
a ***Grace Notes*** course

The Acts of the Apostles

an expositional study
by Warren Doud

Lesson 402: **Acts 23:1-35**

ACTS

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ACTS 23:1-35

ACTS 23:1. *And Paul earnestly beholding the council,* Fastening his eyes upon them, looking wistly and intently at them, and thereby discovering a modest cheerfulness, and a becoming boldness, confidence, and intrepidity, as being not conscious of any guilt, and well assured of the goodness of his cause: ***said, men and brethren;*** (see Acts 22:1). ***I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day;*** not only from the time of his conversion, but throughout the whole of his life; for though, strictly speaking, there is no good conscience but what is awakened by the Spirit of God, and is unprincipled by his grace, and is purged from sin by the blood of Christ; in which sense he could only have a good conscience, since he believed in Christ; yet whereas in his state of unregeneracy, and even while he was a blasphemer, and persecutor, he did not act contrary to the dictates of his conscience, but according to them, in which his view was to the glory of God, and the honour of his law; he therefore says he lived before God, or unto God, in all good conscience, though an erroneous and mistaken one; he thought he ought to do what he did; and what he did, he did with a zeal for God though it was not according to knowledge: besides, the apostle has here respect to his outward moral conversation, which, before and after conversion, was very strict, and even blameless, at least unblemished before men; nobody could charge him with any notorious crime, though he did not live without sin in the sight of the omniscient God.

ACTS 23:2. *And the high priest Ananias,* This could not be the same with Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, but rather Ananus his son; though this is more generally thought to be Ananias the son of Nebedaeus, whom Josephus speaks of. There is one R. Ananias, the sagan of the priests, often spoken of in the

Jewish writings, who lived about these times, and was killed at the destruction of Jerusalem; and in the times of King Agrippa, there was one Chanina, or Ananias the priest, who was a Sadducee; and from the number of Sadducees in this sanhedrim, who very likely were the creatures of the high priest, one would be tempted to think he might be the same with this: who ***commanded them that stood by him:*** that is, by Paul, who were nearest to him, some of the members of the sanhedrim; unless they should be thought to be some of the high priest's officers, or servants, as in (John 18:22) though if they were, one would think they would be so called: these he ordered ***to smite him on the mouth:*** or give him a slap on the face, by way of contempt, and as if he had spoken what ought not to be said, and in order to silence him; the reason of which might be, either because Paul did not directly address him, and give him such flattering titles as he expected, or because he set out with such declarations of his innocence, and spotless behaviour, and with so much courage and boldness.

ACTS 23:3. *Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee,* Which may be considered either as a prophecy of what would be, that God would smite him with some judgment here, or with death quickly, or with eternal damnation hereafter; taking up his own words, and suggesting that a retaliation would be made, and that the measure he meted, would be measured to him again; or else as an imprecation upon him; for the words may be rendered, "may God smite thee"; the future tense being often used by the Jews for the imperative, and that in this very phrase; for certain it is, that this is the form of an imprecation with them: for it is said, if anyone should say, "may God smite", or "so may God smite"; this is, "a curse", written in the law; though this instance of the apostle ought not to be drawn into example, any more than

those of other saints, who might be under a direction of the Holy Ghost to deliver out such things, which would come to pass in righteous judgment: and if this was Ananias, the son of Nebedaeus, as is generally thought, it is remarkable, that five years after this, in the beginning of the wars of the Jews with the Romans, this Ananias, hiding himself under the ruins of a conduit, was discovered, and taken out, and killed : and no doubt but he very fitly calls him *thou whited wall*; or hypocrite, in like manner as Christ compares the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees to whited sepulchres, (Matthew 23:27). *for sittest thou to judge me after the law*; the law of Moses, which was the rule of judgment in the sanhedrim, at least professed to be, and which was allowed of by the Romans, especially in matters relating to the Jewish religion: *and commandest me to be smitten contrary to law*? which condemns no man before he is heard, and much less punishes him, (John 7:51) and which is contrary not only to the Jewish laws, but to the Roman laws, and all others founded upon the law of nature and reason.

ACTS 23:4. *And they that stood by,* The members of the sanhedrim that were next to the apostle; or the servants of the high priest, since they are said to stand, whereas those of that court sat: *said, revilest thou God's high priest?* which seems to confirm that the apostle's words were not a bare prediction, but an imprecation, since they are charged with reproaching, reviling, and speaking evil of him; and the aggravation of which was not only that the person reviled was a priest, an high priest, but an high priest of God; though this could not have been proved, for there was now no high priest of God but Jesus Christ; the priesthood was changed and abrogated, and there were no more high priests among men of God's appointing and approving.

ACTS 23:5. *Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest,* Or I did not know that he was the high priest; and the sense is, that he did not really know him, either because he had been long absent from Jerusalem; and besides there were new high priests made, sometimes every year, and sometimes oftener, that it is no wonder he should not know him; or because he might not sit in his usual place; or chiefly because he was not, in his habit, an high priest; for the priests, both the high priest, and the common priests, only wore their priestly robes, when they ministered in their office, and at other times they wore other clothes, as laymen did, according to (Ezekiel 44:19) which the Targum paraphrases thus; “when they (the priests) shall go out of the holy court into the outer court, to be mixed with the people, they shall put off their garments in which they ministered, and lay them up in the holy chamber, and shall clothe themselves with other garments, that they may not be mingled with the people, , “in their garments”.

“For as soon as they had performed their office, there were servants that attended them, who stripped them of their robes, and laid them up in chests which were in the temple till they came to service again, and put them on common garments; for they might not appear among the common people in their priestly garments; which when they were off of them, they were, as Maimonides says , , “as strangers”, or as laymen, like the rest of the people; for which reason Paul might not know Ananias to be the high priest: and this points to another sense of these words; for it was a rule with the Jews , that “at the time the priests' garments were upon them, their priesthood was upon them, but when their garments were not on them, , “there was no priesthood upon them”; for lo, they were as strangers.”

And then the sense is, Ananias not being in the discharge of his office, nor in his habit, the apostle did not know, or own him as an high priest, or consider him as in such a station; or rather, since the priesthood was changed, and there was no other high priest of God but Jesus Christ, he did not own him as one; had he, he should not have spoke to him in the manner he did. Moreover, if this was Ananias, the son of Nebedaeus, as is the opinion of many, he had no right to the office of the priesthood when he was first made an high priest; after which he was sent a prisoner to Rome; during which time several succeeded in the priesthood; and at this time not he, though he had got the management of affairs in his hands, was high priest, but Jesus the son of Gamaliel; so that the apostle's sense might be, he did not own or acknowledge him high priest. Some take the apostle's words in an ironical sense; he an high priest, I should not have known him to be an high priest, he looks and acts more like a furioso, a madman, an unjust judge, and a tyrant, than an high priest, who ought to behave in another guise manner. But what follows shows rather that the apostle spoke seriously, unless the words can be thought to be a citation made by Luke, *for it is written*, in (Exodus 22:28) "thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people"; which the Jewish writers generally understand of the head of the great sanhedrim, as Ananias might be, or of a king .

ACTS 23:6. *But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees,* That is, that one part of the sanhedrim consisted of Sadducees, which was often the case; sometimes the high priest was of this sect, as Ananias probably was, and sometimes the greater part of the sanhedrim were Sadducees, and even sometimes the whole; (see Gill on "Acts 5:17"), but this sanhedrim were only part of them Sadducees: *and the other Pharisees;* of both these sects, (see Gill on

"Matthew 3:7"). *he cried out in the council;* with a loud voice, that he might be heard by all: *men and brethren, I am a Pharisee;* he was not only brought up in that sect from his youth, and lived according to it before his conversion, but he was still a Pharisee; wherefore he does not say, I "was", but I "am" a Pharisee; for whatever distinguished the Pharisee from the Sadducee, whether in principle, or in practice, and manner of living, which agreed with Christianity, the apostle still retained; as the belief of the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead, and a future state, and strict holiness of life and conversation. *The son of a Pharisee;* the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read in the plural number, "the son of Pharisees"; his father and his mother were both Pharisees; for there were women Pharisees , as well as men; so that he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, as well as an Hebrew of the Hebrews; and this is said to show that he was by education of that sect. *Of the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am called in question;* that is, either for the hope of the resurrection of the dead, (Acts 24:15) or for professing the hope of eternal life, and happiness in a future state, and the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, when the soul and body will be reunited, and enjoy endless felicity together: not that these were the particular things now charged upon him, and for which he was now trying and judging; but that these were the ground and foundation of the hatred and persecution of him, because he preached the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and the resurrection of men through him, and that there was hope of eternal life and salvation by him. And in this the apostle showed the prudence and wisdom of the serpent, along with the innocence of the dove, hereby to divide the assembly, and free himself from them; and it was but just and right; for since they would not hear him about to make a fair and open defence of his cause,

but ordered him to be smitten on the mouth, it was but justice to throw them into confusion, and save himself.

ACTS 23:7. *And when he had so said,* He stopped and made a pause: *and there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees;* about the things which he had spoken of, particularly the resurrection of the dead; and this was what the apostle intended, so that his end was answered by the speech he made: *and the multitude was divided;* that is, the members of the sanhedrim were divided, some being on one side of the question, and some on the other; for this multitude cannot design the multitude of the common people, who were not convened together on this occasion.

