only differs in chronology; since, according to Gamaliel’s account, this case of Theudas was some time ago, and must have been before now, or he could not have mentioned it; whereas the story Josephus relates, as being in the times of Cuspius Fadus, was several years after this. Some think Josephus is mistaken in his chronology, and then all is right. Others, that another Theudas is intended; who, as Origen says<sup>f220</sup>, was before the birth of Christ, since he was before Judas of Galilee, who rose up in the days of the taxing, at which time Christ was born: and the phrase, before these days, seems to design a good while ago. This name was in use among the Jews, and is either the same with **hdwt**, “Thuda”, or “Thoda”, so the Syriac version reads; one of the disciples of Christ was so called by the Jews<sup>f221</sup>, whose name was Thaddeus: or with **swdwt**, “Thodus”; one of this name, said<sup>f222</sup> to be a man of Rome, is frequently mentioned in the Talmud; and another also that was a physician<sup>f223</sup>; but both different from this “Theodas”. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, Theodas; and some take it to be a contraction of Theodotus, Theodorus, or Theodosius. Just as Theucharis is put for Theocharis, and Theudosia for Theodosia: but

it seems rather to be an Hebrew name; and so Jerom<sup>f224</sup> took it to be, who renders it “praise”: but who the man was is not certain; however, he rose up, as Gamaliel says, and made an insurrection,

*boasting himself to be some body*, or “some great one”, as the Alexandrian copy, and three of Beza’s copies read, and two of Stephens’s, and the Complutensian edition; and as read also the Syriac and Arabic versions; just as Simon Magus did afterwards, (~~488~~ Acts 8:9) and so Josephus’s Theudas gave out, that he was a prophet, and promised great things to the people, as to divide the waters of Jordan for them, by a word speaking and lead them through it as on dry land:

*to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves*; who believing what he said, put themselves under his command, and set him at the head of them:

*who was slain*: so Josephus’s Theudas had his head cut off by the troops of Cuspius Fadus, the Roman governor:

*and as many as obeyed him were scattered and brought to nought*; some killed, and others taken; and so the faction was quelled, and came to nothing. This instance Gamaliel produces, to show that impostors and seditious persons, such as the apostles were thought to be, seldom succeeded, but generally failed in their attempts, and were blasted; and with the same view he mentions the following one.

**Ver. 37.** *After this man rose up, Judas of Galilee*, etc.] Of whom Josephus thus says<sup>f225</sup>:

“there was a man of Galilee, by name Judas, who led his countrymen into rebellion, declaring it an evil, should they suffer tribute to be paid to the Romans, and introduce mortal rulers after God.”

And not unlike this is what another Jewish writer says<sup>f226</sup> of Judas the Galilean, and his party:

“these were the cause of the Jews rebelling against the Romans, for they said, it was not fit that any should rule over men but God alone; and that no one should be called Lord, but the blessed God.”

And this insurrection was “in the days of the taxing”; which was made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria; and the reason of it was, because he

and his party would not pay that tax, for the reasons suggested in the above citations: and this is what Josephus refers to, when he says <sup>f227</sup>,

“Cyrenius came to Syria, sent from Caesar as judge of the nation, and appraiser of their estates; upon which Judas, the Gaulonite, (the same with Judas of Galilee,) rebelled, and Saddochus with him; saying, that this appraisment brought nothing else but servitude upon them; and therefore exhorted the nation to vindicate their liberty.”

And his exhortations and arguments prevailed with the people: wherefore it follows here,

*and drew away much people after him*; perhaps a much larger number than Theudas did, since they are not expressly mentioned how many they were:

*he also perished*; being killed in the insurrection, or taken and put to death by the Romans. So Origen says <sup>f228</sup>, that he was punished, and his doctrine was destroyed, and remained only among a few contemptible persons:

