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The Church—Acts 5

Ananias and Sapphira Lied; Jewish Leaders Persecute the Apostles

I. Additional Scriptures/Notes...

- 5:1...** BUT—“But ... This word clearly connects the event of Barnabas' generous action which had just been narrated, with what ensues here. As Boles noted, "The two illustrations here were intended to be brought in contrast, as the conjunction `but' introduces the sentence. The parallel with the conquest of Canaan in the Old Testament is evident in this event, this story being to the book of Acts what the story of Achan is to the book of Joshua. In both, an act of deceit interrupts the victorious progress of the people of God (Josh. 7:1ff)” [Coffman].
- 5:2...** A NOTE ON THE ENORMITY OF THIS SIN—“The apostles of Christ, after their baptism in the Holy Spirit, were inspired men, able to perform miracles and to discern the thoughts of men. They claimed infallibility, as having been guided into all truth by the blessed Spirit in them; and, if such a fraud as that undertaken by Ananias and Sapphira had been successful, it would have discredited the central authority of God's church upon the earth” [Coffman].
- 5:3...** SATAN FILLED THINE HEART—“The two had allowed Satan to fill their hearts with his number one product - the lie. Jesus said of Satan, on another occasion, 'When he speaks a lie he speaks of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it' (Jn 8:44). Peter was not saying that it was Satan's fault, not Ananias' fault that he lied. Rather, he was emphasizing that the guilt and the sin were Ananias' guilt and sin. He had *allowed* Satan thus to tempt him” [Harold Littrell, *A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, p. 67].
- 5:3,4,9...** THREE SYNONYMOUS EXPRESSIONS—(1) “lie to the Holy Ghost”; (2) “not lied unto men, but unto God”; (3) “to tempt the Spirit of the Lord.”
- 5:10...** “We regard her death, like that of her husband, wrought independently of the power lodged in the apostle; and it seems to have been so regarded by the authorities in Jerusalem ... no charge of murder was preferred, as might have been the case if the act had been understood differently” [McGarvey].
- 5:13...** MAGNIFIED THEM—“But the people 'magnified them' (from *Megaluno*, to magnify, exalt, extol). The people were speaking *highly* of the brethren!” [Littrell, p. 74].
- 5:24...** DOUBTED OF THEM WHEREUNTO THIS WOULD GROW—“No doubt they wondered, 'What will develop from this?' Here was another 'notable miracle' they could not explain” [Littrell, p. 78].
- 5:29...** OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN—“The statement is a principle as applicable and true today as when uttered by the apostles. ... There are many things required of us by 'the higher powers' - by our government - that do not conflict with God's requirements. In all such things *God requires* us to obey those people (cf., Rom 13:1-6; 1 Pet 2:13-15)” [Littrell, p. 79].
- 5:41...** Cf., Matthew 10:17, 22.

II. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: **The Period of the Church.**

III. Summary.

This chapter continues giving to us the history of the growth and development of the church. The church as presented to man is PERFECT; however, those who make up the church are imperfect. In Ananias and Sapphira we find the imperfection of the ones who make up the church. Their lie to God and the Holy Spirit was a very serious matter and was dealt with swiftly. The result was a good one—“great fear came upon all the church.” The apostles continued to use signs and wonders to confirm their words and believers were added (v. 14). The High Priest reacted by putting into prison the apostles. They were not swerved from their duty to carry out the Great Commission, but rather rejoiced that they were allowed to suffer for Christ. They made it plain to the authorities that whenever they gave a command that violated God’s will, they intended to obey God. Verse 42 is a tremendous indicator of the spirit of these members of the early church!

IV. Outline.

1. The lie of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).
2. Miracles performed by the Apostles (12-16).
3. Peter and John are opposed by the Sanhedrin for preaching Christ (17-28).
4. Peter and John boldly preach Christ before the Sanhedrin Council (29-32).
5. Gamaliel advises the council to let them alone (33-39).
6. Peter and John are ordered not to preach Christ and are set free (41-42).
7. Peter and John rejoiced in their suffering and continued preaching Christ (41-42).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ This text reveals the amount of money Ananias received for the land he sold.
02. _____ Gamaliel was of the sect of the Pharisees.
03. _____ Luke refers to the Sadducees as a SECT.
04. _____ Gamaliel thought that fighting against Peter and John might be fighting against God.
05. _____ Peter’s message before the Council had no effect upon them.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ Which of the following resulted from the punishment of Ananias: (a) great fear; (b) many became unfaithful; (c) giving stopped.
07. _____ About how much time elapsed between the deaths of Ananias and his wife: (a) 3 days; (b) 3 weeks; (c) 3 hours.
08. _____ What word was used by Luke (KJV) to describe the prison into which Peter and John were sent by the high priest: (a) dirty; (b) common; (c) secure.
09. _____ Who is mentioned as having boasted himself to be somebody: (a) Theudas; (b) Gamaliel; (c) the high priest.
10. _____ Instead of being in prison where the high priest expected Peter and John to be found, they were: (a) in the Temple, teaching; (b) at the market, shopping; (c) in Gethsemane, praying.