ACTS 23:8. *For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection,* Of the dead, being ignorant of the Scriptures, and the power of God; (see Matthew 22:23,29). *neither angel nor spirit;* the Ethiopic version reads, “nor Holy Spirit”: but the sense seems to be, that they did not believe any such species of beings as angels, nor indeed any spirits whatever, which were immaterial or immortal; for as for the spirit or soul of man, they took that to be only the temperament of the body, and that it died with it, and did not exist in any separate state after this life: for so Josephus says, that they deny the permanence of the soul, and rewards and punishments in the invisible state. And, according to the Talmudic writers, they denied that there was any other world than this: *but the Pharisees confess both;* the resurrection of the dead, and that there are spirits, both angels and the souls of men, which are immortal. Josephus, in the place before referred to, says, that they hold that every soul is incorruptible or immortal; and that they held the resurrection of the dead, is manifest from the Talmud, and other writings of theirs; the Syriac version renders

it, “the Pharisees confess all these things”; to which agree the Arabic and Ethiopic versions.

ACTS 23:9. *And there arose a great cry,* Or noise, a loud clamour; they began to be very noisy, and to talk loud, and in high spirits, one against another: *and the Scribes that were of the Pharisees’ part arose;* there were Scribes in the sanhedrim, and these were some of them on the side of the Sadducees, and some on the side of the Pharisees; though, generally speaking, they agreed with the latter, and are often in Scripture mentioned with them, and for them: however, that part in this sanhedrim that were on their side rose up from their seats, *and strove;* that is, contended, disputed, and litigated the point with the Sadducees: *saying, we find no evil in this man;* why he should be hated, persecuted, and punished: *but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him;* that is, if the Holy Spirit, as the Ethiopic version reads, has inspired him, or God by an angel has revealed anything to him, who has to say anything against it? This they said in agreement with their own principles, and more for the sake of establishing them, and in opposition to the Sadducees, than in favour of Paul: *let us not fight against God;* as in (Acts 5:39). These words are not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.

ACTS 23:10. *And when there arose a great dissension,* When that was come to a very great height, hot words were spoken, and they were ready to come to blows, and there was like to be a riot and tumult among them: *the chief captain fearing lest Paul should be pulled in pieces of them;* either of the Sadducees, whom he had greatly offended and provoked, or of both Sadducees and Pharisees, the one laying hold on him to preserve him from the fury of the other, and the other endeavouring to pluck him out of their hands; and the fears of the chief captain were not so much out of affection to Paul, but lest there

should be an uproar, which might issue in sedition, and rebellion against the Roman government, of which the Roman officers were always jealous; and because that Paul was a Roman, and should he suffer him to be destroyed in an illegal manner, he must be accountable for it: wherefore he **commanded the soldiers to go down**: either from the castle of Antonia, or from a superior part of the temple, where he with his guards were, to hear this cause before the sanhedrim, to that part where it sat, and Paul was: and **take him by force from among them**; if they refused to deliver him up, to make use of their arms: **and bring him into the castle**; of Antonia, where he was before.

ACTS 23:11. And the night following, The day in which Paul was brought before the sanhedrim, and pleaded his own cause before them, and had thrown them into confusion and division: **the Lord stood by him**; the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in a vision to him, and stood very near him, by the side of him, by the bed or couch on which he might lie: and said, **be of good cheer, Paul**; though he was now a prisoner in the castle; and though the high priest, and the Sadducees especially, were enraged against him; and though a plot was about to be formed to take away his life; for this exhortation seems to be designed to prepare him for further trials, and to prevent discouragement under them; which shows the great care of Christ over him, his concern for him, and love to him: the word Paul is not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; but the calling him by name seems to express not only singular knowledge of him, but greater familiarity and affection; it is in the Arabic version, and in other Greek copies: **for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem**; not only in the Christian church, and before the Apostle James, and the elders, but in the Jewish sanhedrim, and before the high priest, Scribes,

Pharisees, and Sadducees, where and before whom, though not particularly recorded, he bore a testimony for Jesus, that he was the true Messiah; and that though he died, he was risen from the dead, and was at the right hand of God, and was the only Saviour of men: **so must thou bear witness also at Rome**; as he had bore a public and faithful witness to the person, office, and grace of Christ at Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea; so it was necessary, by the decree of God, and for the glory of Christ, that he should bear a like testimony at Rome, the chief city in the whole world; hereby signifying, that he should not die at Jerusalem, and giving him a hint that he should appeal to Caesar, which he afterwards did.

ACTS 23:12. And when it was day, As soon as it was light, very early in the morning: **certain of the Jews banded together**; these very likely were of the sect of the Sadducees, who had been exceedingly irritated and provoked by what Paul had said the day before in the council; these therefore gathered together, entered into a conspiracy to take away Paul's life, and trailed in it, as one man: **and bound themselves under a curse**; or "anathematized themselves"; the Hebrew word, which answers to "anathema", is sometimes used for an oath, "Cherem" or "anathema" is "an oath", a vow made to be punished with an anathema if not kept; so these men swore to it, bound themselves with an oath, or wished they might be an anathema, accursed of God, and cut off from his people; they imprecated the most dreadful evils upon themselves: **saying, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul**: it was a common form of a vow or oath with the Jews, "that I will not eat"; sometimes they only vowed abstinence from particular things, and then others were lawful; as for instance, if one vowed that he would not eat boiled meat, he might eat roast, or that he would not eat

flesh, he might eat broth, or that he would abstain from milk, then he might drink whey, ; but this oath and vow here were, that they would neither eat nor drink anything, till they had destroyed Paul: these were a set of zealots, who in imitation of Phinehas, and pretending the glory of God, took upon them to take away the lives of men, without any, judicial procedure, or the authority of the civil magistrate; of whom, (see Gill on “Matthew 10:4”) it may be asked, what became of this vow? or how did they get clear of it, since they did not accomplish the fact? to which it may be answered, that it was a pretty easy thing to be freed from oaths and vows, among the Jews, whose doctors had a power to absolve men from them; and in such cases as this, and such a vow as this, might be loosed upon more accounts than one, as on account of keeping another law, the observing the sabbath and other festivals, when men were obliged to eat and drink: and thus it is said, “if a man swears that he will not drink wine, or that he will not eat flesh, for so many days, then they say to him, if thou hadst known at the time of the oath, that the sabbath or a feast day were within these days, in which thou art obliged to eat flesh and drink wine, as it is said, (Isaiah 58:13) “and call the sabbath a delight”; wouldst thou have sworn at all? if he says no, they loose his oath:” and likewise it might be loosed on account of life, which a man is bound to preserve: for so they likewise say, “if a man vows that he will not eat anything, woe be to him if he eats, and woe be to him if he does not eat; if he eats he breaks his vow, if he does not eat he sins against his own soul, or life; what must he do? let him go to the wise men, , “and they will loose his vow for him”, as it is written, (Proverbs 12:18) but the tongue of the wise is health;” and no doubt but these men very easily got their vow loosed, since it was made on such a design.

ACTS 23:13. *And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.*] Who met together, formed this resolution, entered into this scheme, and bound themselves with this oath; the word rendered “conspiracy”, signifies an agreement by oath; such a number of them banded together, that they might have strength sufficient to take Paul out of the hands of the soldiers, as he was conducted by them from the castle to the temple.

ACTS 23:14. *And they came to the chief priests, and elders,* Who were members of the sanhedrim, to acquaint them with their designs: *and said, we have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul:* these chief priests and elders, had they acted according to the character they bore, on such an information, would have taken up those men, and punished them, at least would have dissuaded them from so vile an action; but they knew the men to whom they applied, and very likely they were all of them of the sect of the Sadducees, whom Paul had so much offended the day before; and therefore were pleased with what they had done, approved of their scheme, and readily fell in with the following proposal.

ACTS 23:15. *Now therefore ye with the council,* The whole sanhedrim; their sense is, that they would have the sanhedrim convened by the chief priests and elders, and being met together, then to *signify to the chief captain;* or let him know that they were assembled together, upon the affair of Paul, and that they here desirous he might be brought before them: *that he bring him down unto you tomorrow;* from the castle of Antonia to the place where the sanhedrim met; the word “tomorrow” is not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; and then it should seem that they desired him to be brought downforthwith, or otherwise they must propose to fast all that day, and so long on the morrow, till Paul was

brought down; but that the common reading is right, appears from the chief captain's sending away Paul at the third hour of the night following, to prevent their designs on the morrow, (Acts 23:23). The pretence formed for his being brought down is, *as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him*; what he had done, which had occasioned this uproar, what it was he was charged with, and whether he was guilty or not: *and we, or ever he come near*: where the sanhedrim sat; *are ready to kill him*; lying in wait in some private place between the castle and the temple, from whence they intended to rush out at once upon him, and murder him; far enough both from the temple and the council, that both the one might not be defiled, though they did not greatly stick at that in those times, and that the other might not be charged with having any hand in his death.

