

*The Life of the Apostle Peter*  
Study # 34 E (Complete)  
Persecution and Deliverance  
(Acts 5:17-42)

- I. **The Anger (17)**
  - A. **The Rulers**
  - B. **The Reaction**  
(Jn. 2:17; Num. 25:1-15; Rom. 10:1-4)
  - C. **The Reasons (4:17-22)**
    - 1. **DOCTRINE**
    - 2. **DISOBEDIENCE**
    - 3. **DISORDER**
- II. **The Arrest (18)**
  - A. **Their Capture**
  - B. **Their Confinement**
- III. **The Angel (19-21A)**
  - A. **The Opening (19; Heb. 1:14)**
  - B. **The Orders**  
(20; Jn. 6:68; 1 Pet. 1:25; Rom. 5:8)
  - C. **The Obedience (21; 2 Pet. 1:19; 2 Kings 6:15-17)**
- IV. **The Assembly (21B -25)**
  - A. **The People (21B)**
  - B. **The Problem (21C; 22-23)**
  - C. **The Perplexity (24)**
  - D. **The Pronouncement (25)**
- V. **The Arraignment (26-28)**
  - A. **The Capture (26A)**
  - B. **The Cowardice (26B)**
  - C. **The Confrontation (27)**
  - D. **The Charges (28; Mt. 27:25; 1 Th. 2:14-16)**
- VI. **The Answer (29-32)**
  - A. **The Priority of the Apostles**  
(29; Pr. 29:25; Ecc. 12:13; Acts 4:19)
  - B. **The Preaching of the Apostles (30-31)**
    - 1. **A Message of Providence (30)**
      - a. **God Sending His Son (Gal. 4:4)**
      - b. **God Sacrificing His Son (Acts 2:22-23)**
    - 2. **A Message of Promotion**  
(31A; 3:15; Philip. 2:4-11)  
DEEPER STUDY: Acts 2:33,26; 4:11; Rev. 1:5
    - 3. **A Message of Propitiation**  
(31B; Gal. 4:5; 1 Jn. 2:1-2; Jn. 3:17)
  - C. **The Place of the Apostles (32A; 1:8; 1 Jn. 1:1-3)**
  - D. **The Power of the Apostles**  
(32B; Gal. 3:2; Lk. 11:13; Jn. 15:26)
- VII. **The Animosity (33; 2:23; 7:54)**

**PERSECUTION OF  
CHRISTIAN LEADERS**

Today we seem to think this truth does not apply to our land. We readily assent to the fact that in other countries, such as those with cruel dictatorial governments, godly preachers can experience persecution and, as a result, end up in prison and be put through terrible suffering which could even result in their death. But in our land, we seem to think that if one serves well he will be famous, popular, and have a big church in a big city with a big salary. So if a pastor gets thrown out of a church, we automatically think he has been a failure and needs some instruction on how to pastor. Now that may, of course, be the case in some situations. The pastor may be very deficient and maybe not even called to the ministry. But on the other hand, many pastors are dismissed by their church because they are faithful to God in doing their work. Their ministry is simply too straight for the people. Few churches in our land can tolerate a faithful ministry anymore and are more likely to persecute such a ministry than praise it. Their persecution may not be jail, as in the case of Peter; but it may instead be a cruel and unjust dismissal of the faithful pastor from his pastorate.  
— Butler, *Bible Biography Series*

**ΑΩ**

**indignation** - (vs. 17). Gk., *zelos*. This can be godly zeal (as Christ in John 2:17), or base jealousy. In this context, while the Sadducees may possess some zeal for the law, it is more likely that, due to the corrupt nature of the priesthood in those days, the meaning is that they were jealously guarding their own positions.

**shut** - (vs. 23) Shut (*kekleismenon*). Perfect passive participle of *kleiō*. Shut tight. — Word Pictures in the New Testament

**doubted** - (vs. 24) Lit., were perplexed.

**whereunto this would grow** - (vs. 24) Lit, “as to what this would become.”

**obey** - (vs. 29) Gk., *peitharcho*. The word means to be persuaded by a ruler. The meaning implies obedience to one in authority (cf., Titus 3:1)

**slew** - (vs. 30) Gk., *diacheirizo*. To handle thoroughly, i.e. lay violent hands upon :- kill, slay. *Strong's*

**Prince** - (vs. 31) The Greek word does not imply that Christ is one in line to become a king. Rather it means a chief ruler, or leader. In other places, the AV translates this word as “captain” and “author.” See Heb. 2:10 where Christ is the *Captain* of our salvation and Heb. 12:2 where Christ is the *author* of our faith.

