

Acts of the Apostles # 13

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Barnabas sold a property and brought the proceeds to the Apostles to distribute as they were led by the Holy Spirit. Ananias and Sapphira sold something, brought a portion of the proceeds to the Apostles yet lied, saying they were donating the entire price.

Peter demanded, '*... why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? ... why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.*' When Ananias heard this, he fell down dead! A short time later, Sapphira came in, telling the same lie; Peter declared: '*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.' Acts 5:3-4, 9-10

Acts 5:11: '*And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.*'

This is real life! All of these miraculous happenings are happening! Everyone in and around Jerusalem has heard and seen it all! Nothing has been hidden, though the Priests, Pharisees and Sadducees wish it were. All have seen and heard of the miracles and also of the deaths of two of the Christians, supposedly by the mere words of Peter, their leader.

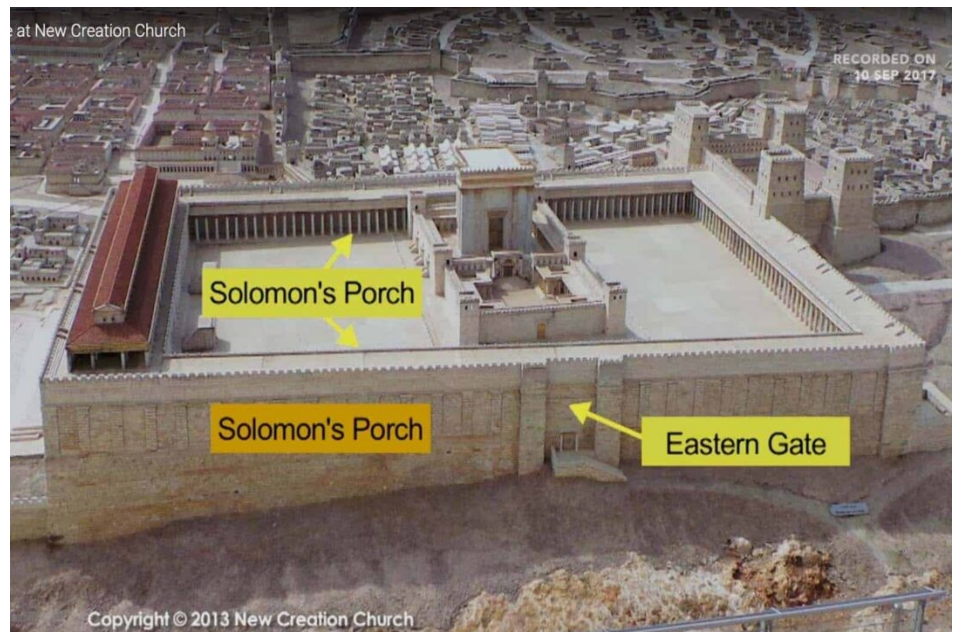
The Believers held a reverential fear and awe of God; others feared Peter and what they thought he could do. Those whom God was calling, came eagerly to hear the Words of Life; others came only as near as they dared, in fear for their lives.

Verse 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.*'

Many signs and wonders: miracles and healings... genuine healings from genuine sicknesses, deformities, injuries... God was moving among the people, through the hands of the Apostles as the new True Church grew, daily, into the many thousands! Where could they all go? Where could the whole Church, altogether, even be all together?

This first picture is an illustration of the entire Temple Mount; centered, we see the Temple, itself.

The wide, open spaces surrounding the Temple is the 'Court of the Gentiles,' the space where Gentiles were allowed. In *The Revelation*, John is told to measure the Tribulation's Temple: '*And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.*'² But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.' Rev. 11:2



This is the area where Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers, where animals were sold to those going into the Temple to offer their sacrifices.

Around the perimeter of the Temple Mount, we see the great covered colonnade which contained Solomon's Porch; until persecution forbade it, this is where the new and growing True Church met to hear the Words of Life; the final picture shows what it must have been like for all those people meeting together: Solomon's Porch is the great, covered colonnade which spans the outer perimeter of the Temple Mount Complex. This



is where the congregation did congregate; sometimes one Apostle would teach them all at once; sometimes they would break up and try to spread out as two, or four or more Apostles would then teach each group. The Christians would hang on their every word as the Holy Spirit gave each Apostle perfect recall of Jesus' Words; He would then give each Apostle ever-increasing wisdom in expanding on Jesus' Words, helping each one teach, explain and break down each idea contained within the Words of Life.

In this last picture, we see a great crowd gathered at Solomon's Porch; see how it must have been and then imagine how God would quiet the people to silence as they, then, hung on every word... and, I imagine the Holy Spirit would also cause the Apostles' voices to speak out in supernatural volume and clarity; some of them would have been more gifted in speaking and teaching while others were more gifted in writing.