Fill in the Blanks

11. A tremendous principle to guide our lives is given in this chapter: “We ought to _____ God rather than _____.”
12. Peter said that Ananias had lied to the _____ and had not lied to men but unto _____.
13. The angel of the Lord told Peter and John to go to the _____ and speak all the _____ of this life.

14. “Lest they should have been _____,” was the fear of the officers sent to arrest Peter and John.
15. “And they departed from the presence of the _____, _____ that they were counted worthy to suffer _____ for His _____.”

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week's handout

ANSWERS to Acts 4... [01—True, Acts 4:34; 02—True, Acts 4:1-2; 03—False, Acts 4:22; 04—True, Acts 4:13; 05—False, Acts 4:17; 06—b, Acts 4:36; 07—c, Acts 4:29; 08—a, Acts 4:23; 09—b, Acts 4:33; 10—b, Acts 4:16; 11—power, name, Acts 4:7; 12—signs, name, holy, child, Acts 4:30; 13—neither, salvation, none, name, Acts 4:12; 14—with, one, accord, Acts 4:24; 15—threaten, Acts 4:17.]

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. We should learn from Ananias & Sapphira...

- 1) That a lie may be ACTED as well as TOLD. Ananias did not say that the money he brought was the whole price of the land, but he allowed the people to form that conclusion.
- 2) That we should beware of giving a PART of what we are able to give under pretense of giving ALL that we are able to give.
- 3) That the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim 6:10).
- 4) That God CAN unmask the hypocrite and ALWAYS knows about the hypocrisy; sin will be detected (cf., Num 32:23; Eccl 12:14; Lk 12:2).
- 5) That God has another side to His character—STERNNESS. Though merciful toward the penitent, He is SEVERE (vv. 5, 10) with the insincere. Thunder and lightning, as well as gentle rain, proceed from His throne (cf., Rev 4:5).
- 6) There was a 6-Fold UNITY with Ananias and Sapphira—
 - 1- In Marriage.
 - 2- In Religion.
 - 3- In Sin.
 - 4- In Death.
 - 5- In the Grave.
 - 6- In Eternity.

[From, Frank L. Cox, *Treatises of Luke*, pp. 158-59].

2. **Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life** (Acts 5:20). This charge is our charge as well. Paul told Timothy to commit the things he had heard from Paul to faithful men who should be able to teach others also (2 Tm 2:2). What a great privilege to tell others about THIS LIFE. The life of a forgiven saint is the life that the entire world needs to hear about from forgiven saints!!!

3. **And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ** (Acts 5:42). Surely the example of the apostles and saints of the first century has gotten away from many Christians of our day. We need to go back to this text and make personal application to our own lives. When all Christians behave as they did here, the church is bound to grow. Yes, there are many out there who have no interest in spiritual matters; but let us search for the ones who do!

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

C E D C V F R T G B N H R E F R A I N Y
 H O N M J U I K L O P I K M J U Y H N B
 G T U R F V B E A T E N C D E W S X N Q
 A O Z N X S W E D C V F R T G B N Y O U
 N V V F S R E D C X S W Q A Z X S C T V
 B E N M K E O P U J N H Y T G B V U S E
 M R J U Y H L B E O F M E N C D E W P X
 C T X S W E D C V F R T G B O N H Y E U
 A H C T O S U F F E R C D E R U T G A J
 N R G B N H D C D E W S X Z A Q G R K E
 N O F V B G O B G T Y H N M J U I H E S
 O W S X C D G V F T O T E A C H N R T U
 T I V F R T T G B O N H Y D E D C V F S
 V T V F R T S G B N N H Y E U J M U Y Q
 A Z X S W E N R F D W O R T H Y V F R T
 B G T Y H T I N M E N H Y N Q A Z X S W
 E D C V H T A Y H S F R E U W S X C D H
 B G T G R F G V B A R E J O I C I N G G
 T Y I H N M A J U E R E W C Q A Z X S W
 T F Y H N B G T R C V F R T G B N D R L

[The highlighted words can be found above. They may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. DRL]

Acts 5:38-42...³⁸ And now I say unto you, **Refrain** from these men, and let them alone: for if this **counsel** or this work **be of men**, it will come to **nought**:³⁹ But if it be of God, ye **cannot overthrow it**; lest haply ye be found even to **fight against God**.⁴⁰ And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and **beaten** them, they commanded that they should **not speak** in the name of **Jesus**, and let them go.⁴¹ And they departed from the presence of the council, **rejoicing** that they were **counted worthy to suffer** shame for his name.⁴² And daily in the temple, and in every house, they **ceased not to teach** and preach Jesus Christ.