

## Acts 5:1-42

**“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 and kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it*, and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apostles’ feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. 6 And young men arose, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*. 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter answered unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. 12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch. 13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16 There came also a multitude *out* of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one. 17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation. 18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. 19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison**

doors, and brought them forth, and said, 20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. 21 And when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. 22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, 23 saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. 24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. 25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. 26 Then went the captain 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 not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. 29 Then 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 ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. 33 When they heard *that*, they were cut *to the heart*, and took counsel to slay them. 34 Then stood up one of the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; 35 and said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. 36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. 37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. 38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men,

**and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: 39 but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. 40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 And 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 ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”**

[Audio version: <http://resources.ccphilly.org/SPM600>]

### *Introduction: Barnabas, The Real Deal*

“We have come to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter, where the disciples have been threatened, at this point not yet beaten, but threatened. And after the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate another 5,000 have been added to the Church, so we are at least 8,000 adults daily, meeting in the Temple precincts in Solomon’s Portico where the apostles are teaching. And after they were threatened, it says they came, they prayed, the place where they prayed was shaken, they asked God for boldness. The condition of the Church, in **verse 32** it says **“the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul:”** it’s a healthy church, **“neither said any of *them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.”** **“And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.” (verse 33)** God was pleased with the Church. **“Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid *them* down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,)”** and again, 25 times in the Book of Acts, five times in the Epistles we meet this man, the Lord takes note of him, not an apostle in the sense, you know as the missionary journeys begin it’s Barnabas and Saul, it quickly

becomes Paul and Barnabas, he has no difficulty taking the second place, he is a man that wants to serve, to encourage others, to lay down his life, and the Lord honours him and has much to say about this man, this son of consolation. He is **“a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,”** now their first missionary journey goes there, him and Paul, they would go there together. No doubt his conversion, alone, as a Levite, is a consolation, because they’d just been with the religious leaders that were threatening them. Now this man comes to the Faith, he is notable enough that the apostles are familiar with him, they change his name, they just love this guy and his attitude, his willingness to edify the Body and to encourage in the faith, and they change his name to Barnabas. It says and **“having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.”** Now this land must have been in Cyprus, the Levites were not allowed to own land in Israel proper. **“having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.” (verses 34-37)** So what a great encouragement as persecution is beginning to mount, and hostility, you have this Levite come to faith, Barnabas. Now look, he is exactly that, a son of consolation, he is someone who listens and watches and looks for the opportunities and gifts in other people’s lives. We’re going to find out in chapter 9, as Saul of Tarsus is converted, that he comes to Jerusalem, Peter’s afraid of him, John’s afraid of him, James, they don’t trust him. Of all people in Jerusalem in regards to the Church, Saul of Tarsus was one who was the least trusted, who was the most deadly, was hauling men and women off to prison, he was, at the point of the sword making people blaspheme the name of Jesus. And now all of a sudden he’s going to come back from Damascus saying that he’s a believer. He disappeared for awhile, comes to Jerusalem, and all of them shy away, but Barnabas. Barnabas somehow takes Saul to his home, and sits and looks at him, and listens to him, and discerns that what he’s saying is genuine. And then we’re told in the Book of Acts, evidently it says **‘Barnabas then brought him to the other apostles,’** and Galatians tells us he ended up staying with Peter for 15 days. Now imagine what that was like. Peter must have taken him to Gethsemane, they must have walked and talked, and said **‘ya, it was over there over there he fell down, we heard him cry Abba, Father,’** he must have gone to Golgotha with him...imagine, Peter must have sat astounded, as he listened to the theology of Saul, as the Old Testament came to light to him, an incredible man, incredible mind that God would use. But it was Barnabas, he was the hinge here, he was the one. And not the

person who gets the spotlight himself in this world, he certainly will in the next, but the man who facilitates, consoling, encouraging, exhorting others, and he becomes a very important character in this process as we move on, again. So, beloved of the apostles, they actually change his name, people take note, this guy is really sold out, he's done this.

## *God Hates Hypocrisy*

Now as Luke wrote, there was no chapter 5, it was a conjunction, and that says **"But"**. So what we're going to read now is set in contrast with Barnabas. Barnabas is the one who sets the stage and gives us a picture, **but**, the idea is, in contrast to Barnabas who had given everything genuinely, there is this other couple, Ananias and Sapphira. And again, whatever you know about them, I know you know this much, I dedicate babies every week, I've never dedicated a Sapphira in 25 years, I've never dedicated a Jezebel either, there's just certain names that hold some sway. This is Ananias, which is the same as Hanna or Joanna, it's *God is gracious*, and Sapphira is the Aramaic for *beautiful*, so you have this couple, Gracious and Beautiful, but they're anything but that. And what we have here, I think the enemy realizing that he couldn't stop the Church through threatening them, they actually came away with greater resolve, as they prayed the place was shaken with great power, they're giving testimony. But it tells us here **"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price,"** notice, **"his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet."** (verses 1-2) there was a plan to it. **"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?"** (verse 3) So, first time we have Satan mentioned in the Book of Acts. No doubt he had been there, but now he is integrated into this picture of hypocrisy in the new Church. And you know what's going to happen here, that Ananias and Sapphira are going to fall down dead. And look, we look at that, that's really heavy man, you know, serious, very, you know Lord, just kind of...Well we see the same thing with Nadab and Abihu, Leviticus chapter 10, it was the beginning of a new era, the Tabernacle was just completed, and as they come to dedicate the Tabernacle, Aaron's sons are struck down because they bring

