

**satan filled
thine
heart to
lie**

Acts 5:1 – 42

~ We considered the effects the sermon Simon Peter presented on the day of Pentecost had upon the men of Israel in the last leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God; and the primary effect I noted was it prompted the religious rulers to arrest the apostles and incarcerate them. Well, that was bad, but this chapter leads from that to the first defections within the early church with the account of Ananias and Sapphira. Then, at the very end of our previous report, we were introduced to Barnabas. He was one of the wonderful saints in the church, and we will read more about him later. Barnabas was a true man of God and one of the first missionaries from the church. He was one of Paul's first partners and they went into the extremely difficult area of the Galatian country together, where God blessed their ministry tremendously.

Barnabas, evidently, gave a substantial monetary contribution to the church. It appears he received quite a bit of publicity for his donation, which gained him a certain amount of notoriety for generosity. The early church was functioning on a high spiritual level at the time in which we are studying, or this would not have happened this way. The defection we examine in this passage of Scripture reveals why this practice of communal living didn't – and couldn't – continue. It is a carnal old nature preventing modern churches from having this high plane of spirituality; because the carnal Christian doesn't study the Bible, friends. They stay away from it while professing to already know it all....

1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

~ These two coveted the attention Barnabas received for giving his gift and they wanted to be acknowledged for their gifts, too. Many people today will only give if and when they are recognized for their donation. Most

refuse to give anything unless they are spotlighted and permitted to speak out publicly in a ceremony honoring them for their benevolence. They almost always give a shamefully and disproportionately small amount in comparison to their resources and capabilities of giving, too. They always seem to have some self-reasoning as to why they shouldn't give more than they do. That just happens to be human nature today; and that was the condition of Ananias and Sapphira....

2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

~ There was nothing inherently wrong with keeping back part of the proceeds from the sale of their property. It was their money, and they had the right to do whatever they wanted to do with it. They could have donated any amount - or none at all. Under grace, we aren't constrained to give preset amounts – or any at all, for that matter. Some think they are supposed to give a tenth, but the early church was giving everything. That's the standard in contemporary tithing. If you haven't given it all - you haven't given anything. The only problem with Ananias and Sapphira was that they lied about it. They proclaimed publicly they had given all when they had not given all. So, this passage doesn't even involve money. It is strictly about lying.

There are songs that speak about placing all we have on the altar; and I cringe when that hymn pops up in a service. Practically everyone in the congregation are made liars of when they hum along to that tune. As we have examined before, let's be super careful about what we vow to the Lord. Let's be even more careful to confess our pride of service to the Lord and repent of it. The actions of Ananias and Sapphira were legitimate because they had no obligation to donate anything. When they lied to the Holy Spirit, they were immediately removed from the congregation. I believe in this case they committed the sin unto death John speaks of in his epistles....

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

~ Many people want to deny the Holy Spirit is God. Well, Simon Peter thought the Holy Spirit was God Himself – in fact, Peter knew this to be true. It is always Satan who plants the seed in the human heart to lie to the Holy Spirit. Anytime we lie, we don't lie to other men – we are only lying to God....

5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

~ There are some who blame Simon Peter for the death of Ananias at this time; but Peter is absolved because he was just as surprised as anyone else when Ananias fell down dead. Peter had no idea what was going to happen. Guess who struck Ananias dead. God struck him dead, friends. If you want to bring charges against God, then contact the local police and tell them you have solved this cold case mystery for them. When we can create a life, then we will have the right to take it away. This just happens to be God's universe in which we live. We are His creatures. We are His subjects. You didn't create your children – God created everyone. You breathe His air, and you are using a body He has so graciously given you. And God can take it all away anytime He sees fit. Questioning God is futile. It won't do a bit of good....

6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

~ Simon Peter had deep spiritual insight and knew what would happen in this second episode. What should be amazing is the fact a lie, such as these two were complicit in living, was not tolerated by the Spirit of God in the early church. The church at the time in which we are studying was intrinsically spiritual and so completely holy that a common liar could not worship amongst them. Today, things are a bit different. If the Spirit of God enforced this standard today, we wouldn't have churches. Spiritual discernment in the church today is almost non-existent. I am amused at those who think they have the "gift" of discerning spirits. I have heard the worst heretics quoted in that connection – to the point it is laughable. They don't have that gift – they only think they do.

