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December 3, 2023

Acts 5

## Ananias and Sapphira

As we have studied the Good News, we repeatedly concluded that is all about the heart. It is a heart condition when it involves a Believer and Jesus. Either your heart is with God, or your heart is against God, there is no in between. And God knows the hearts of men.

***2 Chronicles 6:3 Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men:) (emphasis mine)***

***Proof of the left being wrong?***

***Ecclesiastes 10:2 A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left.***

Man's heart is wicked.

***Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?***

***Matthew 15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.***

***Matthew 15:18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.  
19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:***

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

The issue is a heart issue, it wasn't that Ananias and Sapphira were required to give 100% to God, they were free to give however much they wanted to give. God really doesn't want our money, He want's our hearts.

***Mark 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?***

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

“The great fear” is reference to having reverence toward God who not only can bring life but can take it as well. God tells us that this type of “fear” has some special place in the life of a Believer.

***Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.***

***Luke 4:12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.***

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

“Wound him up”, means that they wrapped him in some type of burial cloth or covering as they carried this dead person out of the town. There appears to be no service for this man’s death, or even an attempt to notify the next of kin; he died, and he was buried, period. Likely the result of the circumstances of his death, no pomp or circumstance just buried. It also appears that the task of burying him took about three hours.

**7And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.**

An opportunity for truth, not based on fear of what happened to her husband, as she did not know at this moment. It was a plea from Peter for just plain truth. Instead of unity in Truth with God Sapphira clung to a lie with her deceased husband to God.

**9Then 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. 10Then 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. 11And**

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

***Proverbs 4:23<sup>23</sup> Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.***

Until man grasps the very nature of God (TRUTH) in that He knows the hearts of man, INDIVIDUALLY, then there is no fear of God. No respect for who He is and what He has done for mankind.

On the other side of the equation Evil (Satan) can cause men to lie to one another and to God, especially if they don't believe God exists. Which is exactly what Satan wants from unbelievers, is unbelief. Satan also wants deceit from Believers as it will weaken their testimony and even cause a believer to backslide.

We need to fear God with a Reverence as to Who He Is. He is the CREATOR GOD, all knowing, all seeing, all understanding, ever present; He is Omnipotent and Omni-present.

### **The Apostles Heal Many**

**12And 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.**

A couple of points here. "By the hands of the apostles", as instruments of God to be used by God for God and HIS Glory, not for the Glory of man. None of them were of the desire to take

upon themselves the mantel of healer, it was God who heals and only God. We may wonder aloud why were there so many miracles then and we see so few today? I think it has to do with this verse:

***John 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.***

It appears to me that when God began to create or raise up the CHURCH big "C" church, that He used miracles to get people's attention, that something had drastically changed in their world.

People would see these miracles like the first one of healing the lame man at the temple entrance. When seen with their own eyes it put them in a position to believe their own eyes as opposed to believe based on what someone told them. That was very impactful and lent itself to the growth of the early Church.

Now we come back to what Jesus told Thomas. I think He tells us the same thing He told Thomas; we are blessed because we BELIEVE without seeing. I do not have to see a miracle to BELIEVE everything that God says and what the Bible says about God. That is sufficient for me. Some may think us fools to believe based on a book written several thousands of years ago. I would rather be a fool that dies in my BELIEF than a fool that dies in unbelief.

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

We are not told who the “rest” are. Different commentators assign them to two main categories. The first category are the temple elites, those of the Sanhedrin and officials of the temple. How could they not be in awe of what they had personally seen, but not willing to give up their positions in the temple.

The other group would be the common folk who had also observed these miracles. They too were in awe of what they had seen and may have been intimidated by what they perceived as the power of these men. Whatever the case, the “rest” stood at a distance in awe, spoke highly of these men but did not join them.

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

Vs 13 indicates that the number of Believers did not grow but vs 14 says that the number grew by multitudes. I think it harkens back to the notion from vs 13 that those who did not join the group of believers was of the temple officials. The common folk were more than willing to join these men of God.

**15Insomuch 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.**

I must be very careful where I step here in discussing these verses. We are given no context from God giving these folks direction to bring their sick and lay them alongside a road or street and that when the shadow of Peter would come across the sick person that they would be healed. It may have stemmed from the ideal of the healing that took place at the pool of Silom when Jesus sent a blind man to be healed by washing there.

***John 5:4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.***

Or perhaps from the Prophet Elisha when he sent Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria to wash in the Jordan River.

***2 Kings 5:14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.***

Or even from Paul's ministry when people were healed by touching a cloth or apron that Paul had touched.