**fight against God** - (vs. 39) Gk., *theomachos*. The word means an opponent of deity, a God fighter.

**COMMANDS THAT BRING CRISIS**

The angel of the Lord gave the apostles a command that, when followed, would lead to a brutal flogging. If that strikes you as odd, it is probably because of the prevailing idea among many believers that obedience inevitably leads to blessing (defined as “a problem-free, blissful existence”). Serious students of the Bible know, however, that obeying God often results in pain and suffering. They also recognize that being persecuted for Christ is a deeper kind of blessing. What biblical commands, if obeyed, might result in discomfort for you today? Will you commit to live them out anyway? — *Life Application Bible Commentary*

## VIII. The Ally (34-40A)

### A. The Man (34)

1. The Surprise (34A)
2. The Summary (34B)
3. The Strength (34C)
  - a. Party Strength
  - b. Personal Strength

### B. The Message (35-40A)

1. His Caution (35;  
Pr. 14:29; 29:20; Ecc. 7:9)
2. His Case Studies (36-37)
  - a. Theudas (36; Gal. 6:3)
  - b. Judas of Galilee (37)
3. His Command (38A)
4. His Conclusion (38B-40A)
  - a. The Choices (38B-39)
    - 1) It is of Man (38B; Ps. 1:1)
    - 2) It is of God (39; 26:12-14)
  - b. The Consent (40A)

### Rabban Gamaliel, the Elder

Gamaliel was famous in Judaism, recognized as the greatest teacher of his day (roughly A.D. 25 - 50). He was the grandson of Hillel, for whom an entire school of thought was named within Pharisaism. Among Christians, he is best known for his role as the spiritual father and teacher to the young Saul of Tarsus (Acts 22:3).

Although some scholars have erroneously regarded him as the president of the Sanhedrin at this time (an office that properly belonged to the high priest), he was nevertheless the most respected man of the Sanhedrin and the leader of the Pharisaic party. It is said in the Mishnah (rabbinic teachings on the oral law of the Jews) that, "when Rabban Gamaliel the Elder died, the glory of the Law ceased and purity and abstinence died."

The Mishnah refers to him repeatedly appealing to his authority for many of the laws regulating the Sabbath, certificates of divorce, the recitation of blessing at a meal, harvesting, tithing, dough offerings, among many others.

Gamaliel also left a significant legacy through his descendants. His son Yeshua served as high priest in A.D. 63-65. Another son, Simeon, became a famous rabbi who is cited repeatedly throughout the Mishnah. His grandson, Gamaliel II, also became a famous rabbi allegedly training over a thousand disciples. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*

## IX. The Apostles (40B-42)

### A. Their Agony (40B; Jn. 14:26; 16:1-4; Mt. 10:17-20)

### B. Their Attitude (41; Gal. 6:17; 3 Jn. 1:5-8; Mt. 5:12; Lk. 6:23; 1Pet. 4:13)

### C. Their Activity (42)

1. The Frequency of Their Preaching
2. The Forwardness of Their Preaching
3. The Faithfulness of Their Preaching

## CONCLUSION: (Lessons)

1. Expect our society to be angry.
2. Expect unbelievers to persecute the church.  
2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.
3. When the world is doing its worst, God is closest.
4. We must remain faithful to God in all circumstances whatever the cost.
5. Expect that some will follow the Lord.
6. We can hope that in times of crisis in our church and in our government, men of character will stop the rash actions associated with the mob spirit.

### Instructions on Flogging

An entire tractate of the Mishnah – *Makkoth* (stripes) – is devoted to delineating the infractions that warrant flogging as well as the methods and procedures for carrying it out. The following excerpt explains how it is to be done:

How do they scourge him? They bind his two hands to a pillar on either side, and the minister of the synagogue lays hold on his garments ... so that he bares his chest. A stone is set down behind him on which the minister of the synagogue stands with a large strap of calf-hide in his hand, doubled and re-doubled, and two other straps that rise and fall are fastened thereto ... He must give him one-third of the stripes in front and two thirds behind; and he may not strike him when he is standing or when he is sitting, but only when he is bending low, for it is written, "the judge shall cause him to lie down." (Deut. 25:2). And he that smites, smites with his one hand with all his might ... If he dies under his hand, the scourger is not culpable.

As the accused suffers his beating, another person stands by and reads from Deuteronomy 28:58-63 ("If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law ...") repeatedly throughout the beating. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*