ACTS 23:16. *And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait*, Paul might have a sister living in Jerusalem; or this her son might be there on account of his studies; he might be a pupil to one of the doctors, by which means he might come at this secret, that such a number of men were in ambush, in order to take away his uncle's life: wherefore having got intelligence of it, *he went and entered into the castle*; the Alexandrian copy reads, "the synagogue"; but Paul was not there, but in the castle of Antonia; the Ethiopic version renders it, "the prison"; though it is plain that he was not very closely confined, it was easy to have access to him; the reason might be, not only because he was a Roman, but because he was uncondemned, nor was any charge proved against him: *and told Paul*; what he had heard, that such a number of men had entered into a conspiracy to take away his life, and lay in wait for him; and this was an instance both of duty and affection to his uncle, and worthy of imitation, whether it

proceeded from natural relation, or from religion, or both.

ACTS 23:17. *Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him*, For under this chief captain there must have been ten of them, if the company of which he was captain consisted of a thousand men, as his title chief captain or chiliarch imports; for a centurion was over an hundred men, as his title signifies; perhaps this might be the same, as in (Acts 22:25,26) *and said, bring this young man to the chief captain*: which was a very prudential step, not to let the centurion into the secret, but to desire him to introduce the young man to the chief captain; for had he trusted the centurion with it, he might not have acquainted his officer with it, but have informed the liars in wait of it: now though the apostle was assured by Christ that he should not die at Jerusalem, but should bear witness of him at Rome, and though he did not distrust the truth of Christ's words, but most firmly believed them; yet he thought it his duty to make use of the means, which providence had put in his way, for his preservation and safety; the Ethiopic version reads, "bring this young man by night to the chief captain"; that so he might not be seen, and observed to have carried any intelligence to him: *for he hath a certain thing to tell him*; which was of some moment and importance, and proper for him to know.

ACTS 23:18. *So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain*, Immediately, without any more to do, without curiously inquiring into the thing, or examining the young man about it; which showed him to be a man of a good disposition, and ready to do a kind office, even to a prisoner: *and said, Paul the prisoner called me to him*; either vocally or by some gesture, beckoned him to him: *and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee*; in which may be observed the apostle's manner

of address to the centurion, on this occasion; it was by way of entreaty; he asked it as a favour of him, to introduce his nephew to the chief captain; and the honour and modesty of the centurion, he did not seek by any methods to get the secret out, either of Paul or the young man; but readily undertakes the affair, honourably performs it, acquaints the captain with the circumstances of it, tells him the young man had something to say to him, he could not tell what, and then departs.

ACTS 23:19. *Then the chief captain took him by the hand,* Some have thought that the reason of this was, that he expected that the young man had brought him a present in his hand, from Paul; but this is to represent him as a sordid mercenary man, which ought not to be said, without sufficient proof; rather this should be considered as an instance of civility and humanity, and what showed him to be a man of breeding and good manners; and might be done partly out of respect to Paul, and partly to encourage the young man to use freedom in the account he was about to give him: ***and went with him aside privately;*** concluding by his coming from Paul, and perceiving by the account of the centurion, that he had a secret to communicate to him; wherefore it was acting a wise and prudent part to take him into a private room, and hear what he had to say: ***and asked him, what is that thou hast to tell me?*** thereby giving the young man an opportunity, and encouraging him to relate the secret to him.

ACTS 23:20. *And he said, the Jews have agreed to desire thee,* By the Jews are meant, the Jewish sanhedrim, for the young man had not only intelligence of the conspiracy, and lying in wait of the forty men or more; but also of the agreement which the sanhedrim at the motion of these men were come into, to make the following request to the chief captain; which seems to confirm the above conjecture, that this young man might be a

student under the president of the council, or one of the doctors, whereby he came at the knowledge of these things: ***that thou wouldst bring down Paul tomorrow into the council,*** etc. (See Gill on “Acts 23:15”).

ACTS 23:21. *But do not thou yield unto them,* Or be persuaded by them, to bring Paul down from the castle to the sanhedrim; this must not be imputed to the young man’s pride and vanity, in taking upon him to give advice to the chief captain; but to his great affection for his uncle, which moved him to entreat, rather than to direct him, for which he gives a good reason: ***for there lie in wait for him more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him;*** (see Gill on “Acts 23:12”). (see Gill on “Acts 23:13”). ***and now are they ready;*** to execute their designs, being met together, and lying in ambush in some place, between the castle and the place where the sanhedrim met: ***looking for a promise from thee;*** that when the sanhedrim should apply to him, he would promise them to bring Paul down according to their request; and for the making and performing of this promise, these men were waiting.

ACTS 23:22. *So the chief captain then let the young man depart,* After he had had the account from him, and was master of the whole affair: ***and charged him, see thou tell no man that thou hast showed these things to me;*** which was prudently said; it was a right and wise thing to conceal this matter, that the men might go on with their designs, and an opportunity be taken to convey Paul away, before the time came fixed by them to execute them; for otherwise, should it have been known that their plot was discovered, they would have entered upon new measures.

ACTS 23:23. *And he called to him two centurions,* Who had each of them an hundred soldiers under them: ***saying, make***

ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea; which was formerly called Strato's tower, a sea port town, where Felix the Roman governor now was; it was six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles from Jerusalem: these two hundred soldiers were foot soldiers, as appears by their being distinguished from horsemen in the next clause, and were just the number that the two centurions had the command of; the making of them ready, was their seeing to it, that they were properly clothed, and accoutred with arms and ammunition, and with sufficient provision for their journey: *and horsemen threescore and ten*; the Ethiopic version reads, "a hundred"; but without support from any copy: "and spearmen two hundred"; who carried spears in their right hand; the word used signifies such who receive, lay hold on, or hold anything in their right hand: some think it designs such who were employed in the militia, to lay hold on guilty persons, and hold them; the Alexandrian copy reads, , "those that cast with the right hand"; and so reads the Syriac version, to which the Arabic agrees, which renders it "darters"; such as carried darts in their hands, and did not shoot out of a bow, but cast darts with their hands: now these being got ready, were ordered to march, *at the third hour of the night*; at nine o'clock at night, that they might go out unobserved, and before the petition from the sanhedrim was presented to him.

ACTS 23:24. *And provide them beasts*, Horses or mules; the Syriac version reads in the singular number, "a beast": and one being sufficient for Paul, here may be a change of number; the Arabic and Ethiopic versions leave out these words, but the following clause makes them necessary: *that they may set Paul on*; on the beast, or on one of the beasts provided; if more than one were provided, they might be for his companions, to go along with him: *and bring him safe unto*

Felix the governor; this man, of a servant, was made a freed man by Claudius Caesar, and by him appointed in the room of Cumanus governor of Judea; he was the brother of Pallas, who had the chief management of affairs under the emperor; and this Felix married three persons successively, that were of royal families; hence Suetonius calls him the husband of three queens; one of these was Drusilla, afterwards mentioned in (Acts 24:24) who was sister to King Agrippa. Tacitus calls him Antonius Felix which name he had from Antonia the mother of Claudius', whose servant he was; Josephus calls him Claudius Felix, which name he took from the Emperor Claudius, who from so low and mean condition raised him to such honour and dignity; his name Felix signifies "happy": according to Tacitus, when Felix was first sent into Judea, the government was divided between him and Cumanus; Felix had Samaria, and Cumanus the other part, which was called the nation of the Galilaeans; but Josephus takes no notice of any such division, he says, that Cumanus was banished; and after that Felix was sent by Caesar, governor of Judea, of Galilee, Samaria, and Peraea; and so he seems to be governor of the whole country at this time; he was now at Caesarea, and it is plain that Judea was under his government, since Paul, a prisoner at Jerusalem, is sent down unto him; and in this his government he continued during the life of Claudius; and when Nero became emperor, and added four cities to the kingdom of Agrippa, he constituted Felix governor of the rest of Judea; which character he bore till he thought fit to remove him, and put Festus in his room, of whom mention is made hereafter: after these words the following ones are added, in the Vulgate Latin version, "for he was afraid lest perhaps the Jews should take him by force and kill him, and afterwards he should bear the reproach, as if he had took

money”; but they are not to be found in any Greek copies.

ACTS 23:25. *And he wrote a letter after this manner.*] The chief captain wrote a letter to Felix the governor, the form and sum of which were as follow; this letter he sent by one of the centurions to him.

ACTS 23:26. *Claudius Lysias, unto the most excellent Governor Felix,* This is the inscription of the letter, and by it we learn the name of the chief captain, so often spoken of in this and the two preceding chapters, which was Claudius Lysias; the first of these names is a Roman one, and which he might take from the Emperor Claudius, for he was not a Roman born; and the latter seems to be a Greek name, and was his proper name, and, he himself very likely was a Greek, since he purchased his freedom with money; one of this name was Archon of Athens ; and another is reckoned by Cicero , among the famous orators of Greece, and is often cited by Harpocratian ; one of Antiochus’s noblemen, and who was of the blood royal, and acted as a general against the Jews, was of this name. “So he left Lysias, a nobleman, and one of the blood royal, to oversee the affairs of the king from the river Euphrates unto the borders of Egypt.” (1 Maccabees 3:32) The chief captain calls Felix the governor *the most excellent*, which was a title of honour that belonged to him as a governor; the same is given to Theophilus, (Luke 1:3) sendeth greeting; or wishes all health and prosperity.