***Acts 19:12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.***

The issue is that I don't see in scripture where anyone was told to lay these people out hoping Peter's shadow would pass over

them and be healed. I have not found an account yet of that occurring in Scripture. The problem being that man sometimes operates outside of God's direction.

As you look at the accounts of Elisha, Jesus and certain people healed what are the two main factors in those accounts?

Belief and obedience.

Mankind is famous or infamous for creating a doctrine from a single verse in scripture and leading many astray.

**16There 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.**

A point of order here. The healings were an amazing event for those in need and those who could see it. But what was the purpose of the healings? To be healed? God's purpose is always to show mankind that He is God, the Great Healer and Creator. He God is to be worshiped of a willing heart and He loved mankind so much that He sent His Son to die for us. And, through The Blood of His Son, we have Salvation. The real healing was the healing of a broken relationships between us and God. Physical healing is wonderful but Spiritual healing is eternal.

**The Apostles Arrested and Freed**



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

From Strong's Concordance "Sadducees"

*"Transliteration: Saddoukaios*

*Phonetic Spelling: (sad-doo-kah'-yos)*

*Definition: a Sadducee, a member of a Jewish religious sect*

*Usage: a Sadducee, a member of the aristocratic party among the Jews, from whom the high-priests were almost invariably chosen."*

Indignation:

From Strong's Concordance

*"Transliteration: zélos*

*Definition: zeal, jealousy"*

The leadership of the Sanhedrin the Priests and high Priest were jealous over the people reaction to the Apostles and the healings that had taken place right under their noses and in some instances right in their presence.

Remember before these same folks were wearied by the Apostles, well that has turned into full blow jealousy. Jealousy can become deadly.

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**18And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. 19But the angel of the Lord by night**

opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

Jesus said this as quoted in:

*Luke 4: [16](#)And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. [17](#)And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,*

*[18](#)The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,*

*[19](#)To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. [20](#)And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. [21](#)And he began to say unto them, **This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.** (emphasis mine)*

Jesus was quoting Isaiah, but the quote was about Himself.

Isaiah 61.

When He said He came to set the captives free it can and did take effect in two realms: Spiritual and physical. This is an early example of setting captives free by using a physical reality to demonstrate His power over the Spiritual as well as the physical.

The Sanhedrin had placed Jesus's disciples in a prison. They could not get out. Jesus then over rood the command of the High

Priest and Sanhedrin, the spiritual leaders of Israel, and set, His Apostles, the captives free. Jesus demonstrated in the physical His omnipotent power over both realms the physical and the spiritual. If Jesus says there is no prison beyond His Reach, no prison beyond His Power, no prison beyond His Control then that is a fact.

As Jesus set His own Disciples free, they were told to go and share the Good News, life giving words, which is what Jesus did when He came to mankind.

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

While the disciples were about the Lord's work, those who claimed that role were about to make a discovery. Somebody is missing??? The missing folks were at work in the Temple sharing the Good News.

**21And 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.**

**22But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, 23Saying, 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.**

There are really only one explanation as stated in God's Word.

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

It does not tell us if the Guards were caused to sleep during this or if they were simply unaware of what was happening under their nose. Either way, the Apostles walked out of jail by the power of God.

### **The Apostles Before the Council**

**24Now 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.**

Barnes Note's on the Bible came to these four points regarding the Sanhedrin and High Priest. (Strong's Concordance)

*“(1) Their authority was disregarded.*

*(2) God had opposed them by a miracle.*

*(3) the doctrines of the apostles were gaining ground.*

*(4) their efforts to resist them had been in vain. They need "not" have doubted; but sinners are not disposed to be convinced of the truth of religion.”*

The idea that they doubted or were in doubt of where this would grow is perhaps an understatement. The reality of what was

happening was sinking into the thinking of the religious leaders. They had been dealing with the idea of the Messiah now for months ever since the Crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. They had seen or heard of the miracles and now were faced with the four potential ideas that Barn's had come up with.

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

The religious rulers probably would have preferred that the Apostles once freed from jail would have run off and hidden. The last thing they wanted to hear is that they were in their very house teaching about Jesus the Messiah.

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

These religious leaders have some brain fog here. They were thinking in terms of men and the fear of them. Their guards saw what was going on and did not want to start a riot, they were afraid of the men in the temple as well. We are not told the words of the guards, but they were undoubtedly gentle and pleading, to get them to come with them.

**John 12:43 *For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.***

Can we say the same thing about our civil leadership today? How about our religious leadership that defies God's Word and puts man's evil thoughts before the Righteousness of God? They do not fear God, but fear what the woke will say and do to them.

***2 Thesalonians 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:***

They had not yet considered fearing God. They were afraid of the wrong thing!

