Acts of the Apostles – 5

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A. Ananias and Sapphira (*1-11*).
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   2. She Tells the Lie (*7-10*).
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B. Apostolic Power (*12-16*).
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D. Second Trial Before the Jews (*27-40*).
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   3. The Wicked Response (*33*).
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E. The Spiritual Response (*41-42*).
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The Sense and Meaning

A. Ananias plays the hypocrite before the apostles and adds tragically to their glorious acts (Acts 5:1-6).
   1. Luke had just identified Joses, also called Barnabas, for his generous giving (Acts 4:34-37).
   2. Luke now names Ananias and his wife Sapphira as a couple also selling a possession.
   3. However, Barnabas and Ananias are connected by the contrary conjunction “but.”
   4. The possession they sold was a piece of real estate (Acts 5:1,3,8,) – a parcel of land.
   5. Their sin was lying about their giving rather than not giving enough or not all of it.
      a. They conspired together to keep a certain amount of the sale for themselves.
      b. But they brought the remainder as if it was the full amount of the sale price.
         1. They brought it in a public way to the apostles as Barnabas had done.

2. Peter calls the sin a lie rather than not tithing or giving enough (Acts 5:3).
3. The lie is identified in strict connection to keeping part of the price (Acts 5:3).

6. When someone lies, we may say with Peter that Satan gave them the idea (John 8:44).
7. When someone lies to Spirit-filled men like the apostles, they lie to the Holy Ghost.
8. When someone lies in the New Testament temple of God, they are lying to the Spirit.
9. Note the spiritual wisdom of asking rhetorical questions to condemn the guilty (Acts 5:3-4).
10. Peter corrects any possible misunderstanding about giving even after Pentecost (Acts 5:4).
    a. When Ananias owned the land, he was under no specific compulsion to sell it.
    b. When Ananias sold the land, the proceeds from the sale were under his control.
    c. There was no compulsion to give it but his depraved desire to be seen of men.
    d. Hypocrites present false lives to be seen of others, but the lie is against God.
11. Peter's rhetorical condemnation are the last words Ananias hears as God kills him (Acts 5:5).
12. The judgment of God through His ministers is to bring fear upon men (I Tim 5:20).
13. Jerusalem is the first church with a cemetery on the property – for these two liars.

B. Sapphira is a hypocrite before the apostles and adds tragically to their glorious acts (Acts 5:7-10).
    1. Sapphira was kept from knowing Ananias's fate to fairly manifest her own heart (Acts 5:7).
    2. Since they conspired together in their lie (Acts 5:2), Peter confronts her with the amount (Acts 5:8).
    3. Lying in the house and temple of God is to tempt the Spirit of the Lord for judgment.
    4. Peter shows no mercy to the fairer sex and judges her a liar before the Holy Ghost.
    5. They politely buried these two liars together in the church cemetery for God's glory.

C. God's judgment should cause believers and all others to fear (Ps 89:7; I Pet 1:17; Rev 15:4).

D. God blessed the apostles with great power for signs and wonders before the people (Acts 15:2-16).
    1. True signs and wonders are just that – signs of God's power causing amazement.
    2. Peter's apostolic gifts were sufficient to heal even by his shadow passing over them.
    3. The apostles healed both sick and demon possessed – physical and spiritual healing.
    4. How many were healed? Just the easy ones? Just the internal ones? Just the plants?
    5. Consider again that all believers were of one accord (Acts 5:12; 1:14; 2:1,46; 4:24; 15:25).

E. The apostles were separated from other believers by extraordinary grace and power (Acts 5:13-14).
    1. The "rest" described here are the other believers, and the "them" refers to the apostles.
        a. We determine the sense of these words by the context of 12a, 15, and 13b.
        b. No man considered joining them, for God's Presence was obviously with them.
        c. Only the foolish would presume on God's offices (Hebrews 5:4; Num 12,16).
        d. Rather than foolish competition with the apostles, the people glorified them.
        e. God exalted them and their office to promote a universal spread of the gospel.
    2. Resulting conversions increased as God exalted His apostles with grace and power.

F. The Jewish leadership, having warned Peter and John, put the apostles in prison (Acts 5:17-18).
    1. They were filled with indignation for the apostles' popularity and their disobedience.
    2. They treated them as common criminals to show their disdain for them and Jesus.

G. But God sent His angel to rescue them from prison and send them back to preaching (Acts 5:19-20).
    1. When God has purposed a work, there is no hindering it by the mere power of man.
    2. The apostles did not write of years in prison, for they were commissioned to preach.
    3. The Lord opened prisons several times in the apostles' lives (Acts 5:12; 3-11; 16:23-27).