ACTS 23:27. *This man was taken by the Jews,* Meaning Paul, who was presented by the centurions to the governor, and was in his presence when the letter was opened and read, and who was taken by the Jews in the temple, and from thence dragged out and beaten by them: *and should have been killed of them;* and would have been killed, had it not been for the chief captain; he was very near being killed by them, he was nigh unto death: *then*

came I with an army and rescued him; he came with the Roman band, which he had the command of, perhaps a thousand soldiers; for such a number he should have under him by his title; with these he came upon the Jews on a sudden, as they were beating Paul, and took him out of their hands, and saved him: *having understood that he was a Roman;* but this he did not know till afterwards, after he had bound him with two chains, and after he had ordered him to be bound with thongs, and examined by scourging; all which he covers and hides from the governor, and suggests that it was his great concern for the Roman name, and for a Roman citizen, which put him upon this enterprise.

ACTS 23:28. *And when I would have known the cause,* Or crime, he was guilty of: *wherefore they accused him:* which they charged him with, and for which they beat him almost to death: *I brought him forth into their council;* their court of judicature, the great sanhedrim.

ACTS 23:29. *Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law,* As about the resurrection of the dead, and a future state, which some in the council denied, and some asserted, which with this heathen man were idle and foolish questions; or about the defiling of the temple, and speaking contemptibly of the law of Moses, the people of the Jews, and the holy place, which was the cry of the populace against him, and were things the captain knew little of: *but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death, or of bonds:* by the laws of the Romans; and yet he himself had bound him with two chains at the first taking of him, and afterwards ordered him to be bound with thongs, and scourged, of which he says nothing, being convinced of his error, and willing to hide it; however, he bears a full testimony to the innocence of the apostle.

ACTS 23:30. *And when it was told me,* As it was by Paul's sister's son, *how that the Jews laid wait for the man;* had formed a conspiracy to take away his life, and laid a scheme in order to it, and at least intended, if they were not actually in ambush, to seize him as he should be brought from the castle to the sanhedrim: *I sent straightway to thee;* the prisoner Paul, under a guard of soldiers; this he did directly, as soon as ever he heard of the design of the Jews; and he sent him to Felix, as being governor, to whom the judgment of this affair properly belonged, and who was best qualified for it, at least in the chiefcaptain's account; and who doubtless consulted his own honour and safety, lest he should incur blame and disgrace, should a Roman have been slain through any neglect or want of care in him: *and gave commandment to his accusers also, to say before thee what they had against him;* it is reasonable to conclude, that he said nothing of this to them, though he might have determined he would, till after Paul was sent away; otherwise the affair would have been discovered, which he desired might be concealed: *farewell;* which is the conclusion of the epistle, and is a wish of health and happiness.

ACTS 23:31. *Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul,* Out of the castle, and put him upon a beast, as the chief captain had ordered the centurions, and they had directed the soldiers to do: *and brought him by night to Antipatris:* they set out from Jerusalem at the third hour, or about nine o'clock at night, and travelled all night, and by break of day came to Antipatris; a city which lay in the road from Jerusalem to Caesarea: it was built by Herod the great, in the best soil of his kingdom, enriched with rivers and woods; and was so called by him, in memory of his father Antipater; it before went by the name of Chabar Zaba, or Capharsaba; the Jewish writers place it in the utmost borders of the

land of Judea; hence that phrase so often used by them, from Gebath to Antipatris, in like sense as from Dan to Beersheba, these two places being the utmost borders of the land; here it was that Simon the just, with some of the principal inhabitants of Jerusalem, met Alexander the great, who travelled all night, as these soldiers with Paul did, and came to Antipatris at sun rising. It was forty two miles from Jerusalem. It was in the road from Judea to Galilee, as appears from the following canon of the Jews, concerning divorces; "if a husband says to his wife, lo, this is thy divorce, if I do not come thirty days hence, and he goes from Judea to Galilee, and comes to Antipatris and returns, it becomes void:" the way from Jerusalem to Caesarea lay through Nicopolis, Lydda, Antipatris, and Betthar; from Jerusalem to Nicopolis, according to the old Jerusalem Itinerary, were twenty two miles; from thence to Lydda, ten miles; and from Lydda to Antipatris ten more (which make forty two miles, as before observed); and from Antipatris to Betthar ten miles, and from thence to Caesarea, sixteen more: so that when the apostle was at Antipatris, he had twenty six miles more to go to Caesarea; and hence it appears, that the length of the journey from Jerusalem to Caesarea was sixty eight miles; though Josephus makes the distance to be six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles: and that the way from the one to the other lay through the places before mentioned, may be illustrated from what the same writer says, of some persons travelling from Caesarea to Jerusalem; so he relates, concerning Quadratus governor of Syria, that from Tyre he came to Caesarea, from Caesarea to Lydda, and from Lydda to Jerusalem; and of Cestius the Roman general, he says, that from Caesarea he came to Antipatris, and from Antipatris to Lydda, and from Lydda to Jerusalem, which clearly seems to be the same road the apostle went; and so Jerom, in the account he gives of the journey

of Paula, says, that she came to Caesarea, where she saw the house of Cornelius, the cottage of Philip, and the beds of the four virgin prophetesses; and from thence to Antipatris, a little town half pulled down, which Herod called after his father's name; and from thence to Lydda, now Diospolis, famous for the resurrection of Dorcas, and the healing of Aeneas. Antipatris is, by Ptolomy, placed at the west of Jordan, and is mentioned along with Gaza, Lydda, and Emmaus; some take it to be the same with Capharsalama, mentioned in: "Nicanor also, when he saw that his counsel was discovered, went out to fight against Judas beside Capharsalama:" (1 Maccabees 7:31) and others say, it is the same that is since called Assur or Arsuf, a town on the sea coast, which is not likely, since it does not appear that Antipatris was a maritime city. The apostle could not now stay to preach the Gospel in this place, nor do we elsewhere read or hear of a Gospel church state in it, until the "fifth" century; when it appears there was a church here, and Polychronius was bishop of it, who was present at the council of Chalcedon, held in the year 451; and in the "eighth" century there were many Christians dwelt here, for in the year 744 there were many of them killed by the Arabians.

ACTS 23:32. *On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him,* That is, the two hundred soldiers, and the two hundred spearmen, who were all on foot, left the seventy horsemen to conduct Paul to Caesarea; for being come to Antipatris, all danger from the Jews was over:***and returned to the castle;*** the castle Antonia in Jerusalem, from whence they set out.

ACTS 23:33. *Who, when they came to Caesarea,* The seventy horsemen: ***and delivered the epistle to the governor;*** to Felix, governor of Judea, who was now at Caesarea; namely, the letter which Claudius Lysias, the chief captain, sent to him; the form and

contents of which are before given: ***these presented Paul also before him;*** concerning whom, and whose affairs, the letter was.

ACTS 23:34. *And when the governor, had read the letter,* Which he doubtless opened and read as soon as he had received it, not knowing what important business might be contained in it, or of what dangerous consequence a neglect of reading it might be; this showed care and diligence in him: ***he asked of what province he was;*** since he perceived by the letter he was a Roman, and that he might know whether he was under his jurisdiction, and whether the hearing of his case belonged to him; and it should seem that it rather belonged to the governor of Syria; but that the crimes he was charged with were committed in Judea, particularly that of profaning the temple. ***And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;*** which was a Roman province, in which Tarsus was, where Paul was born free; (Acts 21:39, 22:3).

ACTS 23:35. *I will hear thee, said he,* The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "we will hear", which is a grand courtly way of speaking: ***when thine accusers are come;*** which Lysias, in his letter, informed him that he had ordered them to come; which shows the governor to have some sense of justice and integrity, being desirous to hear both sides before he judged of the affair, though there was so much said in the chief captain's letter in favour of Paul's innocence, and against his enemies. ***And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall;*** or palace: this was a place built by Herod the great at Caesarea, of whose magnificent buildings here Josephus gives a large account. For besides the famous haven or port which he made here, he adorned the place with splendid palaces, he built a theatre, and an amphitheatre, and a "forum", which was either a market place, or a court of judicature; and if the latter, perhaps the same that is here meant, in a part of which, or in a

place adjoining to it, the apostle was put. Here he was kept by a guard of soldiers, but not in close confinement; he had much liberty, and his friends and acquaintance had leave to come to him; (see Acts 24:23). We read of , which some interpret “the chamber of the judges of Caesarea”; or the place where they sat in judgment, and may be the same that is here meant; though others interpret it a prison; and so it seems was this judgment hall of Herod’s.

Sanhedrin

The rise of this great council of the Hebrews took place in the time of Greek supremacy, though there has been some attempt to trace its origins to the council of seventy elders named by Moses. The first mention of the Sanhedrin is in the time of Antiochus the Great (223-187 B.C.) It was evidently an aristocratic body, with the high priest acting as president. When the Roman order was introduced by Pompey, the high priest still retained the position of governor of the nation, making it likely that the Sanhedrin was carrying on.

