

Acts 5:1-11 Approach the Lord with reverent fear 27.06.21

Context

1] Following Pentecost and the giving of the Holy Spirit, the church is growing – 5000 men (+ women and children!) in a total population of c 40K.

2] A hallmark of the community who believed in Jesus was that ‘great grace was upon them all’ (4:33).

3] Barnabas had sold a field and ‘brought the money and laid it at the Apostles feet (4:37)

Nb It was a gift, firstly to God, that would then be used for care of the needy.

Ananias’ gift (1,2)

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira Ananias

Nb Names mean the ‘Yahweh has dealt graciously’. Sapphira means ‘beautiful’

? Part of the church – believers in Jesus - nothing in the text explicitly saying that they were not?

sold a piece of property, 2 and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it

cf the garden of Eden - they hid from the Lord (3:7)

cf Achan’s sin of taking devoted plunder for the Lord (Josh 7:1)

You cannot hide from the Lord – Anywhere!

Do not keep back for yourself what you have agreed to give to God

and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Cf Barnabus (4:37)

Nb this was firstly a gift dedicated to the Lord and only then for the needy.

Peter’s reply (3-6)

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?"

Nb Satan, the deceiver (2Jn 1:7) - the devil is a liar and the father of lies (Jn8:44) nb his aim is to ‘sift us’ cf Jesus to Peter (Lk 22:31)

Beware the deceiver, Satan

Nb Peter knows what has happened – a word of knowledge (1 Cor 14:6)

Cf Peter lied to men denying Jesus not to God (Lk 22:54) (nb NOT to God)

Cf Where can I go from your Spirit (Ps 139:8)

The Holy Spirit is the one offended when we lie against God

Never believe the lie that you can do anything that is hidden from God

4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal?

I.e. it was your possession but when you dedicated it to God it was not – it was His

Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God."

*Nb If you make a vow to the Lord you shall not delay in fulfilling it (Dt 23:21)
Be sure your sins will find you out (Nu 32:23)*

God knows when you lie to Him

Ensure that that which you commit to God is given to God

5 When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it.

Cf For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgement on Himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill and some have died. (1 Cor 11:30)

? Did God 'strike them down' Some say, 'God wouldn't' Or the temporal consequence of sin in the presence of God?

Cf the weeping in the fields around the 1700s Cambuslang revival + believers under the conviction of the Holy Spirit

God is 'awesome' (We should be 'aweful')

God's displeasure engenders fear.

** GRACE - God does not immediately strike us all down**

6 The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

Sapphira's interview (7-10)

7 After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

? 3hrs - 3 in Bible represents a span awaiting on God's timing (?)

8 And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much."

Nb God's trial is always fair – she is given the chance to express herself in her own words

9 But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?"

Nb You shall not put the Lord your God to the test (Dt 6:16; Lk 4:12)

Never dare wilfully to 'test the Lord'

Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." 10 Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

Nb immediate identical response says that this is no 'natural causes'

The reaction (11)

11 And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

Fear

Nb it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb 10:31)

Whole church

*gk OT = *ekklesai* – Israel, the people of God*

All who heard

A universal response of every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:10-11)

Conclusion

1] Note - God is a holy awesome God

Cf Aslan - Not tame but good

2] Pray for revival that God would come close

3] If he does, as I pray he will, approach the Lord with reverent fear.*