

Acts 5

Worthy of Suffering Disgrace for the Name

<p>God</p> <p>Jesus Christ:</p> <p>Prince & Savior</p> <p>Holy Spirit</p> <p>Angel</p> <p>Apostles</p> <p>Church:</p> <p>Ananias & Sapphira</p> <p>Satan</p> <p>Evil spirits</p> <p>Jews:</p> <p>Sanhedrin</p> <p>High Priest</p> <p>Sadducees</p> <p>Gamaliel</p>	<p>Scene # 1. 5:1-11. Lying will not work as a secret practice for Christians who have the indwelling, or fellowship, of the Holy Spirit.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Luke recorded a "side -story" about the practice of some of the first Christians. They sold their possessions and gave the money to the apostles so believers who needed help could stay in Jerusalem. Ananias and Sapphira desired to be counted among the benevolent group "who gave all," but they also desired, and did, keep some of the money. When questioned by Peter they lied. Peter said they lied to the Holy Spirit and this is the same as lying to God. To make this truth vividly evident to the church, and all who heard about it, they both fell down and died. As someone has said, "God is not mean, but He can be very dangerous." This was a "personal choice offering" program motivated only to serve the need of the church by giving the less fortunate an opportunity to remain with the apostles. This was the new members only source for hearing Jesus' teaching at that time. See John 16:12-15. Two lessons: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> When Jesus said he would give the Holy Spirit to all who obey Him (2:38, 39; 5:32), He meant 24/7 (all the time and in every situation). The Spirit of God knows the mind of God (I Cor. 2:11) and, likewise, the minds and actions of Christians. The giving program in Jesus' kingdom is always based on a response to a need. The need is presented first, or a need is understood, and then choices are made by the givers. (It is not, "give it and we will find a way to spend it"). It is, however, a manifestation of the heart of the giver. See II Cor. 8:8. We do need to remember the fellowship of the Holy Spirit doctrine is still valid today. "Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events." 5:11. <p>Scene # 2. 5:12-16. This scene took place at Solomon's Colonnade in Jerusalem.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> At least five thousand repentant baptized believers were present in one group. Crowds were gathering from towns around Jerusalem, as well as the city dwellers. Since healing of physically sick people was taking place, the streets may have looked like a large hospital ward. The apostles were performing miraculous signs and wonders. Evil spirits were cast out of some. At the same time, the apostles were preaching about Jesus - the one who had recently been crucified. More men and women believed and were added to their number. <p>Scene # 3. 5:17-20. A direct confrontation between the high priest and his party, the Sadducees, and the Lord.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> This time the Sadducees had all the apostles put in jail. An angel of the Lord came and freed them with orders to "Go stand in the temple courts, ..., and tell the message of this new life." 5:20. The Sanhedrin met for a court trial of the apostles, but someone said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple court teaching the people." 5:25. They had the apostles brought before them again, but carefully, because they feared the people would stone them. The court scene was somewhat of a repeat of John and Peter's trial. See Acts 4:5-22. The high priest: "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name." Then they correctly accused the apostles of seeking "to make us guilty of this man's blood." 5:28. Apostles: "We must obey God rather than men." 5:29. Again, they stated those Jewish leaders had indeed killed Jesus. Then they said, "God exalted him to His own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and the forgiveness of sins to Israel." 5:31. When the Sanhedrin heard this, "They were furious and wanted to put them to death." 5:33. Gamaliel intervened successfully for the apostles. After they received a flogging and a warning to stop preaching, "The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name." 5:41. And the evangelism program of Jesus Christ continued in the temple courts and from house to house "day after day." The message: JESUS IS THE CHRIST!
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Questions for Discussion

A. Scene # 1. The first exercise of giving for the citizens of Jesus' rule over God's kingdom.

1. According to II Corinthians 8:8, Paul told the Corinthian citizens of Jesus' kingdom he, as an apostle, was not commanding them to give. What is the purpose of giving for the giver in Jesus' program of sharing?
2. Because of Jesus' purpose of giving for the benefit of the giver, which was presented first?
 - a. The call for funds.
 - b. The need for the funds.

How was the manner of giving different for the Israelites who lived under the Law of Moses?
3. Why was the first giving program initiated for the receivers in the Lord's church?
4. In what sense, may Ananias and Sapphira have had a double motive for giving their gift? What were the possible motives, or motive, for their giving?
5. Did Sapphira have the same responsibility to be truthful as her husband?
6. What is it that Ananias and Sapphira may have forgotten about Christians' new relationship with God "in Christ?"
7. Why might God have taken the drastic action of striking them dead before the church?

B. Scene # 2. Jesus' gospel meeting in Jerusalem.

1. In what different ways was Jesus, as king, cooperating with the apostles in this meeting?
2. What was the power manifested in this meeting that was necessary for converting the people?

C. Scene # 3. A direct confrontation between the Jewish leadership and Jesus, the king.

1. How did the Jewish leaders respond differently to this gospel meeting than they did previously?
2. How did Jesus respond to the leaders' action?
3. How many of the apostles were involved in this scene?
4. How did the Jewish leaders make the second arrest of the apostles differently from the first?
5. How were the two court scenes similar in this narrative?
6. What did the apostles accomplish by the content of their message to which the Jewish leaders strongly objected?
7. What was the standard response of the apostles to the threats of the Jewish leaders?
8. Who saved the apostles from the threat of death?
9. Why did the apostles leave the meeting rejoicing?
10. Describe Jesus' evangelism tactics in Jerusalem after the Jewish leaders' physical abuse of the preachers.