Today, if all liars dropped dead after lying to their church, pastor, or directly to God, we would need to have more funerals than we could perform. If that happened, an undertakers windfall industry would set epic records. No, friends - the liar today seems to get away with their lies in impunity. Ultimately, they'll receive the reward of a false prophet; but today, the worst breeds of proud and pious lying hypocrites permeate our so-called Bible churches. Of course, they aren't interested in a sincere and educated Bible study, but they are experts at telling other people THEY need more Bible study! That's the sad state of affairs in the church these days. It's treacherous, my beloved.

Ananias and Sapphira were not living and interactively functioning on the high level of early church standards – although I believe they were still saved. This is the sin unto death John speaks of. The power of the Spirit of

God in the apostles will continue after this event - and we see them exercising the gifts they were given - but the purity of the church will never be the same as it was before lies entered in. They were misrepresentations of the facts motivated by jealousy. Ananias and Sapphira were jealous of Barnabas being commended for his giving - and they were covetous of his receiving recognition. It hurt their pride not to be the center of attention. Before this event, they had almost all things in common; but this ruined that dynamic – and in the next chapter, we'll see what was ushered in on top of all of this. Moreover, it was the APOSTLES who had the gifts – not YOU! They did many signs and wonders amongst the people that, my friends, you do not do – and CANNOT do. By 300 A.D. there were literally millions of people in the Roman Empire who had turned to Christ....

12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.

14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

15 Inasmuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

~ The “multitude” is an ignorant mob who are merely seeking to take advantage of a benefit they might receive in this situation. They aren't seeking Christ. The religiously superstitious crowd still does this today. Simon Peter wasn't running around casting shadows, friends. The mob thought that if they could just get near the man they would receive a blessing from God. Of course, that's perfect nonsense; and may I say this

kindly - God hates a manufactured religion of lies and hypocrisy that drags Him into it. That's exactly what Ananias and Sapphira were attempting to do.

Compare verse sixteen to the modern day so-called "faith healer." The phonies today NEVER heal ALL of them. Jesus healed every one who came to Him in His day - and the apostles healed every one of them in this passage. The sign gifts disappeared with the apostles, and they haven't been re-instituted. When Simon Peter and the rest of the apostles went to the hospital – or when the hospital came to them – it was empty afterward. That's not happening today. That was the power the early church body of Christ possessed. Our contemporary church doesn't have that power.

There was no New Testament leather bound publication at the time we are studying, either. Not one book had been written yet when Simon Peter hit the streets. The apostles were given authority and credibility by the signs and wonders they performed. Today, we have a New Testament, and we can all be on the same page - and speak the same language, too, by the way. There is no need for a tongues movement – it's obsolete. The Lord Jesus Christ said the church was built upon Himself. Period. They just happened to be witnesses of these things; and for that witness, they were thrown in prison a second time....

17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,

18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

19 But an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

21 And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with

him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

~ This is exactly what happened at the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The stone wasn't rolled away to let Jesus out; He was out of the tomb before the stone was rolled away. The stone was rolled away to let the disciples in. They were the ones who needed to be permitted to look in. The apostles were thrown in prison because their message was beginning to be received. The religious rulers had an awful credibility issue. In fact, Jerusalem was now filled with the sound doctrine of the apostles concerning the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; the same Jesus these same religious rulers had murdered. As we read on, the apostles are now transformed into genuine missionaries, and we see them become extremely effective at executing their commission....

24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.

27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,

28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;

35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

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.

~ **Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God** concludes this report with the religious rulers believing the apostles' doctrine and teaching would come to naught. I'm pretty sure myriad people think the same of this so-called safari. Cowards and hypocrites beat the apostles and let them go. If they were truly guilty, then they should have beat them and thrown them in prison. This is the sorry subterfuge today; and reveals the dimmest of awareness by the secular crowd concerning justice and what is, to them, a faint gray line between guilty and not guilty. Naturally the downward progression continues into modern societal justice; and this is the way we treat the criminal today - but we won't get into that subject at this time as I digress, sort of.

Well, MY teaching may well come to an end, but the teaching of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God isn't going to end. What will certainly end is the false teaching around this forum on which I teach and preach – and you can just write that sage advice down. Time will prove if this missionary ministry is of God. We have a long way to go. The apostles were rejoicing that they could suffer for His Names sake – and they ceased not to exclusively teach Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected - so, that's how we are going to close this report. Jesus is either your Savior, or you don't have a Savior, my beloved. Which is it? ~