*and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed*; were forced to fly, some one way, and some another, and could make nothing of it: and as this instance was after the other before mentioned; and was so early as under the government of Cyrenius, and at the time of the taxing under him; it shows that Theudas could not be the Theudas of Josephus, unless the words should be rendered as see choose to do, “besides this man rose up Judas”, etc. And others observe, that “after him”, is the same as “before him”; and which, however, at first hearing, may seem very absurd, yet is justified by instances, as being a very proper way of speaking, seeing, when an account proceeds from the last as nearest, the first must be last, and the last first. Some, in order to reconcile this passage, think, that there is a transposition in the words of Luke, and that they should be read thus, “for before those days rose up Judas of Galilee”, etc. and then, “after this man rose up Theudas”, etc. so making Judas of Galilee more ancient than Theudas, as he must be, if he is the same Theudas Josephus speaks of: but still it is a difficulty how he could be the same, when that fact of his, the above historian speaks of, was seven, or eight, or ten, and, as some say, twelve years after this speech of Gamaliel’s. To remove this, it is proposed, that what is said concerning Theudas is to be put into a parenthesis, and to be considered not as the words of Gamaliel saying them in the sanhedrim, but as the words of Luke the historian, who wrote after this fact was done;

and because of the agreement of it with that of Judas, mentioned by Gamaliel, he inserts it; here, and joins it with it <sup>f229</sup>. And yet, after all, it looks as if it was another Theudas that is here spoken of, who was before Judas; and that he that Josephus speaks of, might be, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, one of his posterity, who was of, the same name, and trod in his steps, and. was guilty of sedition as his ancestor was, and as the sons of Judas were, mentioned by the same historian in the same place.

**Ver. 38.** *And now I say unto you*, etc.] This is the sum of my advice upon the observation of these and other instances:

*refrain from these men, and let them alone*; keep your hands off of them, do not attempt to take away their lives, but dismiss them quietly, nor go about to hinder them, in what they are concerned:

*for if this counsel, or this work be of men*; if the doctrine these men preach is an human device; or this business they are engaged in is only an human affair, projected by men, and carried on upon selfish principles, and worldly views, seeking only themselves, and their secular interests, and not the glory of God:

*it will come to nought*; as did the designs of Theudas and Judas.

**Ver. 39.** *But if it be of God*, etc.] If it is according to the counsel of his will; if it is a scheme of his forming, and a work to which he has called these men, and they proceed in it on good principles, and with a view to the honour and glory of God:

*ye cannot overthrow it*; it will proceed and get ground, and stand, maugre all the opposition of hell and earth; therefore do nothing to them, or hinder them from going on. Some copies read, “ye cannot overthrow them”; and add, “neither you, nor kings, nor tyrants; wherefore refrain from these men”; so Beza’s Cambridge copy.

*Lest haply ye be found even to fight against God*; which to do is downright madness, and which no man in his senses can expect to succeed in. There are some sayings of the Jewish doctors which seem to agree with these reasonings of Gamaliel <sup>f230</sup>.

“Says R. Jochanan the shoemaker, every congregation, which is for the name of heaven (or God) at length shall be established, but that

which is not for the glory of God shall not be established in the end.”

Which one of the commentators <sup>f231</sup> interprets in words still nearer to Gamaliel’s language, thus:

“it shall be that that counsel which is for God shall stand and prosper, but that which is not for God shall cease.”

And in another place it is said <sup>f232</sup>,

“all contention (or dispute) which is for God, at length shall be established, but that which is not for God shall not in the end be established: what is contention that is for God? the contention of Hillel and Shammai, (two famous doctors among the Jews,) but that which is not for God is the contention of Korah, and his whole company.”

Some have thought from this advice of Gamaliel, that he was a Christian, or greatly inclined to Christianity; but when it is considered what respect was shown him at his death by the Jews, before observed on (~~Acts~~ Acts 5:34) it will appear that he died a Pharisee; and especially it cannot be thought he had any favourable sentiments of the Christians, since a little before his death he ordered a prayer to be made against them. Maimonides says <sup>f233</sup>, that

“in the days of Rabban Gamaliel, the Epicureans (so the Amsterdam edition reads, but former editions read **μυνυμ**, “heretics”, by whom are meant Christians) increased in Israel; and they distressed the Israelites, and seduced them to turn aside from God; and when he saw that this was greater than all the necessities of the children of men, he stood up, and his council or sanhedrim, and composed another prayer, in which there was a request to God to destroy the Epicureans,”

or heretics, meaning the Christians: and though this prayer is sometimes ascribed to Samuel the little, yet it was composed by him at the hint and instigation of Gamaliel; for so it is said <sup>f234</sup>, R. Gamaliel said to the wise men,

“is there no man that knows how to compose a prayer for the Sadducees? (R. Asher reads “heretics”;) Samuel the little stood up and composed one.”

