

# Comments About Acts 5

This article is from the "Among Friends" section of the Church of God Big Sandy's website, churchofgodbigandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of June 24, 2017.

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I began a series of brief articles to discuss chapters in the book of Acts. This week, we will talk about chapter 5.

May this project encourage you to review the valuable history found in the book of Acts.

## **Severe consequence**

If you recall, Acts 4:32 and verses 34-35 mentioned how the energized disciples shared some possessions to serve the needs of other disciples.

At the end of Acts 4 (verses 36-37), Luke mentioned Barnabas as a good example—because he was known for using his possessions to encourage the brethren.

In the beginning of chapter 5 (verses 1-11), Luke mentioned Ananias and Sapphira as bad examples—because they lied about how much they were giving.

The story provides an example of a severe consequence.

## **Astonishing miracles**

Many miracles were done among the people by the hands of the apostles (verse 12).

None of the religious leaders dared to join the disciples, even though the people esteemed the disciples highly (verses 13-14).

The people flocked to the disciples, even desiring the shadow of Peter to fall on some of them (verses 15-16).

## **Irritated Sadducees**

Acts 5:17 confirmed what we said last time about the Sadducees—who were heavily involved with the priests, the temple and the Sanhedrin.

*Acts 5:17*—"Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation."

These religious leaders cast the disciples into prison (verse 18). An angel freed the disciples from prison (verse 19) and instructed them to teach in the temple (verse 20).

The religious leaders called a meeting and sent people to bring the disciples to them (verse 21). But the representatives found the disciples teaching in the temple (verses 22-26).

The religious leaders brought the disciples to the council to question them (verses 27-28).

Notice Peter's answer.

*Acts 5:29-32*—"But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit [which] God has given to those who obey Him.' "

### **Gamaliel's advice**

The religious leaders were furious and wanted to kill the disciples (verse 33).

However, a Pharisee on the council named Gamaliel advised the council to refrain from a knee-jerk reaction (verses 34-39).

The famous section of Gamaliel's advice is found in verses 38-39.

*Acts 5:38-39*—"And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God."

Based upon Gamaliel's wise advice, the council put its emotions aside. Instead of killing the disciples, the religious leaders merely beat them (verse 40).

What was the reaction of the disciples?

- They rejoiced because they followed the example of Christ (verse 41).
- On a daily basis, they went to the temple and homes continuing to teach and preach about Jesus as the Christ (verse 42).