

ACTS: ALIGNING WITH GOD'S SOVEREIGN WORK OF DISCIPLING

XI. Coming Clean With God For Ministry Blessing

(Acts 5:1-11)

I. Introduction

- A. The book of Acts explains "the orderly and sovereignly directed progress of the kingdom message from Jews to Gentiles, and from Jerusalem to Rome," Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 351.
- B. Accordingly, we can learn much about aligning our ministry efforts with God's sovereign work from studying the Early Church era as it is presented in the book of Acts.
- C. Acts 5:1-11 about God's punishment of the sin of Ananias and his wife Sapphira reveals the great need to clear up sin in our lives to be blessed of the Lord in our ministry efforts. We view the passage for our insight:

II. Coming Clean With God For Ministry Blessing, Acts 5:1-11.

- A. The act of Ananias on behalf of himself and his wife Sapphira of giving money from the sale of their land by laying it "at the apostles' feet" (Acts 5:1-2) recalls the action of Barnabas in laying "at the apostles' feet" money he gave from the sale of his land, Acts 4:36-37. (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 365)
- B. However, the sin of Ananias and Sapphira was not withholding part of the proceeds from the sale of their land instead of giving all of it, for Peter in Acts 5:4 stated that the couple owned the land and could do with it what they wished, and once they had sold it, they could still use the money as they chose to use it.
- C. However, the **sin** of Ananias and Sapphira was that of **LYING** in **pretending** to give **all** of the proceeds when in reality it was only **part** of the proceeds from the sale, Acts 5:3.
- D. [Lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3) was lying to God (Acts 5:4), so Acts 5:3-4 reveals the Holy Spirit is God!]
- E. Significantly, Peter said that Satan had filled Ananias' heart to lie to Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3a), indicating "Satan had gained control" of his heart "because Ananias had not dealt with some previous sin in his life," Ibid. We can identify that sin from viewing the preceding context (as follows):
 - 1. Barnabas' gift involved his giving all of the proceeds of the sale of his land as a meaningful sacrificial gift:
 - a. As a Levite whose income was restricted to living off of tithes versus having greater opportunity to gain wealth by conducting business as a member of some other tribe (cf. Numbers 18:20, 24 with 35:1-8) meant that Barnabas had worked hard and saved and invested with skill and discipline even to buy his property.
 - b. For him of all people then to sell that hard-earned land and lay its entire proceeds at the apostles' feet would have caused everyone in the Early Church to be greatly encouraged, Acts 4:36.
 - 2. Ananias and Sapphira noticed the great effect that Barnabas' sacrificial gift had made on others, but instead of being encouraged by it, they lusted after what they thought was the "fame" of Barnabas' act, so they tried to copy Barnabas to get some "fame" in pride while also keeping some of the proceeds of the sale!
 - 3. Accordingly, Satan worked on the worldly lust of the pride of life in Ananias and Sapphira, filling their heart to lie to the Holy Spirit to fulfill this lust of worldly pride! (cf. 1 John 2:15-16)
- F. God could not allow believers in the Early Church to think lightly of the Holy Spirit, so He led Peter to administer severe capital punishment on Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:5-11:
 - 1. Once Peter informed Ananias that in lying to the Holy Spirit he had lied to God, the Lord struck Ananias so that he fell down and died, causing great fear to come upon all that heard about it, Acts 5:5.
 - 2. The young men arose, wound Ananias' body in grave wrappings, carried him out and buried him, Acts 5:6.
 - 3. About three hours later, Sapphira came into visit Peter, being unaware of what had happened to her husband, and Peter asked her whether she had sold the land for a certain price, Acts 5:7-8a.
 - 4. She lied along with her late husband, admitting to the amount he had pretended to have received from the property sale (Acts 5:8b; Ibid.), so Peter announced that the feet of the young men who had buried her husband were at the door, and that they would carry her out dead as well, Acts 5:9.
 - 5. Sapphira, like her husband before her, suddenly fell down at Peter's feet and died, and the young men came in, found her dead, and carried her out, burying her by her husband, Acts 5:10.
 - 6. These events powerfully influenced the Early Church to revere the Lord and avoid sin, Acts 5:11.

Lesson: *In failing to clear up their sin of the lust of worldly pride, Satan led Ananias and Sapphira to seek "fame" by pretending to do what they saw Barnabas do, further sinning by lying to God the Holy Spirit in the process. God severely punished this sin by death to teach the Early Church not to lie to the Holy Spirit Who is God.*

Application: *For ministry effectiveness, may we clear up any sin we might have lest Satan use it to shipwreck us!*