Herod the Great began his reign by ordering the whole of the Sanhedrin put to death, appointing his own council of elders in their place. Under the Roman pro-curators, the internal government of the country was in the hands of the Sanhedrin to a much greater extent. And in the time of Christ and the apostles, the Sanhedrin is frequently mentioned as being the supreme Jewish court of justice. The Sanhedrin was abolished after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

The Organization of the Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin was composed of 71 priests who served for life and who were selected from the following:

- The acting high priest presided over the council; all former high priests were members.
- Male members of the high priestly families
- Scribes, legal assessors, bureaucrats
- Pharisees and Sadducees
- Elders - tribal and family heads

Criminal judges were members of the Sanhedrin, and twenty-three of them sat in judgment, with two clerks to record votes for acquittal and conviction. In capital cases, argument for acquittal was heard first, then those in favor of conviction. Anyone who had spoken in favor of the accused could not then speak against him; but one who had spoken against the accused could change his testimony in his favor. Sentence for acquittal could be pronounced immediately; but sentence for conviction was reserved for the next day.

In voting, each member stood, beginning with the youngest. A simple majority was sufficient for acquittal; but a majority of at least two votes was required for conviction. More members of the Sanhedrin would be brought in two at a time to vote whenever there was a majority of only one for conviction. When all 71 had voted, the person was acquitted if there was still a majority of only one.

Jesus appeared before the Sanhedrin on a charge of blasphemy (Matt. 26:65; John 19:7). Peter and John were charged with being false prophets and deceivers of the people (Acts 4 and 5), Stephen with being a blasphemer (Acts 6:13 ff), and Paul with being guilty of transgressing the Mosaic law (Acts 23).

The Sanhedrin had the right of ordering arrests by its own officers; of finally disposing of such cases as did not involve capital punishment. A sentence of death had to be ratified by the Roman procurator.

Jewish Religious System

The religious life of the Jews in the time of Christ was controlled by the members of the Jewish priesthood, composed of the high priest and his family, the members of the supreme council, the Sanhedrin, and the local priest, or rabbi, who presided over the synagogue. Among the religious leaders there were many factions; and these factions had grave and fundamental differences in doctrine and practice.

This paper contains a description of each of the main elements of the Jewish religious hierarchy, namely: the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Sanhedrin. There is also a discussion of

the doctrinal differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees; and there is a description of the Jewish Talmud, which comprised the written and oral scriptures and traditions of the Jews.

THE SCRIBES

In New Testament times the Scribes formed a small and exclusive class, holding absolute spiritual supremacy over the people. Everywhere you would see the Scribe as the mouthpiece and representative of the people; he pushes to the front, the crowd respectfully giving way and eagerly listening to his statements as those of a recognized authority. The great respect paid to Scribes is reflected in the title of honor "my master", in Hebrew **rabbi**. From this respectful address the title Rabbi was formed, probably beginning as such in the time of Christ. In John 3, Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee, addressed Christ as "rabbi", a form of respect for a recognized teacher.

In New Testament Greek the words **nomikos**, "learned in the law; jurist" (Matt. 22:35; Luke 7:30; 10:25; 11:45,52; 14:3), and **nomodidaskalos**, "teacher of the law" (Luke 5:17; Acts 5:34) are used.

The period of the Sopherim, Scribes, began officially with the return of the Jews from captivity. Ezra was both a priest and a scribe; and the law read by Ezra (Neh. 8-10) was the Pentateuch essentially as we have it now. And from that time the Pentateuch was acknowledged by Jews as the binding rule of life. The office of scribe had its origin somewhat earlier than this official beginning, however.

The scribe of the Greek state (**grammateus**) was more than a mere writer; he was also the keeper and registrar of public documents (acc. to Thucydides, iv. 118; vii, 10; and also in Acts 19:35). Three men are mentioned as holding the office of scribe under Kings David and Solomon (2 Sam. 8:17; 20:25; 1 Kings 4:3). These were the king's secretaries, writing his letters, drawing up orders and decrees, and managing royal finances. At a later period, the word "scribe" is connected with the numbering of the military forces of the country (Jer. 52:25; Isa. 33:18).

King Hezekiah brought together a group of men whose work it was to transcribe old records and to put in writing what had been handed down orally (Prov. 25:1). So the new significance of the title "Scribe" probably dates to this time, no longer referring only to an officer of the king's court, but to a class of students and interpreters of the law, boasting in their wisdom (Jer. 8:8).

The Law had been handed to Moses by God at Mt. Sinai, and the writings of Moses, the Pentateuch, was the chief body of Scripture for the Jews after the exile. Later, however, the inspired writings of the prophets and historians were added to the authoritative canon of scripture. At a still later period, a third collection of writings was begun which over many generations became for the Jews just as authoritative as the inspired writings. This body of work was the writings of the Scribes of decisions and interpretations of the Pentateuch, prophetic, and historical writings.

As the law became more complicated and comprehensive, more scientific study and professional interpretation was required. The many details and applications to everyday life involved patient study. In the time of Ezra, and for several generations thereafter, this study and teaching was the job of the priesthood. But the higher the law rose in the estimation of the people, the more its study and exposition become an independent activity. Thus the scholar class, the Scribes, was formed.

The priests had somewhat abdicated their God-given position as teachers of the congregation of Israel because, under Greek influence, the higher strata of priests, applied themselves to the study of heathen cultures, and more or less neglected the law. The Scribes appeared as the zealous and single-minded guardians of the law, and became the real teachers of the people, over whose lives they had control.

The history of the Scribes is divided into five periods, indicated by the names given to Scribes during successive times:

- The Sopherim (see above): lasting from the return from Babylon and ending with the death of Simon the Just, from about 458 to 300 B.C.

- The Tanaim (“repeaters”, or “teachers” of the law): in New Testament times.
- The Amoraim (Hebrew: “the expounders”) "wise men" and "doctors" of the law, who alone constituted the authorized recorders and expositors of the Halachah (220A.D. to the completion of the Babylonian Talmud, About 500 A.D.) See below regarding the Halachah.
- The Saboraim (from Hebrew:” to think or to discern”): teachers of the law after the conclusion of the Talmud, 500 to 657 A.D., who determined the law from a careful examination of all the considerations urged by the Amoraim in their controversies on divine, legal, and ritual questions contained in the Talmud.
- The Gaonim, the last doctors of the law in the rabbinic succession, from 657 A.D. to 1034.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE SCRIBES

In the time of Christ, the rabbis required from their students absolute respect, even greater than the honor due to parents. "If a man's father and teacher have lost anything, the teacher's loss should have the precedence, i.e., he must first be assisted in recovering it; the burden of a teacher is to be born in preference to that of a father, a teacher must be ransomed from captivity before one's own father." The rabbis in general everywhere claimed the first rank (Matt. 23:6,7; Mark 12:38; Luke 11:43; 20:46).

The main task of the Scribes was the theoretical development of the law. They developed the general precepts of the law; and where the written law made no direct provision, they created an application, either by establishing a precedent that was followed thereafter, or by inference from previous legal decisions. In this way, up to the time of Christ, Jewish law became an extensive and complicated science. Very great study was needed to gain even a general acquaintance with it.

The Scribes assumed that it was their special task to improve what was already binding by developing more and more subtle sophistication in reasoning. To develop a system of law binding on everyone, it was necessary to come as near to a consensus as possible. So the whole process of systematizing the law was carried on by oral discussion, the acknowledged authorities

instructing the students and debating legal questions with each other, for centuries.

This made it necessary that the chief among the Scribes live in certain central places, and until 70 A.D. Jerusalem was the main headquarters of the Scribes, after that at Jamnia and Tiberias. Gradually, the theories of the Scribes became valid law; the rules developed by them were recognized in practice as soon as the various schools were in agreement. The Scribes were, in fact, legislators, especially after the destruction of the Temple, for then there was no civil court of justice under the Sanhedrin (see below).

The second task of the scribes was teaching the law. Every Israelite was supposed to have a thorough knowledge of the law. As a consequence, the famous chief rabbis gathered about them large numbers of students. Because parts of the oral law were never committed to writing, constant repetition was required to make it stick in the minds of the learners. Questions were directed to the students for the decision, while pupils also questioned the teachers. Because all knowledge of the law was strictly traditional, the student had only two duties - to keep everything in memory, and to teach only what had been given to him.

There were special locations for this instruction, "houses of teaching" (synagogues), and the Temple itself among the colonnades or other spaces in the outer court (Matt. 21:23; 26:55; Mark 14:49; Luke 2:46; 20:37; John 18:20).

The third duty of Scribes was to pass sentence in the court of justice. Obviously, men so well versed in the law would be asked to be judges. We know that scribes were members of the Sanhedrin (see below). After the fall of the Jewish state in 70 A.D., scribes were both legislators and judges.

THE WRITINGS OF THE SCRIBES

In the development and writing of the law there evolved two main bodies of written work, the Halachah and the Haggadah.

Edersheim, in *Life and Times of Jesus*, Vol. I, p.98, states that the Halachah contained "either simply the laws laid down in Scripture, or else derived from or traced to it by some ingenious and

artificial method of exegesis; or added to it, by way of amplification and for safety's sake; or, finally, legalized customs. They provided for every possible and impossible case, entered into every detail of private, family, and public life; and with iron logic, unbending rigor, and most minute analysis pursued and dominated man, turn whither he might, laying on him a yoke which was truly unbearable. The return which it offered was the pleasure and distinction of knowledge, the acquisition of righteousness, and the final attainment of rewards."

