

BIBLE STUDY – ACTS Chapter 5 – Leader Notes

1. This wealthy couple had the right to retain their property, but they sinned grievously by pretending to offer it all. Their pious playacting and deceit disrupted the marvelous unity of the church (4:32). This is first deliberate sin recorded in the Church's history.

2. Unsuccessful in his first attempt to curtail the success of the church in proclaiming the Gospel by persecution and threats, Satan tried again to slow the church down – this time from within the congregation. (LL)

3. Peter allowed Sapphira to come clean and repent.

4. If no dire consequences had followed this act of sin, the results among the believers would have been serious when the deceit became known. Not only would dishonesty appear profitable, but the conclusion that the Spirit could be deceived would follow. It was important to set the course properly at the outset in order to leave no doubt that God will not tolerate such hypocrisy and deceit. (CSB)

5. It is interesting to note that a similar incident with the same type of severe punishment happened just as the Israelites were about to occupy the Promised Land (Joshua 7:1-26). On that occasion one of the Israelites, a man named Achan, succumbed to temptation and stole some of the goods captured by the Israelites in a battle. Achan's sins caused God to become angry with the Israelites, who were not blessed by God with victory until the sin of Achan was uncovered and punished. The event recorded in Joshua was a warning to the entire OT church. This event recorded in Acts is a warning to the entire NT church, including us today. We have the same sinful nature they did. Because that is the case, we also need to be strong in the Lord and alert always to the danger of giving in to temptation. A weekly reading (or whenever the temptation takes place Psalm 139 would help to keep our awareness of the intimacy of God's involvement in our daily lives bright and fresh. (LL)

6. a. "Miraculous signs and wonders" is Luke's phrase for identifying the work of the Spirit. The work of the Spirit is to point to the presence of Jesus (Jn 14:26; 15:26; 20:22–23). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

b. In direct defiance of the Sanhedrin's order, the congregation met daily and openly in an area of the temple that could easily accommodate thousands at a time. The quietness and orderliness of the crowd, as well as the non-interference from the outsiders, was a miracle in itself. For the first time we hear about people coming from the towns surrounding Jerusalem. The success was phenomenal. It now seemed as though the entire population of Jerusalem and even surrounding towns would soon be won for Christ. (LL)

c. Because of the fate of Ananias and his wife, no pretenders or halfhearted followers risked identification with the believers. Luke cannot mean that no one joined the Christian community.