

Acts 5 – The Testing of the Early Christians

I. Test from within - Ananias and Sapphira – 5:1-11

- A. A Christian couple that desires attention, yet lies about benevolence
 - 1. The couple sold a possession and kept back some of the profits, yet they gave the money as if it was all the profits
 - 2. Peter says that Ananias had lied to the Holy Spirit, and that while the money was his, he could have done whatever he wanted with it
 - 3. Sapphira comes in three hours later and told the same lie; both die as a result of their wickedness

II. Testing of faith, boldness – 5:12-16

- A. Despite the warnings of the Sadducees, the Christians continued to preach and teach in the name of Jesus Christ
 - 1. Miracles continued
 - a) Multitudes brought their sick and demon-possessed to be healed
 - 2. They were highly esteemed by the people
 - 3. Believers were added to the Lord

III. Testing from without – 5:17-41

- A. Apostles thrown in prison – **5:17-25**
 - 1. Due to indignation, the high priest and the Sadducees throw the apostles into prison
 - 2. An angel comes in the evening and releases them, instructing them to go to the temple and teach
 - 3. When the council called for the apostles the next day, they are found not to be in the jail, but in the temple preaching
- B. Apostles before the council...again – **5:26-42**
 - 1. The council reprimands the apostles for doing that which they had been forbidden to do
 - a) Peter responds that they must obey God rather than men
 - 2. When Peter names them as the murderers of the Christ, the council becomes upset, plots to kill the apostles
 - a) Gamaliel stands up with words of wisdom
 - (1) If this thing (the Way) is of man, it will eventually disperse
 - (2) If this thing (the Way) is of God, there can be no stopping it, and they must beware lest they find themselves to be fighting against God
 - b) The council agrees with Gamaliel's wisdom. They beat the apostles and command them not to preach in the name of Jesus anymore
 - 3. The apostles leave rejoicing, being counted worthy to suffer for Christ
 - a) They did not cease to preach in the name of Jesus

Questions:

1. Why was Ananias condemned for not giving all of his money to the church? (Is this question an accurate one?)
2. Had Satan actually come within Ananias' heart? If so, how? (i.e. the devil made him do it?) If not, what does this mean?
3. How had Ananias (and Sapphira) lied to the Holy Spirit? Did they not just simply lie to Peter?
4. Did God kill Ananias and Sapphira? If so, how?
5. What does vs. 13 mean when it says, "Yet none of the rest dared join them..."? Is it a reference to Christians, non-Christians, or some other group?
6. How had the apostles been released, considering that the guards and the door were still locked the next day (v.23)?
7. Why did the council wonder "what the outcome would be" (v.24) regarding the apostles being missing from their jail cells?
8. Who was afraid of being stoned in vs.26? Why would they have reason to fear?
9. What did the high priest mean when he said that the apostles intended to "bring this Man's blood on us"?
10. What do we know about Gamaliel? In what way were his words so wise?
11. Why did the apostles rejoice over being beaten? Does this mean they were "happy"? What is the difference between "joy" and "happiness"?