Scheurer, in *Jewish People*, Div. II, Vol I, pp. 339 ff, states that the Haggadah "is an amplification and remodeling of what was originally given, according to the views and necessities of later times. It is true that here also the given text forms the point of departure, and that a similar treatment to that employed in passages from the law takes place in the first instance. The history is worked up by combining the different statements in the text with each other, completing one by another, setting the chronology, etc. Or the religious and ethical parts are manipulated by formulating dogmatic propositions from isolated prophetic utterances, by bringing these into relation to each other, and thus obtaining a kind of dogmatic system. "

THE PHARISEES

The word "Pharisee" is from Greek by way of the Aramaic word for "separated". The name Separatist is thought by some to be derived from that separation which took place in the time of Zerubbabel, and then again in the time of Ezra, when Israel separated from the heathen dwelling in the land and from their uncleanness (Ezra 6:21; 9:1; 10:11; Neh. 9:2; 10:29).

However, the name probably has a stricter meaning, coming to the Pharisees as a result of their extremely strict view of the idea of pollution, not only from the uncleanness of the heathen, but also from that pollution with which they thought the majority of Israelites were likewise affected. They might have been called "separatists" by some in praise, and by others in blame. It is unlikely that they took the name for themselves because they called themselves the haberim, those who "associate", this term referring to one who

associates himself with the law in order to observe it strictly in opposition to the encroachments of the heathen world culture.

The priests and scribes (see above) formed the inner structure of Jewish religion after the captivity. These two groups became more and more separated until, in the Maccabean period, two parties, sharply at odds with each other, were developed from them, the Pharisees from the Scribes, and the Sadducees from the ranks of the priests (see below). The characteristic feature of the Pharisees arose from the legal tendency, while that of the Sadducees came from the social position.

During the Greek period, the chief priests and rulers of the people took an increasingly more negative attitude toward the law; so the Pharisees united themselves more tightly into a group that kept to a strict observance of the law. In the time of John Hyrcanus, they were in hostile opposition to the Maccabees, because the Maccabees chief objective was no longer the carrying out the law but maintaining and extending political and economic power.

The stress which the Pharisees laid on the religion of the people won the majority of the nation to their side, and Queen Alexandra, to keep civil peace, gave the power into the Pharisees' hands. It was consistency with principle which gave them spiritual supremacy and kept people on their side. Although the Sadducees were at the head of the Sanhedrin, the whole conduct of internal affairs was in Pharisee hands; they completely ruled the public life of the nation, and this continued essentially throughout the time of Christ and the apostles.

From Scheurer, *Jewish People*, Div. II, Vol. II, p. 28, "They had the bulk of the nation as their ally, and women especially were in their control. They had the greatest influence upon the congregations, so that all acts of public worship, prayers, and sacrifices were performed according to their injunctions. Their sway over the masses was so absolute that they could obtain a hearing even when they said anything against the king or the high priest; consequently, they were the most capable of counteracting the designs of the kings. Hence, too, the Sadducees, in their official acts,

adhered to the demands of the Pharisees, because otherwise the multitude would not have tolerated them."

TEACHINGS OF THE PHARISEES

Concerning immortality, the Pharisees taught "that every soul is imperishable, but that only those of the righteous pass into another body, while those of the wicked are punished with eternal torment" (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, II, 8, 14). "They hold the belief that an immortal strength belongs to souls and that there are beneath the earth punishments and rewards for those who in life devoted themselves to virtue or vileness, and that eternal imprisonment is appointed for the latter, but the possibility of returning to life for the former" (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, XVIII, 1,3).

The Pharisees also taught the existence of angels and spirits, while the Sadducees denied them (Acts 23:8), and this also represented the general standpoint of later Judaism.

Concerning divine providence and human freedom, the Pharisees "make everything depend on fate and on God, and teach that the doing of good is indeed chiefly the affair of man, but that fate also cooperates in every transaction" (Josephus, Wars, II, 8, 14).

"They assert that everything is accomplished by faith. They do not, however, deprive the human will of spontaneity, it having pleased God that there should be a mixture, and that to the will of fate should be added the human will with its virtue or baseness" (Josephus, Antiquities, XVIII, 1,3).

Concerning politics, the standpoint of the Pharisees was looking at civil affairs from a religious point of view. They could be content with any government as long as religion was not hindered; but they became, in a sense, a political party when they rose to oppose a government that interfered with the practice of the law.

PRACTICES OF THE PHARISEES

All Israelites avoided, as far as possible, all physical contact with the heathen, in order to avoid being defiled. The Pharisee, in addition, avoided physical contact with any non-Pharisees, even among other Jews. The fact that the

Pharisees found fault with Jesus' contact with publicans and sinners agreed exactly with this point of view (Mark 2:14-17; Matt. 9:9-13; Luke 5:27-32).

In the Talmud, seven kinds of Pharisees are described (from Delitzsch, *Jesus und Hillel*):

- The Shechemite Pharisee, so-called because he keeps the law for what he can profit from it, as Shechem submitted to circumcision to obtain Dinah (Gen. 34:19).
- The Tumbling Pharisee, who, to appear humble, hangs down his head and is in danger of falling down.
- The Bleeding Pharisee, who is often injured because he walks around with his eyes closed so as not to see a woman.
- The Mortar Pharisee, who wears a cap shaped like a mortar to cover his eyes so as not to see impurities or indecencies.
- The "What-Am-I-Yet-To-Do" Pharisee, who, because he doesn't know much about the law, says "Tell me what my duty is now, and I will do it."
- The Pharisee From Fear, who keeps the law because he is afraid of future judgment.
- The Pharisee From Love, who obeys the Lord because he loves him with all his heart.

A COMPARISON OF PHARISAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

It was Jesus Christ's great effort to make clear the principles of the Laws of the Old Testament dispensation and to carry them to their legitimate conclusions, to "fulfill the law", not to confirm the law as many have thought. The Pharisees taught such a slavish adherence to the letter of the law that its true character, which pointed to something higher than its letter, was completely overwhelmed; and its moral precepts, which were intended to elevate men, were instead made to contract and debase the ideas of morality.

While it was the aim of Jesus to call men to the law of God itself as the supreme guide of life, the Pharisees multiplied minute precepts and distinctions to such an extent that the whole life of Israel was hemmed in and burdened on every side by instructions so numerous and trifling that the

law was almost lost sight of (Matt. 12:1–13; 23:23; Mark 3:1–6; 7:2–4; Luke 13:10–17; 18:12).

It was Christ's leading aim to teach men that true piety lay not in outward forms, but in substance; not in small details, but in great rules of life. The whole system of Pharisaic piety led to the exact opposite. Under its influence "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith" (Matt. 23:23; Luke 11:42) were undervalued and neglected. Religion in the heart was ignored (Luke 11:38–41). The most sacred obligations were evaded (Mark 7:11). Vain and trifling questions took the place of serious inquiry into the great principles of duty (Matt. 19:3). Even the most solemn truths were handled as mere matters of curious speculation or means to entrap an adversary (Matt. 22:35; Luke 17:20).

Christ taught compassion for the degraded and friendless; liberality to the poor; holiness of heart; universal love; a mind open to the truth. The Pharisees shunned lower classes and pushed from themselves such as the Savior would have gathered into his arms (Luke 7:39; 15:2; 18:11; John 7:47,48). They made a prey of the friendless (Matt. 23:13). With all their pretence, they were really avaricious, sensual, and dissolute (Matt. 23:25; John 8:7). They devoted their energies to making converts to themselves (Matt. 23:15).

THE SADDUCEES

The Hebrew word by which the Sadducees were called is **tsaddiqim**, "the righteous ones". If we only look at the points of differences between them and the Pharisees, we get a distorted picture of the Sadducees; but each party had its strong characteristics, that of the Pharisees being a rigid realism, while the Sadducees were aristocratic. According to Josephus, "they gain only the well-to-do; they have not the people on their side." The high priestly families, for example, were almost all Sadducees.

BELIEFS OF THE SADDUCEES

The Sadducees accepted only the written law and prophets as binding. They rejected the entire traditional interpretations and the further developments of the Scribes. "The Sadducees say only what is written is to be thought of as legal...what has come down from tradition of the

fathers need not be observed." (Josephus, Antiquities, XIII, 10,6).

In legal matters the Sadducees were very rigid in judging offenders, while the Pharisees were much milder. "They saw in the tradition of the elders an excess of legal strictness which they refused to have imposed upon them, while the advanced religious views were, on the one hand, superfluous to their worldly-mindedness, and on the other, inadmissible by their higher culture and enlightenment" (Scheurer, Jewish People, Div. II, Vol. I, p. 41). A more thorough discussion of legal matters among the Sadducees can be found in Unger's Bible Dictionary, pp. 952,953.

In ritual, the only important differences of Sadducees from Pharisees was in respect to laws of cleanness. They derided the Pharisees for the oddities and inconsistencies which they had brought into their laws of purity. They did not reject the idea of Levitical uncleanness, however, and they demanded a higher degree of cleanness for the priest who made the red heifer offering than did the Pharisees.

DOCTRINES OF THE SADDUCEES

The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection of the body or in retribution or reward in a future life. They did not feel bound by any doctrine which did not proceed from Moses, and there was no assertion by Moses in the Pentateuch of any resurrection from the dead. The Sadducees would have given much more weight to Moses' writings than to any of the prophets or historians, even though they regarded those writings canonical.

