

Bible Workshop:

Acts of the Apostles 5

Outline

- vv. 1-4 Deception of Ananias and Sapphira
- vv. 5-6 Death and burial of Ananias
- vv. 7-11 Death and burial of Sapphira
- vv. 12-16 Apostles perform miracles
- vv. 17-24 Apostles arrested and freed
- vv. 25-32 Trial before the Sanhedrin
- vv. 33-39 Gamaliel's wise counsel
- vv. 40-42 Apostles beaten and released

Discussion points

- 1 Do you think Ananias and Sapphira had been given the Holy Spirit (vv. 1,2)?
- 2 Was their generosity motivated by the events at the end of chapter 4? What went wrong with their thinking?
- 3 Why did so many people join the ecclesia (v. 14)? Was it more than just the miraculous acts? How would so many be brought into true fellowship?
- 4 How many of the apostles are included in verses 18 and 29—all twelve of them, including Matthias?
- 5 Do you find it difficult to establish the difference between the two camps in verse 29 and take the right course of action? How can we do better?
- 6 How close were the apostles to death in verse 33? Where else do we find this emotion displayed?
- 7 Was the wise counsel of Gamaliel just his own wisdom, or was the hand of God at work (vv. 34-39)?
- 8 Do we ever "suffer shame for his name" in this apathetic society (v. 41)? What does this really mean?

Details

- 1 Consider the link between verses 3 and 4 regarding the source of the temptation and the seriousness of the sin
- 2 Notice the emphasis on fear in verses 5 and 11, in contrast to Acts 2:43. Is it the same

kind of fear in both passages? Why is a specific group identified in verse 11?

- 3 Note the link between verses 12 and 15. Were sick people actually healed with just the shadow of Peter falling on them? Is this similar to Matthew 14:35,36?

Tasks

- 1 Find other references to Solomon's Porch (v. 12) and try to establish where it was and what it looked like. Did it become a meeting place for the believers as their numbers grew?
- 2 Find other occasions where men of God have risen "early in the morning" to do God's work (v. 21). Can we learn something from this?

Information

Gamaliel cites the general unrest and rebellious nature of the Jews towards the Romans at this time, as they looked for relief from the oppression. They looked for the Messiah, but followed false ones to their destruction in A.D. 70 (Lk. 3:15; Mt. 24:24).

Take-home point

Despite the severe blow that the infant ecclesia took from the actions of Ananias and Sapphira, the arrest and beating of the apostles and the growing hatred of the authorities, the believers continued to preach and witness. May our lives mirror their resolve, no matter what problems we face in our generation.

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Comments are welcome and will be considered for publication. Please send them to the Publishing Editor, Brother Eric Marshall, address inside front cover.