strange fire, it doesn't specifically tell us what that is, I think that's to keep us on our own toes. You know, as we come into Canaan land under Joshua, the first victory, there's a new era that begins, of Jericho, and that by the hands of the LORD, the walls of the city fell down, and God said to them **'I don't want you to touch any of the spoils, it all belongs to me, this victory is mine, don't you touch any of it.'** And there's tremendous victory. And then they go on to this little city Ai, and it tells us, they said **'Just send 3 or 4 thousand, look what happened to Jericho, we'll just wipe out this Ai,'** and Joshua was out praying and says to them **'Well go on,'** and it says the men of Ai came out and put them to flight, and they killed 36 of the Israeli warriors. Those are the only casualties of the war in the entire Book of Joshua. And Joshua falls on his knees, and he says **'LORD, what is going on, now your enemies in the land are going to see that this little city put us to flight, what is all the trouble here, what's going on?'** and the LORD says to Joshua **'Joshua, stop praying and get up. There's sin in the camp. As long as there's sin in the camp, there's not going to be victory, so you need to call forth Israel before you, by tribe, and then by family, and then by household, and we'll identify the problem.'** Of course he calls them by tribe, Judah's taken, he calls them by their families, and the family of Achan, and then the household of Achan is taken, and Joshua will say to him **'Achan, what did you do, did you do this?'** and Achan says **'Ya, I did, I touched, there's gold, a wedge of gold, silver, a Babylonian garment in my tent, buried in the floor.'** And they go and dig into his tent and they find that it's true, and then Joshua will burn [and stone] Achan and his family, it says his children, which are adults that were part and parcel to the process, which Sapphira was here. But he says to Achan, **'Why have you troubled us?'** and he had troubled them, because there were 36 widows in Israel. How many children without fathers, we don't know? How many parents with broken hearts, because these 36 soldiers had been killed? And because there was sin in the camp, it troubled the whole camp, it kept back God's hand of blessing. All of that is put before us. Now we come to this inauguration of a new era, in the New Testament, the Church, and this is the first time that deception and hypocrisy come into the Church. And that's the problem here, look, the Bible encourages us again that we would have integrity in our lives. If you're in math, an integer speaks of one, speaks of a unit, and integrity means you're one, your thoughts, your heart, your conviction, your theology, your life, there's integrity. Duplicity

is when there's a dual, you know, you're saying one thing, doing another. And I think all Christians, all of us find we're duplicitous at times. Sometimes by mistake, sometimes by being provoked, sometimes one thing or another temptation. But hypocrisy is vastly different, hypocrisy is deliberately putting on the mask to look like something that you're not. Trying to look like something that you're not, playing the role. Hypocrisy is very different than duplicity, all of us are duplicitous, we make mistakes. It's not what it's talking about here. You and I can come to the Lord, we confess our sins, he's faithful to forgive us, get us back on our feet, *'Lord, I've blown it, man, I've messed up,'* that's different than someone whose living, putting on one mask, and the secretly living another life. That's hypocrisy, the hypocrites, the putting on of the mask, you've seen in the [Greek] theater, that one mask with the smile, the other mask with the frown, that's the hypocrites, the putting on of the mask to play one role or the other. And a hypocrite is someone in the Church who acts one way and then lives another while nobody's watching. And listen, you have friends, you and I, and maybe were like that, saying *'I don't want nothing to do with church, it's full of hypocrites,'* well in this chapter you're going to find out the Lord feels exactly the same way about hypocrites in the Church [greater body of Christ]. And the ones who are put before us are Ananias and Sapphira. What had happened evidently, as they had watched Barnabas, Barnabas gave everything, he was receiving notoriety, he was hanging out with the apostles, they cared enough to change his name, and maybe part of what Ananias and Sapphira took note of is, *'Hey, this guy's on fire, look how he ministers to lives, look, he's getting all this attention,'* but there was something else in them of ambition, of need of recognition, you know, *'I need the notoriety,'* the pumping of their ego and their pride, and that kind of thing ultimately causes cancer and it's destructive to the body. So they come up with this plan, *'Look, we're going to sell this piece of land we have for a 100 grand, and let's keep 25 grand to ourselves, and we'll give 75, we'll come and make believe we're giving everything like Barnabas did, and maybe he'll change our name too.'* He does, to mud. But you know *'May our names will be changed too.'* So, here they come, Satan at this point realizing if you can't beat 'em, join 'em, ***'and they kept back part of the price, his wife being privy to it,'*** she was part of the plan, ***'and they brought a certain part, and they laid that at the apostles' feet,' (verse 2)*** having watched Barnabas. And Peter now, evidently with a word of knowledge, the gifts of the Spirit in his life, he says ***"Ananias, why***

**hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part of the price of the land?*" (verse 3) "to keep back" that's part of the problem, giving an impression, he says this, "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." (verse 4) that's the issue twice now, the heart. So there's interesting things here, look, the deeper part of man, the heart, is what is brought out into the open here. Man is not just an intellectual being, if he was we could solve all the world's problems with education. The problem, man needs to be regenerated, man at the basis of his being, the Scripture calls it the heart, the center-point, is where there's a problem [Jeremiah 17:9]. And here he says '**Satan has put it in your heart,**' there's some longing there for recognition, some pride there, there's something you wanted, and you're willing to act the way that's phony, that wasn't the truth. And look, he said '**While it was yours, we didn't ask for it, there's no rule here you gotta give everything.**' You know, in the last chapter when it says Barnabas did that, the Spirit doesn't laud him for that, he just gives us the facts. Then he said '**when you sold it, the money was yours, we didn't ask for it. And you could have came and said 'Look, I sold this piece of land for a 100 grand, I'm going to give 75 grand to the Church and gonna keep 25 for ourselves,**' and the apostles would have said 'Great, that's wonderful.' But they had done something different, they had come deceptively. Now it says '**you've lied to the Holy Ghost,**' the Holy Ghost was there, the Holy Ghost listened to them when they made their plan, the Holy Ghost was there when he signed the deed over, the Holy Ghost was there when they went home and said '*Hey, we'll do this and we'll do that.*' The Holy Ghost was there the whole time Ananias was walking to the Church to lay the gift down, the Holy Spirit was saying '**You're deceiving, you're doing something that's wrong, this is hypocrisy,**' he was there the whole time, it wasn't hidden from him, and he says '**Satan's filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost,**' and you see down in verse 4, it says '**You haven't lied to men, but to God,**' speaking of the Deity of the Holy Spirit. When you get down to verse 9 he's going to call him the Spirit of the Lord, that is the idea of the Lord Jesus, Peter has no problem here of the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, being the Spirit of God and the same as the Spirit of the Lord, he has no problem with any of that. Look in **verse 5, "And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them****

**that heard these things.”** I love the King James, ‘gave up the ghost, fell down dead.’ And I think nobody was more surprised than Peter. Peter didn’t get up that morning and say to his wife *‘I hate this chapter, it’s heavy man, this chapter is kind of a bummer, but you know, wait till you see what happens.’* I don’t think Peter expected him to drop dead. **“Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear”** I guess **“came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*.”** (verses 5-6) Now, **verse 7** says this, **“And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife not knowing what was done, came in.”** And again, that’s a compliment to this church, for there to be 8,000 adults and for there to be three hours and the gossip hasn’t spread to his wife, that’s really saying something. Because normally information spreads way faster than that in a big church, three hours later and she hasn’t heard... **“And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.”** (verse 8) God’s grace, he gives her an opportunity. Now there’s an opportunity to repent here, there’s grace extended. He’s going to say to her **‘*did you sell the land for 75 grand?*’** and she’s gonna say **‘*Ya.*’** She could have said, *‘You know, the truth is, we sold it for 100 grand, my husband, I tried to talk to him, he wouldn’t listen, he decided to keep 25 grand and give 75 grand,’* instead she lies. Look, you know Ephesians ladies tells you to submit unto your husbands, but not in sin, not in sin. Sapphira could have told the truth and spared her own life here. She was one lie away from eternity. **‘*Have you sold it for so much? And she said ‘Yes, for so much.’*’** Now Peter knows the program now, she’s gonna fall down dead too, **“Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.”** (verse 9) so he knows the whole program by now. He tells us something interesting here, her guilt is indicated. He says **“How is it that ye have agreed”** *symphonia* in the Greek, we get symphony from it, Peter says **‘*you were in harmony with your husband in regards to this thing, you guys were in concert together, it was a symphony, you worked together to do this thing,*’** and look, the center of it is this, **‘*To tempt the Spirit of the Lord.*’** What does he mean, to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? How did they tempt the Spirit of the Lord? I’m convinced that God didn’t want to kill them, Ananias and Sapphira. There’s nothing that tells us that they were unbelievers

or that they went to hell. I don't know. Remember Jesus when he was tempted by Satan, he said **"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."** Satan had said to him **'Cast thyself down,'** Jesus answered him **"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."** They put God in a position where he had to choose between his love for Ananias and Sapphira and his own Word, choosing his own Word, they tempted him, they forced his hand, they put him in a circumstance I don't think that he wanted to be in, because he's gracious and longsuffering and merciful. Peter says to her **'How is it, how could you do this, you've agreed together, symphonia, to tempt the Spirit of the Lord.'** Now we've got the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, now the Spirit of the Lord. **"behold" consider, "the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out."** (verse 9b) **"Then she fell down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband."** (verse 10) (and you could hear them in the crypt saying *'I can't believe you talked me into this...'*) **buried next to her husband."** and look, **"And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things."** (verse 11)