The Sadducees denied that there were angels or spirits, independent spiritual beings besides God. Even the soul, they said, was only refined matter and would perish with the body.

It is not surprising that the Sadducees laid great stress on human free will. With a strong insistence on personal liberty there came a decrease of the religious motive. They insisted that man was at his own disposal, and they rejected the idea that a divine cooperation takes place in human actions. The Pharisees accentuated the divine to the verge of fatalism, and insisted on absolute preordination of every event in its smallest detail. The Sadducees opposed notions like these.

THE SANHEDRIN

The rise of this great council of the Hebrews took place in the time of Greek supremacy, though there has been some attempt to trace its origins to the council of seventy elders named by Moses. The first mention of the Sanhedrin is in the time of Antiochus the Great (223-187 B.C.) It was evidently an aristocratic body, with the high priest acting as president. When the Roman order was introduced by Pompey, the high priest still retained the position of governor of the nation, making it likely that the Sanhedrin was carrying on.

Herod the Great began his reign by ordering the whole of the Sanhedrin put to death, appointing his own council of elders in their place. Under the Roman procurators, the internal government of the country was in the hands of the Sanhedrin to a much greater extent. And in the time of Christ and the apostles, the Sanhedrin is frequently mentioned as being the supreme Jewish court of justice. The Sanhedrin was abolished after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE SANHEDRIN

The Sanhedrin was composed of 71 priests who served for life and who were selected from the following:

- The acting high priest presided over the council; all former high priests were members.
- Male members of the high priestly families
- Scribes, legal assessors, bureaucrats
- Pharisees and Sadducees
- Elders - tribal and family heads

Criminal judges were members of the Sanhedrin, and twenty-three of them sat in judgment, with two clerks to record votes for acquittal and conviction. In capital cases, argument for acquittal was heard first, then those in favor of conviction. Anyone who had spoken in favor of the accused could not then speak against him; but one who had spoken against the accused could change his testimony in his favor. Sentence for acquittal could be pronounced immediately; but sentence for conviction was reserved for the next day.

In voting, each member stood, beginning with the youngest. A simple majority was sufficient for acquittal; but a majority of at least two votes was required for conviction. More members of the Sanhedrin would be brought in two at a time to vote whenever there was a majority of only one for conviction. When all 71 had voted, the person was acquitted if there was still a majority of only one.

Jesus appeared before the Sanhedrin on a charge of blasphemy (Matt. 26:65; John 19:7). Peter and John were charged with being false prophets and deceivers of the people (Acts 4 and 5), Stephen with being a blasphemer (Acts 6:13 ff), and Paul with being guilty of transgressing the Mosaic law (Acts 23).

The Sanhedrin had the right of ordering arrests by its own officers; of finally disposing of such cases as did not involve capital punishment. A sentence of death had to be ratified by the Roman procurator.

THE TALMUD

Extracts from "The Essential Talmud," by Adin Steinsaltz.

The Bible is the chief cornerstone of the Jewish religion, and the Talmud is the central pillar. It is the most important book in Jewish culture and is the backbone of creativity and national life, shaping spiritual content and serving as a guide to conduct.

In a formal definition, the Talmud is "the summary of oral law that evolved after centuries of scholarly effort by sages who lived in Palestine and Babylonia until the beginning of the Middle Ages." The Talmud has two main components: the Mishnah, a book of law (**halakhah**), written in Hebrew; and the commentary on the Mishnah, known as the Gemara, a summary of the discussions and explanations of the Mishnah, written in Aramaic.

The Talmud is the repository of thousands of years of Jewish wisdom, and the oral law, "which is as ancient and significant as the written law (the Torah)," finds expression therein. It is a collection of law, legend, and philosophy, a blend of logic and shrewd pragmatism, of history and science, anecdotes and humor. Is it a collection of

paradoxes; its framework is orderly and logical, every word and term is subjected to meticulous editing, completed centuries after the actual work of composition came to an end; yet it is still based on **free association**, a harnessing together of diverse ideas, reminiscent of the modern stream-of-consciousness novel.

Here is a comment from Rabbi Steinsaltz's book, Chapter 15, **The Sabbath**: "In the most general sense, the numerous Sabbath laws are an expanding network of minute details deriving from several basic concepts, which eventually create an almost Gothic structure made up of thousands upon thousands of tiny and meticulously fashioned details clustered around the original form.

Sects and Parties of the Jews

from "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul" by W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, Chapter 2.

The Sadducees and Pharisees are frequently mentioned in the New Testament, and we are there informed of the tenets of these two prevailing parties. The belief in a future state may be said to have been an open question among the Jews, when our Lord appeared and "brought life and immortality to light." We find the **Sadducees** established in the highest office of the priesthood, and possessed of the greatest powers in the Sanhedrin; and yet they did not believe in any future state, nor in any spiritual existence independent of the body. The Sadducees said that there was "no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit." (Acts 23:8; Matt. 22:23,24) They do not appear to have held doctrines which are commonly called licentious or immoral. On the contrary, they adhered strictly to the moral tenets of the Law, as opposed to its more formal technicalities. They did not overload the Sacred books with traditions, or encumber the duties of life with a multitude of minute observances. They were the disciples of reason without enthusiasm – they made few proselytes – their numbers were not great, and they were confined principally to the richer members of their nation.

The **Pharisees** were the enthusiasts of later Judaism. They "compassed sea and land to make one proselyte." Their power and influence with the mass of the people was immense. The loss of the

national independence of the Jews – the gradual extinction of their political life, directly by the Romans, and indirectly by the family of Herod, caused their feelings to really round the Law and their religion as the only center of unity which now remained to them.

Those, therefore, who gave their energies to the interpretation and exposition of the Law, not curtailing any of the doctrines which were virtually contained in it and which had been revealed with more or less clearness, but rather accumulating articles of faith, and multiplying the requirements of devotion – who themselves practiced a severe and ostentatious religion, being liberal in almsgiving, fasting frequently, making long prayers, and carrying casuistic distinctions into the smallest details of conduct – who consecrated, moreover, their best zeal and exertions to the spread of the fame of Judaism, and to the increase of the nation's power in the only way which was not practicable – could not fail to command the reverence of great numbers of the people.

It was no longer possible to fortify Jerusalem against the heathen; but the Law could be fortified like an impregnable city. The place of the brave is on the walls and in the front of the battle; and the hopes of the nation rested on those who defended the sacred outworks, and made successful inroads on the territories of the Gentiles.

Such were the Pharisees. And now, before proceeding to other features of Judaism and their relation to the church, we can hardly help glancing at St. Paul. He was "a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee," (Acts 23:6), and he was educated by Gamaliel, (Acts 22:3), "a Pharisee". (Acts 5:34) Both his father and his teacher belonged to this sect. And on three distinct occasions he tells us that he himself was a member of it.

Once when at his trial, before a mixed assembly of Pharisees and Sadducees, the words just quoted were spoken, and his connection with the Pharisees asserted with such effect that the feelings of this popular party were immediately enlisted on his side. "And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the multitude was divided ... And there arose a great cry; and the Scribes that

were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man." (Acts 23)

The second time was when, on a calmer occasion, he was pleading before Agrippa, and said to the king in the presence of Festus: "The Jews knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straightest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee." (Acts 26) And once more, when writing from Rome to the Philippians, he gives force to his argument against the Judaizers, by telling them that if any other man thought he had whereof he might trust in the flesh, he himself had more: "circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee." (Phil. 3:4). And not only was he himself a Pharisee, but his father also. He was "a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee." This short sentence sums up nearly all we know of St. Paul's parents. If we think of his earliest life, we are to conceive of him as born in a Pharisaic family, and as brought up from his infancy in the "straightest sect of the Jews' religion."

His childhood was nurtured in the strictest belief. The stories of the Old Testament, the angelic appearances, the prophetic visions, to him were literally true. He needed no Sadducean explanation. The world of spirits was a reality to him. The resurrection of the dead was an article of his faith. And to exhort him to the practices of religion, he had before him the example of his father, praying and walking with broad phylacteries, scrupulous and exact in his legal observances. He had, moreover, as it seems, the memory and tradition of ancestral piety; for he tells us in one of his latest letters (2 Tim. 1:3) that he served God "from his forefathers."

All influences combined to make him "more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers," (Gal. 1:14) and "touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless." (Phil. 3:6) Everything tended to prepare him to be an eminent member of that theological party, to which so many of the Jews were looking for the preservation of their national life, and the extension of their national creed.

But in this mention of the Pharisees and Sadducees we are far from exhausting the subject of Jewish

divisions, and far less from enumerating all those phases of opinion which must have had some connection with the growth of rising Christianity and all those elements which may have contributed to form the character of the apostle of the heathen. There was a sect in Judea which is not mentioned in the Scriptures but which must have acquired considerable influence in the time of the apostles, as may be inferred from the space devoted to it by Josephus and Philo. These were the **Essenes**, who retired from theological and political distractions of Jerusalem and the larger towns, and founded peaceful communities in the desert or in villages, where their life was spent in contemplation and in the practices of ascetic piety. It has been suggested that John the Baptist was one of them. There is no proof that this was the case, but we need not doubt that they did represent religious cravings which Christianity satisfied.

