



THE BARNABAS FACTOR

DYNAMICS OF CHARACTER

“THAT IS THE PRICE” (Acts 5:1-10)

“The account of Ananias and Sapphira stands in vivid contrast to that of Barnabas. The sin was dishonest dealing with the Holy Spirit. The judgment was swift and terrible.”—G. Campbell Morgan

I. INNOCENT ENTERPRISE (Acts 5:1)

- A. The principals—a couple involved with the Church.
- B. The premise—a legitimate real estate sale.

II. ILLICIT WITHHOLDING (5:2)

- A. The agreement to deceive (v. 2)
 - 1. Note Acts 4:32-37, Barnabas’ example.
- B. Ananias’ deceptive public display.

“To lie a little is not possible; whoever lies, lies a whole lie.”
—Victor Hugo

III. ILL-FATED INTERROGATION (5:3, 4)

- A. Peter’s miraculous disclosure (v. 3)
 - 1. A triad of judgment—Satanic motivation, lying to the Holy Spirit, selfish withholding a portion of the money.
- B. Peter’s search for reasons (v. 4)

IV. IRONIC JUDGMENT (5:5, 6)

- A. Fatal fall (v. 5a)
- B. Fearful reaction (v. 5b)
- C. Forthwith burial (v. 6)
 - 1. Reminiscent of Achan’s judgment (Joshua 7)
 - 2. “Sin that leads to death” (1 John 5:16)

V. IRRESPONSIBLE LINKAGE (5:7-10)

- A. Sapphira’s guilt (vs. 7, 8)
- B. Sapphira’s indictment (v. 9)
- C. Sapphira’s judgment (v. 10)

VI. INTERNAL APPLICATIONS (5:11)

- A. Emotional and spiritual reaction to the events.
- B. Impact on “the whole church”. First use of the title, “church”.

“It is an awful hour when the first necessity of hiding anything comes. The whole life is different thenceforth. When there are questions to be feared and eyes to be avoided and subjects that must not be touched, then the bloom of life is gone.”

—Phillips Brooks (1835-1893)

FOR CONSIDERATION...

1. What was the central sin issue in the Ananias/Sapphira tragedy?
2. Compare their story with that of Achan in the Old Testament (Joshua 7). Why was the penalty so extreme?
3. What were the positive results of the tragic judgment that fell on Ananias and Sapphira?
4. What does the account say to the present-day Church?
5. Compare the character qualities of Barnabas with Ananias and Sapphira.



The Judgment of Ananias (Acts 5)