### *The Number One Problem With Our Nation*

It tells us in **Psalm 19** that **'the fire of the Lord is clean,'** there's something healthy about it. The problem with our nation, **Jeremiah 2:19, 'your own sins will correct you, your backslidings will reprove you, you have left off, it is an evil thing that my fear is not in thee.'** There is no fear of God within this nation. I remember on 9/11, did you see that whole group of cronies standing on the Capitol steps singing God Bless America, they were all there, man, singing out loud, they've forgotten all about it, haven't they, they've forgotten all about it. You know, sometimes people say *'I wish we were like the Book of Acts,'* let's take a second thought, what if the same standard was held. You come to church, fighting with your wife, fighting with your kids, yelling in the car, and you get here, you walk in, somebody says *'Hey, how you doing?'* You say *'Oh great, praise the Lord!'* **Kaboom!!!** you just fall over dead, *'Now there's one that's not telling the truth there, you know.'* *'I have decided to follow the cross before the world'...Kaboom!!!* *'I surrender'* **kaboom!!!** I mean, no hypocrisy. This early church now,

there's a healthy fear. Now it's going to tell us right after this, the Holy Spirit starts to heal and do signs and wonders. He doesn't want to hold anyone away in terms of terror, that wasn't the program. There was to be a healthiness to this, and it's placed in front of us.

*After This Important Lesson Was Learned, God Ramps Up  
The Church's Witness And Calling Of New Believers*

But look what it says here, **“And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch...” (verse 12)** now that's the center of activity as far as the apostles preaching, and the Holy Spirit now is not grieved, he's not withholding himself, he's not withholding himself with those who have need or hurting and broken. No, there's signs and wonders taking place, and he's re-affirming God's love to them, he would not leave them at a distance, terrified, he begins to minister now, the Holy Spirit in an extremely remarkable way. Now look, it would seem those observing them **“...and of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)” (verses 13-14)** Now we had 3,000 saved on the Day of Pentecost, 5,000 saved after that, now multitudes are being added. Look, there is a debate over the genuine population of Jerusalem in these days, and the estimates go from 250,000 up to a million, but they say there were over 100,000 believers in Jerusalem. And if we're looking at 250,000 that's a third of the city that came to Christ within 40 years (30AD to 70AD). That's incredible. **“And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.” (verses 14-15)** Doesn't this hark back to the Gospels, to Jesus' own ministry? Because it is Jesus' own ministry. Luke says **‘The former treatise that Jesus began to do and teach,’** this is what Jesus is continuing to do and teach. And this miraculous ministry is taking place to the point where they're actually bringing people, just laying them in the street, hoping that the shadow of Peter as he passes by, will fall on them. Now it doesn't say they were all healed, but evidently enough of them were that this was a practice. And look at the next verse, **“There**

**came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.” (verse 16)** So you have to get the scope of what’s taking place here at this point in time. And sadly, I mean, we obviously don’t see miracles or healing to this degree. We see them sometimes to a greater extent in the mission field. We do see the Lord heal, occasionally here, we have seen him do some wonderful things. But we don’t see anything like this. And you look, and see some of these guys on TV, swirling around their sports jackets and knocking people down, just some of the, you know, Robert Tilton and Benny Hinn and some of these guys, and you think ‘*Well produce, let’s get the doctors,*’ you know they can’t produce one bonafide, legitimate, verified miracle. Compare that to one of the apostles walking into Children’s Hospital and emptying out the entire hospital. You understand the difference here, between reality and some of the side-show stuff that goes on today? These were the signs of the apostles, God had granted them the gift of miracles and healings, so much so, that they’re putting people in the streets just so that Peter’s shadow might touch them. And evidently a good portion of them, it doesn’t say what percentage, but enough are being healed that this practice continued. And then multitudes are coming from surrounding cities, and it says, as they come to the apostles, they’re healed, ***every one of them.*** Very much like the ministry of Jesus in Galilee and some of the places that we read about. So what a remarkable scene this is.