***Psalms 111: [10](#)The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom:***

***[Job 28:28](#) And He said to man, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.'***

**[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.**

This is an interesting tactic, one that seems to be in operation even today. The High Priest is accusing these men of exactly what they had done several months earlier. They had indeed killed the Messiah and His blood was on their hands. Little did they know that God had planned this as the only means to bring

salvation to the world. His Son would have to die to take the place of every sinner and every sin committed against God.

**29Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. 30The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.**

Perhaps the religious leaders had failed to remember what they had done just a few short months before this day. Peter and the others decided it would be a good idea to remind them of their deeds. They were explicit in the account; “whom ye slew and hanged on a tree”. That pretty much covers it.

Peter had a few other double edged sword comments for these pious religious leaders, lest they forget who it was they hung on a tree.

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

“Him” of course is Jesus. God exalted with His Right Hand. The term Right Hand was acknowledgement of the power of a man or especially of God is demonstrated by his right hand or right arm; a symbol of strength and might.

**Psalm 89:13 *Mighty is Your arm; strong is Your hand. Your right hand is exalted.***

**Exodus 15:6 Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.**

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

There were many eyewitnesses to the crucifixion of Christ the Messiah. The Law required a minimum of two witnesses to prove a thing. The religious leaders during Jesus's trial tried in vain to bring multiple witnesses against Christ and failed. These men standing before the council were without doubt true witnesses of the murder lead by these religious leaders.

***Mark 14:56 For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.***

### **Gamaliel's Counsel**

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

Again, perhaps something we are seeing today around the world and here in the US. If someone disagrees with you, kill them, or cancel them, or silence them, just don't let the truth come out. Vs 33's quick solution: "slay them".

**34Then 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;**

It is believed that Gamaliel spoken of here is the son of Simeon of Luke 2.

***Luke 2:25And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. 26And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, 28Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,***

***29Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:***

***30For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,***

***31Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;***

***32A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.***

***33And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. 34And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; 35(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.***

A little more background on Gamaliel from Endicott's Commentary:

*For the first time, there seemed likely to be a dynasty of scribes, and the office of chief of the Jewish schools, what we might almost call their Professorship of Theology, was transmitted through four generations. Hillel was succeeded by his son Simeon, whom some have identified with the Simeon of [Luke 2:25](#) (see Note there), and he by Gamaliel. He, too, was known as the Rabban, and he rose now, with all the weight of years and authority, to counsel moderation.*

Gamaliel wanted to have a private conversation with the other religious leaders. He was going to draw on his years of education and experience to caution his fellow leaders.

**[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.**

Theudas, was thought to be a false prophet that had convinced a number of Israelites to follow him. He had convinced them that if they could get to the river Jordan that He would cause the river to divide, and they could all cross to the other side with all their possessions free from Roman taxes. The local Roman ruler sent cavalry after Theudas and his followers and killed many before they could reach the river. Theudas was beheaded and his head led the way into Jerusalem followed by all who survived as prisoners. This was meant to show the Jews that they could not

escape their tax obligation. The point being that the movement died with its author.

**37After 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.**

A touch of wisdom from man, didn't help the Jews much but it sure helped the rest of the world.

**38And 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: 39But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.**

A prophetic word that dissipated into the air as just a thought?

**40And 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.**

It seems a little odd based on my study that the Sanhedrin made up of Sadducees and Pharisees, would inflict corporal punishment. That was generally left to lower courts. The primary reason they may have done this was due to it taking place in the Temple.

The Sanhedrin was made up of 71 scholars and religious leaders. The reason for 71 is that God told Moses to assemble 70 men of

good character to judge the people. 70 plus Moses made 71. They were divided by Sadducees and Pharisees.

The Sadducees were of a more violent nature than the Pharisees, so it is that Gamaliel was of the Pharisees and was of a gentler nature. The Sadducees just wanted to kill the 12 and be done with it. It may also be that due to Gamaliel's lineage that he may have been the presiding Pharisee of the Council. The law of Moses was clear on the amount and severity of punishment.

***Deuteronomy 25: 1If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. 2And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. 3Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.***

The Apostles were each likely given 39 lashes on their backs.

**41And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.**

***Isaiah 51:7 Listen to Me, you who know what is right, you people with My law in your hearts: Do not fear the scorn of men; do not be broken by their insults.***

***John 15:21 But they will treat you like this because of My name, since they do not know the One who sent Me.***

**1 Peter 4:14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.**

**1 Peter 4:16 But if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but glorify God that you bear that name.**

**42And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.**

Perhaps the Sadducees were right, they should have killed them!!

God has a plan, and it will not be interrupted by mere men filled with their evil hatreds and Satanic thoughts.