



MIDWEEK FILLUP | THE STUDY OF ACTS

ACTS 5

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

1. To examine the sin of Ananias and Sapphira in lying to the Holy Spirit
2. To note the amazing signs and wonders that were done by the apostles, in which all were healed
3. To consider the apostles' response when government seeks to stifle the preaching of the gospel

SUMMARY

In contrast to the remarkable liberality in the church as described in the previous chapter, we are now told of the example of Ananias and Sapphira. A husband and wife who sold a possession, they tried to mislead the apostles that they were giving the entire proceeds. Confronted one at a time by Peter and found guilty of lying against the Holy Spirit, they both fall dead, bringing great fear upon all (1-11).

Highly esteemed among the people, the apostles continue doing many signs and wonders among the people and in the temple (Solomon's Porch). Believers were added to the Lord in increasing numbers, who then brought the sick out into the streets on beds and couches, that perhaps the shadow of Peter might fall on some of them. A multitude from the surrounding cities brought those who were sick and tormented, and everyone was healed (12-16).

Once again the high priest and those of Sadducees are filled with anger. They have the apostles placed into custody. During the night, an angel of the Lord frees them and commands the apostles to continue to teach in the temple. In the morning when the council convenes, the prison is found secure but empty. When told that the apostles are teaching in the temple, officers are sent to bring the apostles peacefully to the council. When the high priest charges them of disobeying the command not to teach in the name of Jesus (cf. 4:18), the apostles reply "We ought to obey God rather than man." They further proclaim that God raised Jesus (whom the council had murdered) and has exalted Him to be Prince and Savior who offers repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. To this the apostles claim to be witnesses, along with the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him (17-32).

Infuriated, the council plots to kill the apostles. However, one in the council, a Pharisee and highly respected teacher of the law by the name of Gamaliel (cf. 22:3), advises the council to leave the apostles alone. Based upon the history of other "movements" that had failed,

Gamaliel reasons that if the apostles were doing the work of men, it would come to naught. But if it was the work of God, the council could do nothing to stop it and would only be fighting against God. The council is willing to heed his advice, though the apostles are beaten and charged not to speak in the name of Jesus before being released. The apostles leave the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame in the name of Jesus, and continue right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ every day in the temple and in every house (33-42).

OUTLINE

1. ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA (1-11)

a. THEIR PLOT TO DECEIVE (1-2)

- i. They sold a possession, but kept back part of the proceeds
- ii. Ananias brings a part to the apostles, Sapphira aware of his intention to deceive

b. THE DEATH OF ANANIAS (3-6)

- i. Peter challenges Ananias
 1. Why has he allowed Satan to enter his heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?
 - a. The land was his to use
 - b. The money was his to control
- ii. He has not lied to men, but to God!
- iii. Ananias drops dead
 1. Upon hearing the words of Peter
 2. Creating great fear on those who heard
 3. Carried out by young men and buried

c. THE DEATH OF SAPPHIRA (7-11)

- i. Peter confronts Sapphira
 1. She enters three hours later, unaware
 2. Did she sell the land for a certain amount? Yes, she answers
 3. Why did she agree with her husband to the test the Spirit?
 4. Those who buried her husband are ready to carry her out
- ii. Sapphira falls dead
 1. Immediately at the feet of Peter
 2. Carried out by young men and buried by her husband
 3. Creating great fear upon all the church and all who heard

2. THE POWER OF THE APOSTLES (12-16)

a. WITH ONE ACCORD IN SOLOMON'S PORCH (12-13)

- i. Many signs and wonders were done by the apostles among the people
- ii. While none dared join them, they were esteemed highly

b. HEALING ALL WHO BROUGHT TO THEM (14-16)

- i. Believers were increasingly added to the Lord
- ii. They brought the sick out on the street
 - 1. Laying them on beds and couches
 - 2. That at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on them
- iii. A multitude gathered from the cities surrounding Jerusalem
 - 1. Bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits
 - 2. They were all healed

3. THE PERSECUTION OF THE APOSTLES (17-42)

a. IMPRISONED, THEN FREED (17-21a)

- i. The apostles put into the common prison
 - 1. By the high priest and those of the sect of the Sadducees
 - 2. For they were filled with indignation
- ii. The apostles freed by an angel of the Lord
 - 1. Who came at night, opened the prison doors, and brought them out
 - 2. Who charged them to return to the temple and speak the words of life
 - 3. Which they did, entering the temple in the early morning

b. BEFORE THE COUNCIL (21b-33)

- i. The council calls for the apostles to be brought from the prison
 - 1. The officers are unable to do so, for the apostles are not there!
 - 2. Despite the secure doors, and guards standing outside
- ii. The council has the apostles brought from the temple
 - 1. The council is informed that the apostles are teaching in the temple
 - 2. The apostles are brought to the council peacefully, for fear of the people
- iii. The high priest challenges the apostles
 - 1. Were they not strictly commanded to teach in Jesus' name?
 - 2. You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, intending to bring this Man's blood on us!
- iv. Peter and the apostles' response
 - 1. We ought to obey God rather than man
 - 2. God has raised Jesus, whom you murdered
 - 3. God has exalted Jesus to His right hand

- a. To be Prince and Savior
 - b. To give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins
- v. We are witnesses to these things
 - 1. And so is the Holy Spirit
 - 2. Whom God has given to those who obey Him
- vi. The council's immediate reaction
 - 1. They were furious
 - 2. They plotted to kill the apostles

c. THE ADVICE OF GAMALIEL (34-39)

- i. Gamaliel stands up in the council
 - 1. A Pharisee, a teacher of the law
 - 2. Held in respect by all the people
 - 3. Who commands the apostles be put outside for awhile
- ii. Gamaliel cautions the council
 - 1. To be careful what they do with the apostles
 - 2. Remember what happened to Theudas
 - a. A man claiming to be someone, joined by 400 men
 - b. He was slain, and those who obeyed him came to nothing
 - 3. Remember what happened to Judas of Galilee in the days of the census
 - a. He drew away many people after him
 - b. He also perished, and those who obeyed him dispersed
 - 4. His advice regarding the apostles: leave them alone
 - a. If their work is of men, it will come to nothing
 - b. If it is of God, it cannot be overthrown and you will be fighting against God

d. THE APOSTLES' RELEASED (40-42)

- i. The council's decision
 - 1. They agree with Gamaliel to let the apostles go
 - 2. But first beat them and command them not to speak in the name of Jesus
- ii. The apostles' reaction
 - 1. They depart rejoicing they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name
 - 2. They continued to teach and preach Jesus daily in the temple and in every house