

**Review & Intro**

- We saw in Chapter 4 how Peter and John were examined by the Sanhedrin and proclaimed that the lame man had been healed by the Name of Jesus.
- After returning to the disciples, they had a powerful prayer meeting in which they prayed for boldness and prayed for God to heal and do signs and wonders.
- In the next few chapters, we will see the Devil trying to stop the growth of the Church again through persecution, sin, bureaucracy, grumbling, and disunity.

**The Church Continues To Flourish (Acts 4:32-35)**

*32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. 33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. 34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.*

- Here is another passage like the end of Acts 2, which shows us how beautifully they were flourishing. We see their unity and their fellowship.
- They were of one heart and one soul: love and unity!

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- The apostles testified with “mega-power.”
- They were also experiencing “mega-grace.”
- The giving was not a forced thing, but a loving distribution.

### **Barnabas Sells His Property (4:36-37)**

*36 And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, 37 having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.*

- They called Joses “Barnabas” perhaps because he was a tremendous encourager. To call someone the “son of” something meant that he truly embodied whatever that quality was. (Remember the “Sons of Thunder!”)
- Barnabas was indeed a wonderful encourager of people. It’s not too much to say that he launched Paul into the fullness of his ministry. He is one of only two men in the New Testament to be called “a good man.”
- Tradition says he was one of the 70 Jesus sent out after He sent out the Twelve.
- *Barnabas* might also mean “Son of Prophecy.” In Acts 13, he and Paul are among the prophets and teachers in the Church at Antioch in Syria.
- They are sent by the Holy Spirit on their missionary voyage and called apostles.
- A Levite from Cyprus, he seems to have had strong connections to Jerusalem, and his family apparently had wealth and property there, near the Temple.
- He was a brother to Mary, the mother of John Mark (see Acts 12).

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- Why mention Barnabas here like this?
  - Luke spotlights his heart.
  - This is foreshadowing for the significant role he will play in Acts.
  - Luke is creating a contrast for the next story.

### **Hypocrisy And Judgment (5:1-6)**

*1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. 2 And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? 4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."*

*5 Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. 6 And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him.*

- In contrast to Barnabas, Ananias and Sapphira play the hypocrite.
- This wasn't about giving, but fraud and hypocrisy. The Greek may indicate that they had agreed to do a certain amount and then skimmed something.
- While others are being filled with the Spirit, Ananias has his heart filled by Satan.
- This doesn't absolve him: the Devil doesn't make us sin.

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- This isn't only a lie to the Church but to the Holy Spirit. Peter equates, as you can see, the Holy Spirit to God – the Holy Spirit is a Person.
- Young men buried him; this included a willingness to be made unclean.
- Great fear came upon everyone who heard this, and likely much soul-searching.

### **Sapphira Dies Also (5:7-11)**

*7 Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?" She said, "Yes, for so much." 9 Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." 10 Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. 11 So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.*

- Mercifully, Peter questioned her, but she went forward in the lie.
- This is the first use of the word "church" in Acts. It highlights the sin against the church and the danger that the hypocrisy posed to the young fellowship.

### **Explosive Power As the Word Spreads (5:12-16)**

*12 And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. 13 Yet none of the*

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*rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. 14 And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, 15 so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. 16 Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.*

- Once again it appears that when the Body is unified and walking in the fear of the Lord, there is also a release of God's power. Now all the apostles are being used in signs and wonders – and many signs and wonders are taking place.
- Everyone was with one accord in Solomon's Porch, and there was ample room to gather and teach and pray.
- We see a split among the people: people didn't casually join them; some opposed the believers but all respected them. Multitudes women were coming to Jesus – Luke says they were added to the Lord, not just to the Church!
- A brief description of the power evangelism that was taking place:
  - Peter's shadow per se wasn't healing people; something was radiating out from Peter and overshadowing them: the *dunamis* of God.
  - Sick people from outside Jerusalem are now being healed: the possible beginning of the spread of the Gospel to the next concentric circle.
  - Verse 16 also shows us people getting delivered from demons. This wasn't something new for the apostles, but their message was!
- This is the only place in the New Testament where all were healed. We should ask ourselves why or how that is! *Lord, move in Your power!*

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### **The Apostles Arrested (5:17-21)**

*17 Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, 18 and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. 19 But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 20 “Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.” 21 And when they heard that, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.*

- The word *jealousy* or *envy* may be a better translation of the word rendered here as *indignation*. The apostles and believers in Jesus now have popularity to go with their supernatural power.
- The Sadducees were wealthy elites, and not well liked – in fact the Pharisees disliked them immensely.
- In their dealings first with Jesus and now here in *Acts*, the Sadducees might have wanted to stamp out this growing movement before it made the Romans nervous.
- The Romans could be incredibly ruthless in suppressing revolts and had crucified thousands in Israel. At Sepphoris, near Nazareth, some 2,000 were crucified during Jesus’ childhood.
- Luke may be hinting that the high priest and his family were all that there was to the sect of the Sadducees.

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### **Before The Council Again (5:22-32)**

*22 But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, 23 saying, “Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!” 24 Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. 25 So one came and told them, saying, “Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!”*

*26 Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, 28 saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!”*

*29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. 31 Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”*

- The apostles go straight back to preaching! Now they’re brought in more gently.
- The apostles have filled the city with the teaching of Jesus, and they intend to bring Jesus’ blood on them. Beware of using this as a justification for antisemitism. Not all Jewish people were, of course, involved in Jesus’ death.

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- The council cannot bring themselves to say the Name of Jesus.
- Peter lays out here the conditions of civil disobedience for the Christian. If God commands it, a government cannot forbid it; if God forbids it, a government cannot command it. We must be respectful to authorities but must obey God.
  - God approved of the acts of the midwives in Egypt.
  - Daniel and his friends refused to obey the King of Babylon.
  - And the apostles refused to undercut the Great Commission.

### **Gamaliel's Counsel And The Results (5:33-42)**

*33 When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them. 34 Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. 35 And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. 36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. 37 After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. 38 And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; 39 but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God." 40 And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.*

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*41 So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.*

- Gamaliel’s advice has become quite famous, but it’s not necessarily any good! If his advice were always correct, many cults and religions would not exist.
- The apostles were once again commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus. And as you can see, they immediately disobeyed that order.
- We perhaps cannot be sure whether the apostles were beaten or flogged.
  - The Jews were limited by the Law of Moses (Deut. 25:1ff.) to giving someone forty lashes.
  - The Romans had no such limitations but might indeed flog a person to death.
  - Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 11:24ff. that he received the 39 lashes from the Jews five different times and was beaten with rods three times.
- Jesus says, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:10).

In Chapters 6 and 7, we will see Stephen’s ministry, his defense, and his martyrdom. The enemy will continue to attack the Church, but it will continue to grow, and the Gospel will continue to spread.

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