H. The Jews show incredibly hard hearts by missing this miraculous escape from prison (Acts 5:21-24).
    1. Full of the Holy Ghost and eager to obey their Lord, they immediately preach again.
    2. Why doesn't a miraculous escape from prison cause them to reconsider Jesus?
    3. Their only concern was how far this apparent further miracle might grow (Acts 4:16-21).

I. The Jews apprehend the apostles again very discreetly for fear of the people (Acts 5:25-26).
    1. The apostles had escaped, but rather than hiding they were preaching in the temple.
    2. False teachers will compromise in public to preserve themselves and their theology.

J. The Jews bring the apostles to trial for preaching Jesus contrary to their warning (Acts 5:27-28).
    1. They remind them they had clearly ordered no further teaching in Jesus name (Acts 4:18).
    2. They were having success with the doctrine, which always irritates the establishment.
    3. By constant naming of the murderers of Christ, the apostles condemned the Jews.
    4. Why did they lose desire for Christ's blood on them and their children (Matt 27:25).

K. Peter and the other apostles give a glorious answer as to their doctrine and allegiance (Acts 5:29-32).
    1. They ask no rhetorical question this time (Acts 4:19): they state truth boldly and honestly.
    2. There is no authority greater than God's, and we should always obey Him regardless.
    3. Peter again identifies the connection of the fathers to himself and to Christ (Acts 3:13).
    4. He does not mince or soften his condemning words for their crucifixion of Jesus.
    5. He boldly proclaims the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus as a Prince and Saviour.
    6. Jesus Christ, and faith in Him by repentance, was the only hope of the Jews (Acts 2:40).
    7. Jesus Christ, and faith in Him by repentance, was the payment for sins (Acts 2:38).
    8. The apostles boldly declare they are witnesses – they saw and knew these things.
    9. The Holy Ghost testifies of Jesus and is given to believers (John 7:39; Acts 2:38).

L. The Jews further manifest their ungodly and unregenerate hearts with their response (Acts 5:33).
    1. Peter and the other apostles were not effeminate or politically correct to seduce them.
    2. God controls the hearts of all men (Prov 16:1; Isaiah 6:10; John 12:37-41; Rom 9:18).
    3. God must open our heart to receive the truth (Acts 16:14; John 6:44-45; II Tim 2:24-26).
    4. Jesus Christ will cause divisions (Lu 4:22-30; Mat 10:34-36; Jn 7:12,43; 9:16; 10:19).

M. They have a political discussion to select the preferred course of action in the matter (Acts 5:34-39).
    1. Observe that theological enemies will become friends to jointly oppose Jesus Christ.

2. Gamaliel was of the conservative Pharisees, highly educated and well respected by all.
3. Paul will testify to the Jews that this respected Pharisee personally trained him (Acts 22:3).
4. Gamaliel gives two examples of other men whose crusades fell apart after their death.
    a. Theudas may have been one of the false Christ's warned against (Matt 24:24).
    b. Judas may have been the leader of tax rebels punished by Pilate (Luke 13:1).
5. Due to great popularity of the apostles, this man was reasoning with natural wisdom.
6. Gamaliel may have been one of those believers afraid to confess Him (John 12:42-43).
7. Whatever his reasoning, we know our sovereign Lord Jesus was pulling the strings.

N. They sentenced the apostles to a beating and then commanded them again not to preach (Acts 5:40).
1. The general consensus against the apostles was to kill them for their teaching (Acts 5:33).
2. Though they submitted to Gamaliel's recommendation, they still chose to beat them.
3. A Jewish beating was by rods on the back on the ground up to 40 (Deut 25:1-3).
4. Because God had blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, they hated Jesus Christ.

O. The apostles show their spiritual condition by rejoicing in their suffering for Jesus Christ (Acts 5:41).
1. Jesus had foretold such persecution and the godly response (Matt 5:10-12; Luke 6:22).
2. If they hated our Lord, then they would certainly hate His servants (John 15:18-25).
3. The apostles had learned this lesson well (Acts 16:22-25; Phil 3:7-14; I Peter 4:13-16).
4. Consider a prophecy of this persecution to comfort the disciples (Isaiah 66:5).
5. Sufferings should encourage us rather than discourage us (II Tim 3:12; 2:12; Ro 8:17).

P. The apostles show their Divine commission by rejecting the Jews' manmade law (Acts 5:42).
1. Since Jesus is the Blessed and Only Potentate, they obeyed Him rather than the Jews.
2. Their ministry was constant teaching and preaching of one grand theme – Jesus Christ.
3. They preached and taught publicly in the temple and did the same in every house.