

#### Acts

	The Church Established at "Jerusalem"	The Church Enlarged to "Judea and Samaria"	The Church Expanded to "the Ends of the Earth"
	The church is	The gospel is	The witness is
Ç	born	spreading	extended
CA	tested	multiplying	received and rejected
	purified	changing lives	changing lives
	strengthened	breaking traditions	unifying Jews and Gentiles
	CHAPTERS 1–7	CHAPTERS 8–12	CHAPTERS 13-28
Leaders	The apostle Peter		The apostle Paul
Emphasis	Jewish evangelism	Transition	Gentile evangelism
Time	AD 33 (1:1–2:47)	AD 36 (8:1) AD 40 (9:32)	AD 46 (13:1) AD 57 (21:18)
Scope	City evangelism	National evangelism	Cross-cultural evangelism
Theme	In the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus's followers carry the good news of Christ to the world.		
Key Verse	1:8		
Christ in Acts	Jesus is the glorified, enthroned Savior, who continues His ministry in the world by means of the Holy Spirit working through His disciples until He returns (1:7-9).		

AD 60

**Verse 1-** But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property

In contrast to Barnabas was the account of Ananias and Sapphira. This is the first recorded sinful act in the church and the first use of the word "church" in the book of Acts.

The nature of hypocrisy is to hide behind a mask. It is usually a hidden sin, but in this instance, it was exposed.

So far, this couple has done nothing wrong. They, like Barnabas, sold a piece of property (*ktēma*) to give the proceeds to the church.

**Verse 2-** and kept back some of the proceeds for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet.

Nobody made them sell this property, but many scholars believe they saw the reaction to Barnabas' genuine, generous act, and they wanted to be thought of in the same way. Hypocritically, they kept some of the money themselves and pretended to give all of it to the church. They corrupted the three-step process:

- Sell the land ✓
- Bring the money
- Lay it at the apostles' feet

**Verse 3-** But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the proceeds of the land?

Were Ananias ("The Lord is gracious") and Sapphira ("beautiful jewel") false believers or believers who were hypocrites? Were they false or faulty? The other believers were "all filled with the Holy Spirit" (4:31), but Ananias and Sapphira's hearts were filled with Satan. It wasn't a sin to sell their property and only give part (kept back- nosphisasthai- "to embezzle") of the money. Satan tempted them to lie about it, and they followed him instead of the Holy Spirit. They both were Satan-oppressed, not possessed.

**Verse 4-** While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God."

How did Peter know they lied? By the power to discern given by the Holy Spirit. The problem wasn't that Ananias and Sapphira gave some of the money from the sale of their land. It was that they lied about it. They were free to sell it, not sell it, give no money, give some money, or give all the money, but their hypocrisy caused their destruction. They were influenced by Satan to lie to the Holy Spirit, who is God (God = Holy Spirit).

**Verse 5-** And as he heard these words, Ananias collapsed and died; and great fear came over all who heard about it.

In response to his hypocrisy, it was not Peter but the Holy Spirit who killed Ananias, which caused fear among the other believers. The fear (*phobos*) other believers and those outside the church felt was due to this being an act of God against hypocrisy.

**Verse 5-** And as he heard these words, Ananias collapsed and died; and great fear came over all who heard about it.

There are other examples of God striking down people for disobedience (Penalty or Judgment Miracles):

- Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu gave an offering to God that He did not endorse; God responded by consuming them with fire (Leviticus 10:1-2).
- Achan took spoils belonging to God. In response, God demanded the execution of Achan and his family (Joshua 7).
- An angel of the Lord struck Herod dead for not giving God glory (Acts 12:23).

**Verse 6-** The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

Young men covered up (συνέστειλαν- "wound him up, packed up the body") to carry it outside the city walls. The regular word for "arranging" a corpse for burial is περιστέλλω (prepare by dressing- peri- around + stello- (make ready, prepare), suggesting this hurried burial was akin to something done for a suicide, a criminal, or as a result of God's judgment (Derrett). They were back in only three hours, much too short a period of time for a proper burial.

