

## Acts 5 (NIV)

### **Ananias and Sapphira**

*5:1 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. 2 With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.*

*3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? 4 Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God."*

*5 When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. 6 Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.*

At the end of Chapter 4, Barnabas sold his land and gave it to the apostles. Ananias and Sapphira kept back a part of the money from the sale of the land. There wasn't anything wrong with them keeping a portion of the money. Peter told Ananias that it was ok to give a part but do not lie about it. The issue was they were taking credit for giving all of the money but they were keeping some of it. This was a lie. The ancient Greek word for kept back is *nosphizomai*, which means "to misappropriate." The same word was used Titus 2:10a which means to steal. Ananias and Sapphira stole from God. Ananias' punishment for cheating God was death and God carried out the punishment on Ananias. Their motivation for saying that they were giving all of the money from the sale was to they wanted the image of great generosity or to build their status and their egos. In trying to deceive God and the apostles, Ananias was showing that he lacked faith, he was vain and a hypocrite.

*5:7 About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?"*

*"Yes," she said, "that is the price."*

*9 Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."*

*10 At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11 Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.*

In verses 2 through 6, God judges and deals with Ananias. In these verses God judges and deals with Sapphira.

"It is a good general rule that secret sins should be dealt with secretly, private sins privately, and only public sins publicly." (Stott)

The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira caused great fear in the Church and to all who heard about it. This is the first time the Greek word *ekklēsia* is used in the Book of Acts. This word means church\_

The fear in the church was centered about the power of God and the ugliness of sin. Satan has slipped into our group of believers. The picture of the church here in Acts 5 is different than the one described in Acts 2:42-47. In Acts 2, the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit and there was a sense of unity and sincere hearts. Here there is a sense of fear and Ananias and Sapphira have brought discord to our group of believers.

### *The Apostles Heal Many*

*5:12 The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. 13 No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. 14 Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. 15 As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. 16 Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed.*

In Chapter 3 and 4 (see Acts 3:11), Peter and John were captured by the Sadducees and Temple guard at Solomon's Colonnade. Peter and John were commanded, "not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus." Here they are in the same place performing many signs and wonders among the people. Because of their teaching and healing of the sick, the number of believers was increased.

In John 14:12, Jesus says "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these". It is not known for sure whether these signs and wonders are what Jesus was talking about but no other human will ever do what Jesus did. John 14:12 may mean that as a whole over the last 2000 years we may have done more than Jesus did. Despite the persecution that has occurred so far in Acts, the church has continued to grow. The disciples that we see here are different than the apostles we saw in Matthew 17:14-16. In Acts 5:16 the apostles were casting out demons from "those tormented by impure spirits" and in Matthew 17:14-16, the disciples had weak faith and did not have the power of the Holy Spirit.

### *The Apostles Persecuted*

*5:17 Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. 19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. 20 "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people all about this new life."*

*21 At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.*

*When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin—the full assembly of the elders of Israel—and sent to the jail for the apostles. 22 But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, 23 "We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside." 24 On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were at a loss, wondering what this might lead to.*

The apostles find themselves arrested and put in a public jail. An angel released them and told them to “Go, stand in the temple courts and tell the people all about this new life.” God has added some divine humor here because Sadducees do not believe in angels

“Luke alternates between a picture of the church by itself...and a portrait of the church as it exists in its relationship to the world. The second portrait increasingly deals with persecution.” (Boice)

When the Jewish leaders arrived at the Sanhedrin they called for the apostles to be brought to them. They jailers could not bring them because they were gone. The text tells us that they found “The jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.

God does not always send angels to deliver us from trials. The apostles were delivered this time but in the future:

- Matthew was beheaded with a sword.
- Mark died in Alexandria after being dragged through the streets of the city.
- Luke was hanged on an olive tree in Greece.
- John died a natural death, but they unsuccessfully tried to boil him in oil.
- Peter was crucified upside-down in Rome.
- James was beheaded in Jerusalem.
- James the Less was thrown from a height then beaten with clubs.
- Philip was hanged.
- Bartholomew was whipped and beaten until death.
- Andrew was crucified and preached at the top of his voice to his persecutors until he died.
- Thomas was run through with a spear.
- Jude was killed with the arrows of an executioner.
- Matthias was stoned and then beheaded – as was Barnabas.
- Paul was beheaded in Rome.

Taken from [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Act/Act-5.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Act/Act-5.cfm)

*5:25 Then someone came and said, “Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people.” 26 At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.*

*27 The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. 28 “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.”*

The apostles were found doing the same thing they had been doing the day before. They were NOT taken forcibly back to the Sanhedrin. The Temple guards were afraid of the people. This shows that popularity of Christianity. The Jewish leaders were angry because the apostles taught in the name of Jesus, filled the people with His teaching and they were afraid they would be accused of killing Jesus.

*29 Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings! 30 The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. 31 God exalted*

*him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. 32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."*

*33 When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death.*

The reason that the apostles gave for disobeying the Sanhedrin was that same as they gave in Acts 4:19-20, they were following God's commands and not man's. Again Peter is not out to make friends. He accused them of putting Jesus to death. Peter is making the argument that Jesus was resurrected and is sitting at the right hand of God to a group of men who do not believe in resurrection or life after death. What do you think the reason for Peter making the same argument to the Jewish leaders? Is he trying to make them confess or feel guilty about putting Jesus to death or is Peter trying to get the High Priest to repent and come to the saving grace of Jesus. It is probably the latter. He truly understood that Jesus came for all people. Peter said that they were witnesses but so was the Holy Spirit. If he could have convinced these Sadducees to repent, it would have been a miracle. Their belief system did not include resurrection and spirits. Instead of accepting Jesus as the Messiah, the Jewish leaders wanted to put the apostles to death.

*5:34 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. 35 Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. 36 Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. 37 After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. 38 Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. 39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."*

*40 His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.*

One of the Pharisees name Gamaliel told the Sanhedrin that other men had come and stirred things up but they came to nothing. He told them to "Leave these men alone! Let them go!" They would know if the apostles were from man or God because if it is from man, it will fail but if it is from God, you will not be able to stop it. So they flogged the apostles and let them go. It must not have been an extreme flogging as Jesus received as was depicted in the movie "The Passion of the Christ" because the text handles it in a matter of fact fashion.

*5:41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. 42 Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah*

They left the Sanhedrin rejoicing. They continued to teach in the temple courts and from house to house. They never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.