

The Acts of the Apostles

The Journey – 2020
Jim Hoffman

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Prayer Requests

- Zeek Cook – 8 moth old nephew of Stacia’s with pneumonia.
- Bill Cox’s brother-in-law nurse on front line in Philadelphia.
- Jocelyn Essick (nurse) is now treating COVID19 patients.
- PTM – client needs protection for a health concern as she awaits surgery.
- Gene Weiland’s granddaughter Lilian is well.

2

Announcements

- Pam Stoner is improving each day.
- Fran Nestor’s sister went home to be with the Lord.
- Ralph Mack, also went home this week.
- Thanks to those who have dropped off meals at the Stoners.
- Dorothy Zechman / Keith George – card shower.

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Prayer Requests

If you have questions during class please text them to 717-645-2134 and Jackie will relay them to me.

If you know how to use the ZOOM chat feature you may use that to send a question to me.

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• Acts 5:1 But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property. 2 He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife's consent, he kept the rest. 3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit, and you kept some of the money for yourself. 4 The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished. And after selling it, the money was also yours to give away. How could you do a thing like this? You weren't lying to us but to God!" 5 As soon as Ananias heard these words, he fell to the floor and died. Everyone who heard about it was terrified. 6 Then some young men got up, wrapped him in a sheet, and took him out and buried him. NLT

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- **The facts** – Ananias and wife had a property to sell.
- They sold it and gave some of the money to the Apostles.
- They wanted the Apostles and others to think that they had sacrificed for the Kingdom of God.
- Ananias is confronted by Peter about the amount of money.
- Ananias falls down dead on the spot.

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• Acts 5:7 About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 Peter asked her, "Was this the price you and your husband received for your land?" "Yes," she replied, "that was the price." 9 And Peter said, "How could the two of you even think of conspiring to test the Spirit of the Lord like this? The young men who buried your husband are just outside the door, and they will carry you out, too." 10 Instantly, she fell to the floor and died. When the young men came in and saw that she was dead, they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11 Great fear gripped the entire church and everyone else who heard what had happened. NLT

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- Great fear gripped the entire church – **this is the first mention of the "church" in the bible.**
- The law of 1st Reference – the best way to understand the church is what is true of it Acts 5.
- No building, very little structure, and not even the entire canon.
- But they had Jesus, hope, and each other – the essentials.

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- **The facts** – Three hours later Ananias’ wife Sapphira comes in and is questioned about the amount of money.
- Sapphira tells the same lie as Ananias.
- She too falls dead at Peter’s feet and is carried out and buried beside her husband.
- Great fear gripped the entire church when it was learned of the severity of God’s judgment.

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- As with so many narratives there are the facts and there is the story.
- From the facts we see the short story of Ananias and Sapphira – so much infamy from so few words about a man and his wife that were part of the church.
- It probably never crosses our mind about all of the good they may have done, or the testimony they had, or perhaps even how generous they often were.

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- When my sister’s husband committed suicide, I assured her that the last act of one’s life rarely defines the person.
- However, for most who will ever hear of Ananias and Sapphira all we know are their last acts.
- Question #1 - “why would they do such a thing”?

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- Question #2 - why was God seemingly so harsh with them and not so harsh with others in the church who sinned?
- Question #3 – what is meant by ““Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart”?”
- Question #4 – where are Ananias and Sapphira today?

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- “why would they do such a thing?”
- My best guess, because we are not told, is that Ananias and Sapphira were hypocrites – they were pretending to be super spiritual and wanted the recognition that comes with being big givers without actually giving big.
- I do think, although we can’t be certain, they were born again believers in Jesus Christ who were influenced by Satan himself. (why have you let Satan fill your heart?)

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- By definition, a hypocrite is “a person who pretends to be what he is not”. (an actor in days gone by)
- A religious hypocrite can be saved or lost – when you hear people complain of all the hypocrites in the churches they are not wrong.
- It is possible to be a saved hypocrite and Ananias and Sapphira are examples of same.

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- Some evidence for their conversions is found in Acts 4:32 **All the believers were united in heart and mind.** And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. 33 The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. NLT

- So if they were saved, why the seemingly harsh response from God – because God hates hypocrisy and he was going to lay down a marker for all to see.

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- In Matthew 23 no less than 6 times Jesus pronounces a “woe” upon the Pharisees for their sin of hypocrisy.

- They wanted to be seen as pious without actually being holy – Matt 6:1 “Watch out! Don’t do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven.” NLT

- For God to let Ananias and Sapphira off easily the church would have been weakened at a time when it is just getting started.