**Verse 7-** Now an interval of about three hours elapsed, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

God the Holy Spirit killed Sapphira's husband just hours before as an example to the church to be holy. She didn't know her husband had been killed by the Holy Spirit, and apparently church members were hesitant to gossip after seeing Ananias killed for lying. Three hours had passed, and no one told her about him! He was dead and buried, but she had a chance to succeed where he had failed. The typical mourning period of the day would last from three to seven days. Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days by the time Jesus arrived (John 11:17-19).

**Verse 8-** And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for this price?" And she said, "Yes, for that price."

The question debated by Bible scholars centers on the price Peter mentioned to Sapphira. Did he mention the actual price they received for the land or the price Ananias and Sapphira said they received for the land?

Without hesitation (as if it had been rehearsed), she lied to Peter, but more importantly, to God the Holy Spirit.

**Verse 8-** And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for this price?" And she said, "Yes, for that price."

God used Peter to ask a question in a certain way.

God asked Adam and Eve, "where are you?" to give them an opportunity to answer correctly (Genesis 3:9). He asked Moses, "what is in your hand" (Exodus 4:2) and asked the woman at the well to "go call your husband" (John 4). He knows the answer before asking the question. Sapphira repeated the lie Ananias told and suffered the same consequence, even though she had an opportunity, to tell the truth.

**Verse 9-** Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well."

So, this was a conspiracy. This husband and wife "agreed" (synephōnēthē- syn- together with + phone- sound or voice. It is similar to a "symphony," the same music written for different "voices" (instruments).

Ananias and Sapphira were two voices telling the same lie for the same purpose.

**Verse 9-** Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well."

They have tested (*peirasai*- "tempted") God not to punish them for sin by telling it openly.

Interestingly, they didn't need the money! They could have kept their land or sold it and kept the money. They wanted recognition for something they hadn't done after seeing the response of other believers to Barnabas' genuine gift (hypocrisy + pride).

**Verse 10-** And immediately she collapsed at his feet and died; and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

Identical to her husband, she fell dead immediately. This is one reason I don't believe their deaths were from natural causes or psychological fright (stroke, heart attack). These are identical, supernatural deaths.

Almost comically (dark humor), the young men return from their three-hour burial trip outside the city gates to immediately repeat the process.

**Verse 11-** And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard about these things.

The word "church" appears only in two passages in the four Gospels (Matt. 16:18; 18:17), and this is the first time Luke uses it in Acts.

Both deaths caused the same response- great fear. The fear of other believers was because they witnessed divine judgment.

The believers' purity of heart was a cause of numeric growth in the church. Faith in Jesus made a difference in believers, which helped the lost to believe.

**Verse 11-** And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard about these things.

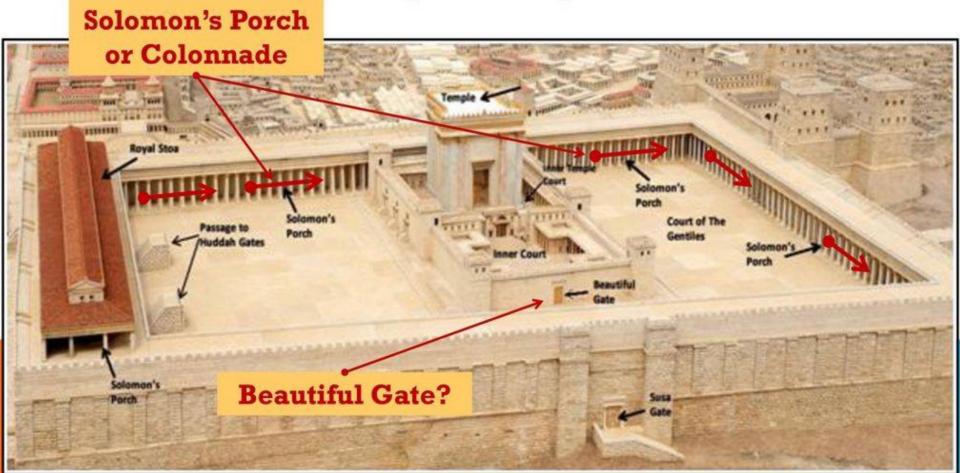
The report of Ananias and Sapphira's death sent a message that God does not tolerate deceit and falsehood in the church. In a sense, it was a warning to anyone who wanted to join the church to deceive the people.