Another party was that of the **Zealots**, who were as politically fanatical as the Essenes were religiously contemplative, and whose zeal was kindled with the burning desire to throw off the Roman yoke from the neck of Israel. Very different from them were the Herodians, twice mentioned in the Gospels (Mark 3:6; Matt 22:16; see Mark 12:13), who held that the hopes of Judaism rested on the Herods, and who almost looked to that family for the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Messiah. And if we were simply enumerating the divisions and describing the sects of the Jews, it would be necessary to mention the **Therapeutae**, a widely spread community in Egypt, who lived even in great seclusion that the Essenes in Judea. The **Samaritans** also would require our attention. But we must turn from these sects and parties to a wider division, which arose from the dispersion of the Hebrew people, to which some space has been devoted in the preceding chapter.

HELLENISTS AND ARAMEANS

We have seen that early colonies of the Jews were settled in Babylonia and Mesopotamia. Their connection with their brethren in Judea was continually maintained; and they were bound to them by the link of a common language. The Jews of Palestine and Syria, with those who lived on the Tigris and Euphrates, interpreted the Scriptures

through the Targums or Chaldean paraphrases, and spoke kindred dialects of the language of Aram; and hence they were called Aramean Jews.

We have also had occasion to notice that other dispersion of the nation through those countries where Greek was spoken. Their settlements began with Alexander's conquests and were continued under the successors of those who partitioned his empire. Alexandria was their capital. They use the Septuagint translation of the Bible, and they were commonly called **Hellenists**, or Jews of the Grecian speech.

The mere difference of language would account in some degree for the mutual dislike with which we know that these two sections of the Jewish race regarded one another. We were all aware how closely the use of a hereditary dialect is bound up with the warmest feelings of the heart. And in this case the Aramean language was the sacred tongue of Palestine. It is true that the tradition of the language of the Jews had been broken, as the continuity of their political life had been rudely interrupted. The Hebrew of the time of Christ was not the oldest Hebrew of the Israelites; but it was a kindred dialect, and old enough to command a reverent affections. Though not the language of Moses and David, it was that of Ezra and Nehemiah. And it is not unnatural that the **Arameans** should have revolted from the speech of the Greek idolaters and the tyrant Antiochus, a speech which they associated moreover with innovating doctrines and dangerous speculations.

For the division went deeper than a mere superficial diversity of speech. It was not only a division, like the modern one of German and Spanish Jews, where those who hold substantially the same doctrines have accidentally been led to speak different languages. But there was diversity of religious views and opinions. This is not the place for examining that system of mystic interpretation called the Kabbala, and for determining how far its origin might be due to Alexandria or to Babylon. It is enough to say, generally, that in the Aramean theology, Oriental elements prevailed rather than Greek, and that the subject of Babylonian influences has more

connection with the life of St. Peter than that of St. Paul.

The Hellenists, on the other hand, or Jews who spoke Greek, who lived in Greek countries, and were influenced by Greek civilization, are associated in the closest manner with the Apostle of the Gentiles. They are more than once mentioned in the Acts, where our English translation names them "Grecians" to distinguish them from the heather or proselyte "Greeks." Alexandria was the metropolis of their theology. Philo was their great representative. He was an old man when St. Paul was in his maturity; his writings were probably known to the apostles; and they have descended with the inspired Epistles to our own day. The work of the learned Hellenists may be briefly described as this – to accommodate Jewish doctrines to the mind of the Greeks, and to make the Greek language express the mind of the Jews. The Hebrew principles were "disengaged as much as possible from local and national conditions, and presented in a form adapted to the Hellenic world."

All this was hateful to the Arameans. The men of the East rose up against those of the West. The Greek learning was not more repugnant to the Roman Cato that it was to the strict Hebrews. They had a saying, "Cursed by he who teaches his son the learning of the Greeks." We could imagine them using the words of the prophet Joel (3:6), "The children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them from their border," and we cannot be surprised that even in the deep peace and charity of the Church's earliest days, this inveterate division reappeared, and that "when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews." (Acts 6:1)

It would be an interesting subject of inquiry to ascertain in what proportions these two parties were distributed in the different countries where the Jews were dispersed, in what places they can into the strongest collision, and how far they were fused and united together. In the city of Alexandria, the emporium of Greek commerce from the time of its foundation, where, since the earliest Ptolemies, literature, philosophy, and

criticism had never ceased to excite the utmost intellectual activity, where the Septuagint translation of the Scripture had been made, and where a Jewish temple and ceremonial worship had been established in rivalry to that in Jerusalem, there is no doubt that the Hellenistic element largely prevailed. But although (strictly speaking) the –Alexandrian Jews were nearly all Hellenites, it does not follow that they were all Hellenizers. In other words, although their speech and the Scriptures were Greek, the theological views of many among them undoubtedly remained Hebrew.

There must have been many who were attached to the traditions of Palestine, and who looked suspiciously on their more speculative brethren; and we have no difficulty in recognizing the picture presented in a pleasing German fiction, which describes the debates and struggles of the two tendencies in this city, to be very correct. In Palestine itself, we have every reason to believe that the native population was entirely Aramean, though there was no lack of Hellenistic synagogues (see Acts 6:9) in Jerusalem, which at the seasons of the festivals would be crowded with foreign pilgrims, and become the scene of animated discussions. Syria was connected by the link of language with Palestine and Babylonia; but Antioch, its metropolis, commercially and politically, resembled Alexandria; and it is probable that, when Barnabas and Saul were establishing the great Christian community in that city, the majority of the Jews were “Grecians” rather than “Hebrews.” In Asia Minor we should at first sight be tempted to imagine that the Grecian tendency would predominate; but when we find that Antiochus brought Babylonian Jews into Lydia and Phrygia, we must not make too confident a conclusion in this direction. We have ground for imagining that many Israelitish families in the remote districts (possibly that of Timothy at Lystra) may have cherished the forms of the traditional faith of the eastern Jews, and lived uninfluenced by Hellenistic novelties.

The residents in maritime and commercial towns would not be strangers to the western developments of religious doctrines; and when Apollos came from Alexandria to Ephesus (Acts

18:24), he would find himself in a theological atmosphere not very different from that of his native city. Tarsus in Cilicia will naturally be included under the same class of cities of the West, by those who remember Strabo’s assertion that in literature and philosophy its fame exceeded that of Athens and Alexandria. At the same time, we cannot be sure that the very celebrity of its heathen schools might not induce the families of Jewish residents to retire all the more strictly into a religious Hebrew seclusion.

That such a seclusion of their family from Gentile influences was maintained by the parents of St. Paul is highly probable. We have no means of knowing how long they themselves, or their ancestors, had been Jews of the dispersion. A tradition is mentioned by Jerome that they came originally from Giscala, a town in Galilee, when it was stormed by the Romans. The story involves an anachronism and contradicts the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 22:3). Yet it need not be entirely disregarded, especially when we find St. Paul speaking of himself as “a Hebrew of the Hebrews” and when we remember that the word “Hebrew” is used for an Aramaic Jew, as opposed to a “Grecian” or “Hellenist.” Nor is it unlikely in itself that before they settled in Tarsus, the family had belonged to the Eastern dispersion, or to the Jews of Palestine. But, however this may be, St. Paul himself must be called a Hellenist; because the language of his infancy was that idiom of the Grecian Jews in which all his letters were written. Though, in conformity with the strong feeling of the Jews of all times, he might learn his earliest sentences from the Scripture in Hebrew, yet he was familiar with the Septuagint translation at an early age.

It is observed that when he quotes from the Old Testament, his quotations are from that version/ and that, not only when he cites its very words, but when (as if often the case) he quotes it from memory. Considering the accurate knowledge of the original Hebrew which he must have acquired under Gamaliel at Jerusalem, it has been inferred that this can only arise from his having been thoroughly imbued at an earlier period with the Hellenistic scriptures. The readiness, too, with which he expressed himself in Greek, even before

such an audience as that upon the Areopagus at Athens, shows a command of the language which a Jew would not, in all probability, have attained, had not Greek been the familiar speech of his childhood.

But still the vernacular Hebrew of Palestine would not have been a foreign tongue to the infant Saul; on the contrary, he may have heard it spoken almost as often as the Greek. For no doubt his parents, proud of their Jewish origin, and living comparatively near to Palestine, would retain the power of conversing with their friends from there in the ancient speech.. Mercantile connections from the Syrian coast would be frequently arriving, whose discourse would be in Aramaic; and in all probability there were kinsfolk still settled in Judea, as we afterwards find the nephew of St. Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 23:16).

We may compare the situation of such a family (so far as concerns heir language) to that of the French Huguenots who settles in London after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. These French families, though they soon learned to use the English as the medium of the common intercourse and the language of their household, yet, for several generations, spoke French with equal familiarity and greater affection.

Moreover, it may be considered as certain that the family of St. Paul, though Hellenistic in speech, were no Hellenizers in theology; they were not at all inclined to adopt Greek habits or Greek opinions. The manner in which St. Paul speaks of himself, his father, and his ancestors, implies the most uncontaminated hereditary Judaism. "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I." (2 Cor. 11:22) "A Pharisee" and "the son of a Pharisee." "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews."