And it is also said <sup>f235</sup>, that

“Samuel the little composed, *^ynym tkrb*, “the prayer for the heretics”, before, or in the presence of Gamaliel the elder.”

He made it when he was present, assisting, dictating, directing, and approving. The prayer was this <sup>f236</sup>,

“let there be no hope for apostates, and may all heretics perish in a moment, and all the enemies of thy people be quickly cut off: root out the kingdom of pride, and break, destroy, and subdue them in haste in our days.”

In some forms it is added,

“blessed art thou, O Lord, that breakest the wicked in pieces, and humblest the proud.”

Upon the whole, Gamaliel does not seem to have been a Christian, or to have favoured the Christian religion; but he was, as he is said, (~~Acts~~ Acts 5:34) to be, a Pharisee: and this council, or sanhedrim, were, for the greater part of them, Sadducees, as seems from (~~Acts~~ Acts 5:17) who, as the Jews say, were wicked and base men, men of very ill manners, whereas the Pharisees were *^ynmj r*, “merciful men” <sup>f237</sup>; and such an one was Gamaliel: he was a religious man in his way; a man of humanity, a mild and moderate man, that had compassion and pity for his fellow creatures; and could not give in to any schemes of cruelty and persecution, which the Sadducees were forward to; and upon these principles he acted, and upon these he gave this advice.

**Ver. 40.** *And to him they agreed*, etc.] They were convinced and persuaded by his reasonings, approved of his advice, and agreed to follow it:

*and when they had called the apostles*; into the council again, having sent their servants for them, or ordered them to be brought in:

*and beaten them*; or scourged and whipped them with forty stripes save one, whereby was fulfilled what Christ had foretold, (~~Matthew~~ Matthew 10:17)

*they commanded they should not speak in the name of Jesus*; as they had strictly commanded them before, (<sup><408></sup>Acts 4:18). Perhaps both in this, as well as in bearing the apostles, they did not closely attend to Gamaliel's counsel, who advised them to keep their hands off of them, and not hinder them, but let them alone in what they were about: but this might be thought by them not to their reputation, nor sufficiently asserting their authority, to dismiss them, without saying or doing anything to them:

*and let them go*; from the council to their own company: they released them, and loosed them from their bonds; they set them at liberty, and let them go where they would; and so far they followed Gamaliel's advice.

**Ver. 41.** *And they departed from the presence of the council*, etc.] Having been threatened and beaten by them:

*rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name*; Beza's ancient copy, and others; the Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions read, "for the name of Jesus"; in which name they were forbid to speak, and for speaking in it they were beaten; the Alexandrian copy, and the Syriac version read, "for the name": that is, for God, for the glory of God, and in the cause of God; **μϥη**, "the name", is often used in Jewish writings for God: the shame they suffered for him was by being scourged with forty stripes save one; which was reckoned an infamous and ignominious punishment, and which was inflicted on persons guilty of very scandalous crimes<sup>f238</sup>: but this gave the innocent minds of the apostles no uneasiness; they accounted it an honour conferred on them to be called to suffering for the sake of God and Christ, and in so good a cause; they did what Christ exhorted them to, (<sup><411></sup>Matthew 5:11) which shows they had much of the presence of God, and large measures of grace communicated to them, by which they were supported; and thus cheerfully bore all indignity and reproach, for the name of Christ, which was exceeding dear and precious to them.

**Ver. 42.** *And daily in the temple, and in every house*, etc.] Every day, with great constancy and assiduity, both publicly and privately; in the temple, the place of public worship, where the Jews resorted on that account; and in each of their private houses, as often as they had opportunity:

*they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ*, that he is the Son of God, truly and properly God, the only Saviour of sinners: they preached up the dignity of his person, the grace of his incarnation, the obedience of his

life, the benefits of his sufferings and death; they preached his resurrection from the dead, and the resurrection of the dead through him; they declared his ascension to heaven, his session at the right hand of God, and intercession for his people; they preached peace and pardon by his blood, atonement of sin by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, and complete redemption and salvation by him. And this they did without ceasing, not regarding the orders and threats of the sanhedrim; they waxed bolder and bolder in the ministry of the word, and were more constant and assiduous in it; their reproaches and persecutions increased their zeal for Christ, and his cause.