It would be natural to believe that the size of the church would decline as a result of what happened to Ananias and Saphira, but it grew! People are attracted to what is true and real.

**Verse 12-** At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all together in Solomon's portico.

Peter and John weren't the only ones performing miracles in the power of the Holy Spirit. The other ten were also working signs and wonders, first mentioned in 2:43. The early church had no building and they were mostly Jewish, so they gathered at the Temple Mount for worship.

# **Temple Complex**



**Verse 13-** But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem.

To whom does "them" refer? Either the five thousand (men) new believers or the apostles. Probably the twelve apostles who gathered to teach and heal at Solomon's portico.

They appreciated them, but from a great distance. There are always those who appreciate and admire what Jesus stands for, but will not follow Him.

**Verse 14-** And increasingly believers in the Lord, large numbers of men and women, were being added to their number,

Instead of the church dwindling in number because of Ananias and Saphira, it grew rapidly. As the numbers grew, it was impossible for Luke to be precise. 12 apostles grew to 120 disciples which grew to 3000 Christians, then to 5000 Christians, now to "a large number." From this point, he counts both men and women in the numbers being saved.

**Verse 15-** to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any of them.

The text doesn't say that Peter's shadow actually healed, but it is possible that it did. A very sick woman believed that just touching the hem of Jesus' robe would heal her- and it did (Mark 5:25-29). In Ephesus, the Holy Spirit so blessed Paul's ministry that cloth that had touched Paul healed people (Acts 19:11–12). However, it's important to know that it isn't the shadow or the cloth that heals, but faith (Mark 5:34).

**Verse 16-** The people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together as well, bringing people who were sick or tormented with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.

We have seen this before in the ministry of Jesus. People who heard what Jesus was doing came to Jesus from Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and areas across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon (Mark 3:7-8). The Sadducees did not forbid the apostles from healing, but they were not to do it in Jesus' name, which they continued to do. Scores of people were now being healed in the name of the resurrected Jesus which infuriated the religious leaders.

**Verse 17-** But the high priest stood up, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy.

This is a verse of contrast- the apostles were healing in power but the Sadducees were jealous.

The high priest didn't stand to his feet ("stood up"), but he "rose up" in the sense that he went into action. Even though Caiaphas was high priest in name, Annas, his father-in-law was the power behind the office. They were completely jealous of the popularity of the apostles, something they guarded carefully for themselves.

**Verse 18-** They laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public prison.

How did they spring into action? By re-arresting the apostles.

They "laid hands" (*epi*- upon + *ballo*- to throw = they "threw themselves on" the apostles).

They put all of them in a different jail than the one Peter and John were in (4:3- *térésis*- temple jail vs. 5:18- *démosios*- common jail). All the apostles were put into the public jail with common criminals.

**Verse 19-** But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and leading them out, he said,

We're in a battle of contrasts in our text.

- But none of the rest dared to associate with them
- But the high priest stood up
- But during the night an angel of the Lord

This is doubly offensive to the Sadducees because they don't believe in angels. God had a purpose for the apostles which didn't include being in jail.

**Verse 20-** "Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple area the whole message of this Life."

The angels relayed a message to the apostles: Get back at it. Go back to the temple area and boldly speak "the whole message of this Life."

They were to continue to preach the gospel of the resurrected Jesus, which they did.

**Verse 21-** Upon hearing this, they entered into the temple area about daybreak and began to teach. Now when the high priest and his associates came, they called the Council together, that is, all the Senate of the sons of Israel, and sent orders to the prison for them to be brought.

The apostles took the first opportunity to resume what they had been doing before being arrested. The sense is that they approached the temple area and spoke to the crowds by saying, "Where did we leave off?"

**Verse 21-** Upon hearing this, they entered into the temple area about daybreak and began to teach. Now when the high priest and his associates came, they called the Council together, that is, all the Senate of the sons of Israel, and sent orders to the prison for them to be brought.

As they had previously done, the Sanhedrin met once again in their chamber located in the Temple.

The Senate is only mentioned here. It is thought that these were the men who were elders and leaders of Israel but not members of the Sanhedrin. They call for the apostles to come before them.