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- Matthew 13:24 “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. 25 But that night as the workers slept, **his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat**, then slipped away.” NLT
- What is the enemy’s purpose in sowing weeds among the wheat?
- To stunt the growth of the wheat and prevent it from producing its crop.

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- The enemy’s work in our midst looks like -

- Gossip
- Jealousy
- Clicks
- Power Grabs
- Disunity
- Scandals
- Weak Doctrine
- Sin that is Ignored

ETC...

et cetera

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- So where are Ananias and Sapphira today?
- We really don’t know their hearts, but it is my opinion that while their sin was judged quickly and harshly, they are in heaven.
- Far worse things have been done – their timing was bad.
- 1st Tim 5:24 Some men’s sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later. NKJV

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• Acts 5:12 **The apostles were performing many miraculous signs and wonders among the people.** And all the believers were meeting regularly at the Temple in the area known as Solomon’s Colonnade. 13 But no one else dared to join them, even though all the people had high regard for them. 14 **Yet more and more people believed and were brought to the Lord—crowds of both men and women.** 15 As a result of the apostles’ work, sick people were brought out into the streets on beds and mats so that Peter’s shadow might fall across some of them as he went by. 16 **Crowds came from the villages around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil spirits, and they were all healed.** NLT

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- Acts 5:12 **The apostles were performing many miraculous signs and wonders among the people.** NLT
- The same God who takes his redemption plan so seriously that he kills to keep it pure, is the same God who lavishly pours out his power to heal in so many ways that they cannot be detailed.
- “Many” – evidently Luke saw so many miracles that he doesn’t even try to provide the details for them.

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So how many miracles would one have to see before they became so common that the details of each one would seem unimportant?

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- Perhaps one of the reasons the Spirit does not have Luke detail all the Apostles were doing was so that we would not limit the ways we think God can heal.
- Many believe that God heals today through the Elders anointing the sick with oil – and that is true.
- But that is not the only way he heals – we pray, we lay on hands, and lots of other things, and when healing occurs **it is always and only a work of God.**

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- He Healed At A Distance (Luke 7:1-10)
- He Sent The Sick To The Priests (Luke 17:11-19)
- He Rebuked The Illness (Luke 4:38-39)
- He Told People They Were Free, Then Touched Them (Luke 13:10-13)
- He Told Them To Receive Their Healing (Luke 18:35-42)
- He Spit On The Ground And Made Mud, Then Sent The Person To Wash (John 9:1-7)
- He Gave Others Authority To Heal (Luke 10:1-20)
- He Allowed Demons To Leave A Man And Enter Pigs (Luke 8:26-39)
- He Commanded People To Do Something They Could Not Previously Do (John 5:1-15)
- He Called Someone Out Of The Grave (John 11:1-44)

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- Acts 5:14 **Yet more and more people believed and were brought to the Lord—crowds of both men and women. NLT**
- How many churches have followed this strategy for church growth?
- Strike people dead as they are giving large sums of money right at the altar at the front of the church and watch your attendance soar!

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- The fact that what happened to Ananias and Sapphira drew people to Christ may not be as surprising as we think.
- Would people actually want to worship a God who treats those who bring him offerings in that way?
- It probably wasn't so much that God struck them down, but that finally there is a God and a religion that is taking sin seriously.

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- Just weeks ago if a worshipper was found to be a fraud, they would be asked to go through the motions of a sin offering and all would be well.
- But the believing Jew of that day knew that just going through the motions of an offering is but another form of a works religion that does not change the heart.
- So yes, in that day, the severity of God's response was one that added weight to the Apostle's message.

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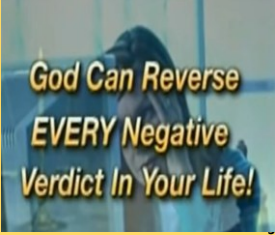
- Acts 5:15 As a result of the apostles' work, sick people were brought out into the streets on beds and mats so **that Peter's shadow might fall across some of them as he went by.** NLT
- It is probably wrong to assume that Peter's shadow healed anyone, but in Acts 19 we do read the following about Paul.
- Acts 19:11 God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles. 12 When handkerchiefs or aprons that had merely touched his skin were placed on sick people, they were healed of their diseases, and evil spirits were expelled.

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- In both cases, even if Peter's shadow did effectuate healing, the only power in the universe to heal is God himself.
- These two events, Peter's shadow and Paul's handkerchiefs, have led to people doing odd things that they believe will help them.



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- Acts 5:16 **Crowds came from the villages around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil spirits, and they were all healed.** NLT

Crowds and **sick people** and **mass healing** 😊

- Matt 15:30 **A vast crowd brought to him people who were lame, blind, crippled, those who couldn't speak, and many others. They laid them before Jesus, and he healed them all.** NLT

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Questions

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