*The Religious Leadership Freaks Out, Tries To Contain  
And Stop This Movement Which Was Becoming The New  
Testament Church*

**“Then”** in that context, **“the high priest rose up, and all that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation.” (verse 17)** the Greek word there is “envy,” they are filled with envy, because thousands are turning to Christ. Multitudes are gathering every day, miracles are taking place at a rate that they had only heard about in the ministry of Jesus, and now Caiaphas and Annas the high priest are Sadducees, they rise up in indignation, in envy, and look again, the ruling party was the Sadducees, they only believed in the first five books of Moses, the Torah, they did not believe in angels, they did not believe in the

resurrection, they didn't believe in the miraculous. So this is all very bad for their theology. The apostles are preaching the resurrection and doing miracles every day in the Temple courts, that's very bad for their theology. And they're filled with envy, and notice, **"And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison."** (verse 18), plural, and the grammar indicates "publicly," in front of everyone. And they took them, **"and put them in the common prison."** Now this is the apostles, chapter 6, verse 2, it says "the twelve," so we're talking about "the twelve" here. The twelve of them were put in prison. And I wonder what they did when they got there? I'm sure they're praying, because the last prayer-meeting they had the building was shaking. So they're put into the prison, and **verse 19** says, **"But"** King James says "the angel," there's no definite article, **"But an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth and said, brought them forth,** he brings them out, and says, **"Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life."** (verse 20) he doesn't say *'Get out of town, baby, I got you out of prison, now get out of here.'* He says ***'You're not freed so you can flee, you're set free so you can go right back into the heat of battle.'*** Now I love this, because these are the Sadducees that throw them in prison, the Lord knows they don't believe in angels, so he sends an angel to get the apostles out of prison, send someone the Sadducees don't believe in. And evidently, if you look down in verse 23, when they go to check the prison, they find out the guards saying ***'We found the prison truly shut with all safety,'*** and the keepers were still standing there outside the door keeping guard, ***'but when we opened up we found no men.'*** So, the angel comes and opens the door, and evidently the guards are in a trance. And the twelve apostles are set free and the doors shut again, and the guards never even know. And the angel says to these guys, ***'I want you to go on back into the temple and preach the Gospel again, the words of this life, this eternal life, this resurrected life.'*** **"And when they"** the twelve of them now, **"heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel,"** the Sanhedrin **"and sent to the prison to have them brought."** (verse 21) and you can see they're sitting there, talking, thinking *'Well we finally got our hands on these guys, and we gotta put a stop to this, Go get 'em and bring 'em in.'* **"But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, saying,**

**The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.” (verses 22-24)** They didn't know what this was about, and they doubted. **“Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.” (verse 25)** *‘hey, you know the men you put in prison,’ ‘Ya,’ ‘They’re standing in the Temple, preaching again.’* Now again, we have these interesting interludes, and the only reason we have a dialogue of what takes place in the Sanhedrin, the apostles are not there, Luke is not there, it's because Saul of Tarsus is there. And we're going to hear in the next chapter, **‘Many of the priests came to the faith.’** So some of those who were in there, as Luke puts the quill to the page and is guided by the Spirit to write this Book, he had some of those who had been inside, saying, *‘You should have seen how smug these guys were, they were sitting around saying ‘All right, go get those jokers out of prison and bring ‘em in here,’ and he said, you should have seen the look on their faces when they said ‘Well we went and the doors were locked, everybody was guarding the place, we went up and nobody was there,’ and he said, ‘look we were sitting in the meeting scratching our heads, some guy came running in saying ‘You know those guys you’re looking for? They’re out standing in the Temple, preaching and teaching the people again.’* **“Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.” (verse 26)**...evidently there was no struggle, they were afraid of the people though, the high priest and their officers, lest they should have been stoned. **“And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.” (verses 27-28)** you'd think the high priest would say *‘How did you guys get out of prison?’* that's not what he asked them. He says **‘Didn't we tell you not to preach anymore?’** I mean, come on, cut us a break, the guys were at the prison, the guards were there, the guys, they escaped, you didn't even ask Houdini how he got out of there. It's amazing to me, they didn't say *‘How did you get out of prison?’* that's not what they do, they said **“Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in**

**this name? and, behold,”** how wonderful, **“ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine,”** *You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine,* **“and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.”** Now, if you remember, back in Matthew chapter 27, verse 25, when Pontius Pilate, and they said **‘Give us Barabbas,’** and Pontius Pilate said, **‘What shall I do with this man?’** they said **‘Crucify him,’** and Pontius Pilate said **‘What has he done?’** and they all screamed **‘His blood be upon us and our children.’** I think these guys got a short memory. Now they’re saying to the apostles **‘you’re trying to put his blood upon us,’** they had already cried **‘Let it be on us.’**

*A Transference Of Spiritual Power And Authority Is Taking Place Between the Sanhedrin And The Apostles Of Jesus Christ*

