

singing : "Thy mercy my GOD" #11

Welcome friends to another broadcast of "Morsels for Zion's Poor"

Gamaliel was a man raised up by GOD and given earthly wisdom and the ability to be a teacher of men in matters pertaining to the Laws of the Jews. His most famous pupil was one Saul of Tarsus. Under his instruction, Paul gained a strong fundamental understanding of the law and Jewish traditions, which served him well in later times as the LORD was pleased to remove the scales from his eyes that he might more clearly see (in contrast) the damning nature of the law and the freedom, which is given to the sons of GOD in CHRIST, from that law.

The LORD uses all sorts of men, even those who have no love of HIM or HIS way; to fulfill HIS purpose, giving some, great wisdom and even a measure of understanding, which is useful in the deliverance of those whom HE loves from various dangers and snares which are in their paths. The Jews would have killed Paul numerous times were this not the case. One illustration of this is when Claudius Lysias had Paul taken by cover of night to Antipatris, to protect him from those intent upon his demise. In this we rejoice as we see the controlling hand of GOD in all of men's affairs and we are made to reflect upon Paul's words, "*If God be for us, who can be against us?*"

Gamaliel calmed the more radical elements of the Pharisees by telling them that the apostles were no different than other rabble-rousers and seditious men who had arisen in times past to oppose the status quo, only to be proven no threat to them at all. He was sure that such men as these (i.e.; the apostles) would be proven to be the same and in the off chance that they were sent by GOD, then they could not overturn it anyway. In Gamaliel's words we see proven, the fact, that even some who are not "believers" are given some knowledge of the absolute nature of GOD's decrees, and therefore such is no sign of true faith and desire to worship HIM. Religions of all sorts recognize certain facts about the LORD which may be true, yet such knowledge is not "the knowledge of CHRIST" without which they shall surely perish, regardless of their doctrine or sincerity in their own religion.

In his words of warning he made mention of a man named Theudas, who was evidently the ringleader of a "sect" who rose up only to be overthrown and slain. We are not certain of the entire purpose for which the LORD raised Theudas up but it is obvious that he was fitted to be a ringleader of malcontents. Nothing about Theudas is an example of one who is following in the steps of CHRIST but many who claim to be the followers of CHRIST, nonetheless, emulate the characteristics of Theudas.

Paul warned the Ephesian elders of the fact that in the near future in which they lived, the very base nature of man would be demonstrated and some of them would start to divide themselves up into various sects and form spheres of influence by promoting themselves rather than the gospel of CHRIST. To do so in any fashion is to "speak perverse things."

The spirit of Theudas is seen in Diotrephes, of whom John said "*who loveth to have the preeminence.*" Gamaliel described Theudas as "*boasting himself to be somebody*". This very trait is completely opposite to the characteristics of any who would be the follower of CHRIST. If CHRIST is ALL and in all, then there is no room for any man to raise himself up or seek a place of higher esteem among the brethren. There is no place for the sons of GOD to glory except in HIM.

The LORD has given various gifts and offices to the church for her benefit. Men have corrupted these offices and substituted "learning" for "gifts" or used "gifts" to gain preeminence among the saints. Some disregard Paul's exhortation to be examples to the flock as they gladly receive titles and expect deferential treatment, salaries and other perks be given to them because they have the particular gifts of teaching or preaching. These gifts are given to equip the saints to perform the work of the ministry, rather than the ministry being that which is defined by preaching and limited to those whom the LORD has given these particular gifts. The spirit of Theudas is seen when men desire recognition or status among the saints. To think of ourselves as we "ought to think" is to confess that we are unworthy sinners, blessed just to eat of the crumbs which fall from the MASTER's table

"Thy free grace alone," #11 **If you would like a free transcript of this broadcast email us at forthepoor@windstream.net ,**