

Acts 5 Empty Cells

- Satan could not tolerate good things happening to the church.
- He tried to destroy from without (persecution), now tries from within (pretension).

1. Church Discipline – v. 1-11

- 1: But: contrasts w/ Barnabas; Ananias: “Jehovah has been gracious;” Sapphira: Aramaic: “beautiful;” sold a tract of land.
- 2: 1st recorded sin in the church; sin is not: owning land, making a profit, giving only some to the Lord. Sin is: lying about it. Cf. 1 Tim. 6:10
- 3,4: God knows hearts of men; God, HS Same
- 5: no curse pronounced. Peter prob. just as surprised as everyone else; result: great fear
- 6: young men: not done in private; no funeral is abnormal, like Nadab/Abihu, Lv. 10:5
- 7: Act II: 3 hours later, she doesn’t know
- 8: Sapphira goes along w/ fabricated lie
- 9: imagine Peter shaking his head; shock upon shock
- 10: immediately she fell over dead
- 11: public record: great fear; 1st appearance of GK word ekklēsia (church)

2. Popularity – v. 12-16

- 12: apostles capitalize off Word spreading of Ananias & Sapphira
- 13: appears enemies kept their distance
- 14: 1st mention of women, no longer using numbers
- 15,16: popularity & power; 1st mention of demon possession; Dr. Luke differentiates physical & spiritual illness; all were healed

3. Persecution – v. 17-42

- 17: probably Caiaphas; sect (hairesis) heresy; also jealous of Jesus’ popularity, Mt. 27:18
- 18: all apostles in public prison
- 19: God had other plans
- 20: 3 instructions: 1. go 2. stand 3. speak
- 21: wasted no time from a sleepless night; most powerful body in for a shock
- 22,23: confused when they found none inside
- 24: wish to see their faces!

- 25: could not believe their ears! Expect escapees to leave, not be next door preaching – commanded not to do!
- 26: commanded to arrest those who healed lame and cured sick; afraid of crowds; apostles chose not to cause trouble
- 27: brought before council
- 28: 2 charges: 1. strict orders not to continue teaching; 2. apostles tried to hold them accountable for Jesus' death
- 29: minced no words!
- 30: preaches mini-sermon
- 31: 1st mention of Savior; forgiveness possible by sacrifice of Jesus!
- 32: following instructions from 1:8
- 33: cut to the quick “sawed through” lit. taken a saw to their hearts
- 34: 1st mention of Pharisees: Heb. “separated ones,” arose during period of Maccabees. Gamaliel I (the Elder) “Rabbaic” title: most respected teacher of the Law
- 35: “stop and think what you are doing!”
- 36: Theudas: false prophet, Mt. 24:4,5,23,24
- 37: Judas of Galilee: rebelled against new tax laws in 6 AD
- 38: advice: leave apostles alone: if of men, it will fade away
- 39: if of God, no good in opposing it
- 40: took his advice; beat them to show we mean business
- Some who were flogged were crippled for life; died at the whip; all bore the scars, physical & emotional, for life (done to Jesus); renewed rule: no preaching
- 41: Christianity could not be stopped by beating “dignified by the indignity,” rejoicing in persecution, tough to learn, Mt. 5:10-12
- 42: teach publicly & privately, cf. 20:20

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 Questions & PowerPoint (No. 355) available online.

Lessons:

- Ananias & Sapphira lost their lives because of their sin. Too many people don't regard lying as a sin, but it is a habit Christians shouldn't engage in. Rev. 21:8
- When evangelizing, we would always do well to capitalize on every moment possible.
- When we choose to obey God rather than men (29), we must be willing to serve Him even when conditions are not favorable to us – and be happy about it (41)!

November 19, 2023 AM Arlington church of Christ