

* ACTS

The Continuing Work of Jesus

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, ² and kept back *some* of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. ³ But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *some* of the price of the land? ⁴ While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." ⁵ And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. ⁶ The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

⁷ Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price." ⁹ Then Peter *said* to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out *as well*." ¹⁰ And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.

(Acts 5:1-11)

* A Deadly Deceit

Acts 5:1-11

A Deadly Deceit

1. What was their sin?

- it was NOT merely the failure to give the full price of the land they sold
- it was their deliberate deception and hypocrisy; they lied about the price of the land

A Deadly Deceit

1. What was their sin?

- *possible motives*
 - love of money or lack of trust in the Lord
 - a desire to appear more generous and self-sacrificing than they really were

A Deadly Deceit

2. Why was this sin so egregious?

- it was a conspiracy to lie against the Holy Spirit – to deny the reality of His presence and work in the community of the believers
- it was a sin against the Spirit-created unity and fellowship of the church (cf. Eph. 4:25)

A Deadly Deceit

3. Why was it dealt with so severely?

- it was the first overtly public sin in the church against the Holy Spirit's work
- it was intended to produce a healthy, lasting fear upon the church in all generations

A Deadly Deceit

Lessons

1. The church is the Spirit-created community of believers in which the Holy Spirit dwells
2. We must fear and deal with sin that hinders the expression of unity, love and holiness of the fellowship created by the Spirit

¹⁶ Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?

¹⁷ If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.

(1 Corinthians 3:16-17)