**“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.” (verse 29)** and it’s emphatic, it really says **“we must obey God rather than men.”** that’s the truth for you and I also, civil disobedience. We’re not those who encourage civil disobedience. We should pray for our leaders, we should be praying for our new President, all the time. I do not want his job. Imagine what he’s waking up to now thinking *‘What have I gotten myself into?’* It’s not funny, in the sense that, the threat of terrorism is there, every day he’s getting his briefing, he’s got a whole constituency he’s going to have to try to please, and he’s realizing in a huge way, life is hanging in the balance, there’s other prudent decisions that have to be made that you have to think about, then you pray for him. But when they tell us, Paul says we’re to submit to the authorities that be, they’re ordained of God and so forth, and yet Paul went to prison for not submitting to them. Peter was crucified for not submitting to them. So, yes, **we do not** endorse shooting people at abortion clinics, we don’t endorse any of that kind of stuff. But you and I will make a decision someday, if it comes to that point, where they tell us I can’t talk to my grandchildren about Jesus Christ anymore, I have a higher authority. I heard they tried to pass in the Colorado state legislature a law that says it’s illegal to carry your Bible in public, because it’s got hate-speech in it. So your Bible is going to have to be your concealed weapon now. Isn’t it crazy? It’s crazy. If it comes to a point where they tell me I can’t carry a Bible and I can’t share Jesus Christ, then I must go where

they've gone, it's emphatic, we must obey God rather than men. And the problem that the Sanhedrin are having now, is they're no longer up against unlearned and ignorant men, they're realizing now at this point in time, that they are now up against these apostles and the Holy Ghost, and angels. They don't stand a chance. Peter says this in **verse 30**, and I believe as we read these next few verses, he is still appealing to the Sanhedrin, even Jesus Christ through them is still reaching out to these men. **"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree."** the most vile death in Israel. **"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."** (verse 31) and they're the leaders of Israel standing right in front of them. **"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."** (verse 32) and that, in regards to obedience, that God gives the Holy Ghost to those who obey him through repentance and faith, it says they were cut to the heart. What's happened is, the authority of God is here. ***The Sanhedrin are no longer the custodians of truth. The Sanhedrin is no longer the repository of truth in the world, that has changed hands, and now these apostles and the Church of Jesus Christ are the custodians of God's truth, it's no longer Israel.*** Now we have Peter with greater authority, speaking to the religious leaders of the nation, saying ***'This is the story,'*** and it's all about repentance and remission of sins, even for the nation of Israel, **"And we are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."** (verse 32) and it says they're cut to the heart, and they are going to, in a blasphemous way, turn against them, **"When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them."** (verse 33) Now, God is still not through, he will give them another chance in three chapters, through a man named Stephen, and he would bring the house down. They're going to scream and hold their ears, and God is still going to give them another opportunity to hear the truth. [Comment: This first Christian church in Jerusalem, as Pastor Joe said, swelled to over 100,000 members during the 40-year span of time from 30AD to 70AD. Then, when the witness of that early church was complete, and the leaders and the nation of Judah would still not listen, God took the nation of Judah and Jerusalem down hard, first in 70AD, when Jerusalem was conquered and the Temple destroyed, and then in 133-135AD when the whole nation of Judea was destroyed, and the few remaining Jewish survivors were

driven out of the whole land of Israel, not to return in any substantial numbers until the 1940s, during WWII. God took *very* seriously the warning and witness he gave to the Jews in Judea during that 40-year span of time, and when they wouldn't listen, he turned his witness to the Gentile nations for a period of close to 2,000 years before he would start calling any Jews in significant numbers. We see that calling taking place right now amongst the Jews with the Messianic Jewish revival which has taken place over the past 50 years. At the cross the apostle John had been given custody over Mary, Jesus' mother, and as 70AD approached he moved her safely to Ephesus, where Paul had established and laid the foundation for a thriving church. Many of the Jewish believers followed him north to safety, thus continuing what Revelation would call the Ephesus era of the Church, as it passed out of Judea and into Asia Minor. Major wars tend to relocate people and churches, and this one did that for sure. Has the Lord witnessed to you? He won't do it forever.] So he tells them this, I believe there's pathos here, he's not cold or hard-hearted in regards to this.

### *The Wisdom Of One Man*

And it says **“When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.” (verse 33) ‘How do we kill these guys?’ “Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;” (verse 34)** Now again, we're going to hear what he says, the apostles are put out, but we're still going to hear what he says, that means we have an inside line here, from Saul of Tarsus or someone else. Now Gamaliel stands up to speak, the School of Gamaliel, amongst the fundamentalists, the Orthodox, the Pharisees, those who embraced the entire Word of God and kept it as best they could, the School of Gamaliel was the most revered. The Talmud tells us he's the grandson of Hillel, one of their most revered rabbis. The Mishna says that the nation of Israel in his day called him Rabbon, if you called someone Rabboni, it was *persona my lord*, or rabbi, it was *teacher*, when you said Rabbon it was plural *our Master*, it was one of the greatest and most endearing terms that could be addressed to someone. The Mishna says that Israel called him Rabbon. Nicodemus was an instructor in this School of

