



# Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



## The Acts of the Apostles

### Chapter 5

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# Introduction

- The Deceit and Death of Ananias and Sapphira.(5:1-11)
- The growing church with many signs and wonders (5:12-16)
- The persecution and the trial of the apostles (5:17-32)
- God's protection and the reaction of the Apostles (5:33-42)

# Lying to the Holy Spirit (5:1-11)



- But: Amid the peace, grace and abounding liberality of the church there was one dark spot
- The sin and fate of Ananias and his wife must be recorded for our edification
- Like many others, of their own accord they sold a possession for the benefit of the church
- They were not compelled to sell it, or when sold to give the money, or to give all
- Their sin was not withholding a part, but lying about it

# Lying to the Holy Spirit (5:1-11)



- They gave from the wrong motives, not for the Lord, but for human praise
- There was hypocrisy and falsehood
- Aware: Hence equally guilty. There was a guilty conspiracy between them
- Brought a certain part: Pretending it was all (a deliberate, public lie)
- Please notice that this sin was initiated by Satan who moved him to lie

# Lying to the Holy Spirit (5:1-11)



- The lie was not to men, but to God
- The apostles were moved by the Holy Spirit and representatives of God
- These verses show clearly that:
  - ❖ the sin was hypocrisy and deception in the name of religion
  - ❖ that the gifts of goods were purely voluntary
- God: proof of the divinity of the Holy Spirit

# Lying to the Holy Spirit (5:1-11)



- There was a visible judgment upon him for his great sin to make the people respect the church
- It was inflicted by the Holy Spirit through Peter, and shows how hypocrisy is regarded by the Lord
- Severe examples occurred at the outset of both Dispensations: Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:1,2) and the sin of Achan (Josh 7:16-25)
- It was common, in the warm climate of Palestine, to bury on the day of death



# Lying to the Holy Spirit (5:1-11)



- His wife came in, full of his spirit
- She Named the amount offered by Ananias
- Instead of the confession that would have saved her, she persisted in the agreed upon
- It had required three hours to carry Ananias out of the city to the tomb and return
- Even if we can deceive men, we cannot deceive God
- People became afraid of sinning lest they invoke the punishment of God. It was a beneficial fear

# Continuing Power in the Church (5:12-16)



- The gift of miracles was not general. Note the unity and oneness in the early church
- Of the rest: Of their enemies. This verse does not include all who were not Christians as shown by what follows in Acts 5:14. At first the converts were mainly men. Acts 4:4. Now there are also women
- Multitudes of converts were constantly made. The fame of the miracles, and of St. Peter's, caused this to be done
- Note the power of the Holy Spirit and the great favor of the apostles with the people





# Imprisoned Apostles Freed (5:17-21)

- The high priest: Annas is, meant (Acts 4:6)
- His sect, the Sadducees were determined to stop the preaching of the resurrection (Acts 4:1)
- In the city jail, among malefactors
- The keepers remain outside of the door (Acts 5:23), but the prisoners are not bound."
- The same night God delivered them
- They were to return to their interrupted service



# Imprisoned Apostles Freed (5:17-21)

- It would give a powerful impulse for them to be at their place and work the next morning
- This life: The eternal life denied by the Sadducees (Mt 22:23)
- Called the council: The Sanhedrin, for the trial of the apostles, supposing them still in prison
- All the senate: Many think that a body of elders and other influential leaders were called to assist in the deliberations

# Apostles on Trial Again (5:22-32)



- All was as usual and the guards before the doors, but the prisoners gone
- The mystery was explained by the word that, as usual, the apostles were preaching in the temple
- The favor of the people for the apostles was so shown that they feared a tumult
- The high priest asked them. As president
- He charges them with three charges:

# Apostles on Trial Again (5:22-32)



- ❖ That they had disregarded the authority of the Sanhedrin;
  - ❖ They had filled Jerusalem with their doctrine;
  - ❖ They would work up the people to indignation against the rulers for condemning Christ
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- Peter's defense asserts
    - ❖ That God must be obeyed rather than earthly rulers;

# Apostles on Trial Again (5:22-32)



- ❖ God raised up Jesus whom they hanged on the cross;
  - ❖ Exalted Him to His right hand; to be a Prince and Savior,
  - ❖ To grant Israel the opportunity to repent, and to obtain forgiveness;
  - ❖ That they were witnesses of these facts, and so was the Holy Spirit
- The Holy Spirit is given only to those who have submitted to the Lord (Acts 2:28; John 7:38,39). He dwells only in the obedient heart



# Gamaliel's Advice (5:33-42)

- Furious: Convulsed with rage, not sorrow
- Took counsel concerning the practicality of putting them to death
- Observe that it is a Pharisee that opposes violence
- Gamaliel was the most distinguished Jewish rabbi of this time
- His fame is preserved in the Talmud
- He was a grandson of Hillel, a still more famous teacher. St. Paul was his disciple (Acts 22:3)





# Gamaliel's Advice (5:33-42)

- Gamaliel's temperate and wise speech advises:
  - ❖ Not to be impulsive
  - ❖ If they were fake their movement would come to nothing like that of others, if let alone
  - ❖ But if of God, it could not be overthrown
  
- Theudas: Some leader, only mentioned here, probably raising a commotion in the disturbances that followed the death of Herod the Great



# Gamaliel's Advice (5:33-42)

- Judas of Galilee: A zealot who had opposed the payment of tribute not many years before, in 8 A.D., and was overthrown and slain
- He is named by Josephus
- He made the Sanhedrin to agree with him
- While rejecting the punishment of death, they decided to scourge them for disobedience
- The scourging was on the bare back, and bloody and cruel



# Gamaliel's Advice (5:33-42)

- This was their first experience of physical torture for Christ, but not the last, and it gave them joy to suffer for one who had suffered for them
- One of the features of the early church was the welcome given to shame, suffering and martyrdom endured for Christ's sake
- Undeterred by suffering and threats, they still preached the cross in the most public place in Jerusalem, as well as from house to house



# Conclusion

- Which two people sold their possession and kept back part of the price?
- Who did St Peter say that Ananias lied to?
- Who filled Ananias' heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?
- What fell upon the people that heard about what happened to Ananias?
- For what reason did the people bring forth their sick into the streets?



# Conclusion

- What sect of people rose up against Peter and the apostles and put them into prison?
- How did the apostles get out of prison?
- Where were the apostles when the high priest heard that they were no longer in prison?
- What advice did Gamaliel give the council regarding the apostles?
- How did the apostles depart from the presence of the council?