Gamaliel, they were close friends. And the Mishna says this, *“At the death of Gamaliel the glory the Torah ceased, and purity and separateness died.”* Imagine that. The Mishna says so revered was this man, the Mishna says *“At the death of Gamaliel the glory of the Torah ceased, and purity and separateness died.”* So he’s quite a man. He stands up here and he wants to address them, they all give ear, they respect him, he puts the apostles out, **“and [he] said to them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain;”** evidently by the Romans **“and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished;”** again through the Romans **“and all, even as many as obeyed him were dispersed.”** (because he told them it was illegal as religious Jews, they had one king which was Jehovah, and they didn’t have to pay tribute to the Romans, so the Romans put an end to this.) **“And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.”** (verses 35-39) *‘if this work be of men, it will come to nothing, the Romans will deal with that in the same way.’* He doesn’t just say, if this counsel is of men it will come to nothing, because there are a lot of councils that lasted, you know, Islam has been around a long time, the JW’s have been around a long time, there are some things, religious movements that are born of the council of men that have some enduring quality to them, that even though they’re deceptive they endure. Here, what he’s saying is these other two movements were put down by the Romans, he’s saying the same thing will happen if this movement happens to be of men, it will come to nought, **“But” verse 39, “if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.”** There’s a man standing there, Saul of Tarsus who doesn’t listen to this passage. Now look, that’s a remarkable thing, it tells us some things about this man Gamaliel, that he would be that honest, not afraid to say this. Tradition does tell us this, that Nicodemus, traditions tells us it was Nicodemus ben Gorion, that he was the brother of Josephus and the third richest man in Jerusalem, and that after Nicodemus went with Joseph of Arimathea and took down the body of Jesus and put it in the tomb, that he was then

excommunicated, he lost everything. Tradition says that Gamaliel took him into his home, and they were friends. And in the Roman calendar, I believe it is August 3<sup>rd</sup>, is St. Nicodemus day of...St. Nicodemus of the house of Gamaliel, and for all we know, Nicodemus may have been talking to this man, saying, *'Gamaliel, I'm telling you, I took the body down, we took the crown of thorns off, we washed him, we wrapped him, we put it in the tomb, and I went back there three days later, and **it was not there.** And several days later, we saw him walking, the body that we washed, and cleansed and wrapped, we saw it standing there talking to us, he's risen Gamaliel.'* And very interesting to hear the response of this man. Tradition tells us that Saul of Tarsus studied in the School of Gamaliel, and Gamaliel at one point said he was not able to keep Saul in books, that Saul was such a voracious reader. Look, I would encourage all of you guys, computers are wonderful, but books, they don't crash, read books, read. At one point they're going to say *'Saul, your much learning hath made thee mad.'* He was a scholar, he was a student. I'm not saying be an academician, but be a scholar. Be the Bereans, don't believe what I say, study to show yourself approved, see if these things are so. Gamaliel said **'But if this movement be of God,'** and he's quieted the whole crowd, they're going to kill them, everybody's lost their minds, these are the most upscale religious leaders in the world about to have a riot. Gamaliel calls them to their senses, and says **'But if this movement is of God, you can't overthrow it, lest perhaps you be found even to fight against God.'** **"And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go."** (verse 40) So they said (to Gamaliel) *'You're right, we don't want to be found fighting against God, so let's get those guys and beat 'em.'* Now, the Greek is here, *"they skinned them,"* this is a flogging, which was permitted to the Sanhedrin, this would have been 39 stripes, not with a scourge, but with a flog, **'when they had skinned them, when they had beaten them,'** **"they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go."** And look in **verse 41**, the tenses are interesting, it says, **"And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."** It says they were rejoicing as they walked out, that they were accounted worthy to suffer for his name. What do you do with guys like that. They say *'Ah, you're right Gamaliel, we don't want to be found fighting with God, get those guys in here,'* so they get the 12 of them, they must pull down their robes down to

the waist, and they flog them, they skin them, peeled their skin off, they beat them, and they say *'You guys, get out of here! And we don't want to hear you preaching this name of Jesus anymore,'* and as they're walking out the door, ***'Praise you Lord, thank you for this flogging, Oh Lord we got to suffer for you, this is wonderful!'*** and the Sanhedrin has gotta be there thinking *'What do you do with guys like this, what do we do?'* it's just so amazing. And you know they gotta be filled with the Holy Ghost, because I can't imagine personally getting flogged and then walking out saying *'Lord, thank you, this is really cool, my back feels great,'* there's a genuine moving of the Holy Ghost here as we look at this. And these guys go out praising his name that they were worthy to suffer shame for his name, as they leave, and it says **"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." (verse 42)** They told them not to speak in his name anymore and **"they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."** Everything they were told not to do, it says here, they continued to do. Now they were preaching and teaching, those are two different things. Teaching, for the saved, generally, preaching for the lost. The word "teacher" means to instruct, and the Church needs to be instructed. Preaching, the word "*evangeliso*" used here in the Greek, it means "the proclamation of the Good News," and most often in relation to the lost. But that was taking place in the Temple, they were preaching the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, and it says multitudes were being added as they preached the good news of Jesus Christ. And they leave, the 12 of them, they're kind of whupped up and beaten up, but they're there (in the Temple) and they're instructing the people that have gotten saved. And again, they're using the Old Testament, their text book is the Old Testament. And they're no doubt taking people through Isaiah 53, no doubt they're talking people through Genesis 22, saying, look here you got Abraham, take note the first time in the Bible the word "love" is used, the first time in the Bible "lamb" is used, the first time in the Bible "worship" is used, it's all in this chapter here, ***'Take thy son, thine only son whom thou lovest, and take him to a mountain that I will tell thee of, Mount Moriah, Golgotha, the same place.'*** and just what a picture, God, certainly ***'How can I hide from Abraham the thing that I'm going to do to my own Son,'*** he says ***'bring your son and offer him, I'm going to teach you something, I'm going to show you something.'*** I would imagine the apostles would take them to Genesis, again, you guys have been here when Chuck Missler has taught the genealogy in

chapter 5 of Genesis, and you just read through it, Adam begot Seth, Seth begot Enosh...you go through that, and then you translate the names, “man, Adam, Seth, appointed, Enosh, mortal, Lemech, sorrow, and you translate all the names it says “man appointed mortal sorrow, but the blessed God will come down teaching this his death shall bring the afflicted comfort.” Now who would find the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the genealogy in Genesis chapter 5, a rabbi? I don’t think so. And imagine what it was like to be with these apostles and hear them teaching the multitudes Isaiah 53, **Zechariah chapter 10, verse 12, ‘They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.’** Imagine what it was like, and then translating those truths to Jesus Christ **‘when we walked with him, this is what we saw, this is when he hung on the cross, it was like Moses when he lifted up the serpent,’** and just the whole thing, how incredible these days of instruction must have been. And again, it’s all with the Old Testament, without the benefit that we have of the New Testament being written out. So, remarkable, remarkable days now.

### *In Closing*

Read ahead...we come to the next problem in the Church, and again, as we read through these things, there are reasons. Look, for you and I tonight, I would say guard your hearts from hypocrisy. Matthew’s Gospel uses the word “hypocrite” more than the rest of the Bible combined. Matthew, his name was Levi, a publican, 99 quotations from the Old Testament. The name of Levi probably he was raised in a Levitical family. But at some point he saw such hypocrisy in the Temple precincts, he said *‘I’m outa here, I’m getting everything I can for myself,’* and he becomes a tax collector...and over and over again he talks about hypocrisy...because we’re supposed to not just talk the talk but walk the talk. We’re supposed to be walkie-talkies, not talky-talkies. Integrity, that we would be one with our profession. And God through his Spirit can grant that to us, and look, if the government someday prohibits us, we’re going to have to take a stand to be one with our professions. And I’m not, look, again, I’m an escapist, I’m a Pre-Tribulationist, I want to sing songs, teach the Bible and get raptured, if God’s taking suggestions. It might not happen that way [no, it might not, see <https://unityinchrist.com/mathew/Matthew24-1-31.htm>]. It

might not happen. I believe this, Jesus Christ could come tonight, he could come at any moment. Look at what's happening in the news, look what's happening in the Middle East, look at what's happening in the economy, look at what's happening in the world we live in...the economy's going out the window, we're ready to go to World War III, the avion flu could knock down 300,000,000, I mean, it's the world we live in. Isn't it interesting, through entertainment, we get our minds warped into the television and the media and so forth, hey, open your eyes, read books, take note of what's going on. The Internet's a blessing and a curse, open your eyes, there's some wonderful resources on there in regards to information. But the days we live in, it's important for you and I, let's be genuine. We can be failing, and still be genuine. We can come to one another for prayer and confess our faults to one another. We can say *"I'm really struggling with this, could you pray for me, this is an area in my life where I've had a terrible time, for years I've been trying to get freedom, and I just want to have victory here."* That's what's different than living in sin, putting on the mask, *'Praise the Lord brother! Praise the Lord sister!'* you know, playing the whole role, while the truth is, your life is a completely different thing. That is hypocrisy. Let's not go there, let's be honest...these things are written for our learning and our instruction. So is the next chapter, read ahead, again, some churches never make it past chapter 6...but let's stand, let's pray...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Acts 5:1-42, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

related links:

Audio version: <http://resources.ccphilly.org/SPM600>

We're closer to the end of the age than we think. see <https://unityinchrist.com/mathew/Matthew24-1-31.htm>

What was the Early Church like in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century? For a good research paper, see <https://unityinchrist.com/history2/index3.htm> and read through that whole four "html" page study. It is quite enlightening.