Verse 13: *'And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.'*

Those being called out, unto Salvation by the Holy Spirit, came near and magnified the Apostles' teaching; those who had not been chosen, by God, from the foundation of the World, not being called out unto Salvation by the Holy Spirit... to them, the Apostles' words were foolishness; they were afraid to even come near the Apostles; they didn't dare; they'd all heard of Ananias and Sapphira.

Before He laid the foundations of the Earth, long before Creation... God planned to call, to save and to preserve every person He had chosen to comprise the spotless, virgin bride for His faithful Son; He began with the Disciples/Apostles and then those who believed Jesus' teaching. After that He began calling out to those who would hear the Apostles' words, as they taught in Solomon's Porch and also out and around to different homes of Believers... and then all the way down to you and me, until the Rapture; we are the Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ who will rule and reign with Him for 1000 years and then forever!

Jesus said: *'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. ³⁸ For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. ³⁹ And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day... ⁴⁴ No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day... ⁶⁵ And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.'* John 6

Paul wrote: *'According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved... In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:'* Eph 1:4

This is the beginning of the fulfillment of God's plan to create the Bride for His Son.

Verse 14: *'And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.'*

Here is an early illustration of what True Christianity brought to the world; men and women are equal, both

having full position and membership in the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

From time immemorial, women were considered little more than chattel to be owned and controlled by men. In this time, under Roman rule, a man had complete control over wives, children and servants even as to life or death. One need look no further than lands ruled by Islam, by Hinduism, by Mormonism, etc. Only in True Christianity are women raised to the stature of fully equal children of God, heirs with Jesus Christ of all things, to rule and reign at His side, forever!

'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.' Gal 3:27

Verse 15: *'Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the 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.'*

All we can say about this, is that nothing is impossible with God; He can do anything... even bringing healing to those by whom Peter simply walks.

Here's how it may have come about: everyone had heard about Ananias and Sapphira but they had also heard of all those who were miraculously healed.

If God gifted a man or woman, today, if genuine miraculous, verified healings were happening... every one of us would rush to get in line to be completely healed! If the Internet and TV were reporting it honestly, people by the thousands and by the millions would walk, drive, hitchhike, fly or hop a train as quickly as they possibly could!

That is what is happening here, with the Apostles. There are so, so many standing, sitting or lying on cots... Peter and the others can't possibly get to every one, laying their hands on each one and praying for them. Thus, the Holy Spirit may have said: 'Just walk by them and they will be healed; the people might have, perhaps, created the idea of Peter's shadow having the miraculous power to heal. To be sure, it could have been his shadow which somehow projected healing power but I, rather, think that was man's imagination. Remember, it doesn't say that Peter's shadow healed anyone; it says: 'that *at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them...*'

'... at least... might... some of them...'

Remember, they had prayed: '*... grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, ³⁰ By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.'* Acts 4:30

God was healing according to the Apostles prayer for the sick in Jesus' Name. Many do not want to believe in, or even hear, the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and, so, they fabricate all manner of excuses for healing, other than according to the prayer of faith in Jesus' Name: handkerchiefs, oils, shadows, bones, crosses on chains, etc.

However God accomplished such a complete ministry to so many is not fully explained but: '*they were healed, every one!*'

However they got there, if they made it, they were healed; they all had faith to believe that what was happening, was real. Many of those coming were not yet born again but when God's healing power touched them... I would guess each one then was given the faith to believe unto Salvation; then, each one took their own healed selves back to their families, resulting in many, many more then believing and beginning their own trip to Jerusalem to be healed by the Apostles.

Verse 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,'*

The Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit while the religious leaders were filled with indignation... the way it's always been, even today...

The Greek word used here, for indignation is: Zelos/dzay'-los from which we get: zealous, zealot...

It means: zeal, envy, jealousy, emulation which means: the desire to match or surpass, especially through imitation.

These priests and Sadducees, especially the high priest and his family... they were filled with envy and jealousy... they were furious that these ignorant bumpkins were attracting converts by the tens of 1000's who were hanging on the Apostles' every word in rapt attention; no one had ever hungered for Pharisees' or Sadducees' words as they were toward these followers of this Jesus fellow... I think 'indignation' doesn't even begin to describe these priests' jealous and envious hatred.

Verse 18: *'And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.'*

All of the Jewish religious leadership, full of envy and jealousy, recognizing they were unable to control the Apostles, just as they'd been unable to control Jesus, sought to solve their problem in the same way they'd solved their problem of Jesus of Nazareth; arrest them and kill them; Jesus was no longer a problem, so they thought, and they hoped that soon these, too, would cease to be a problem.

But, just like Jesus, these were unwilling to cooperate; they stubbornly refused to stop being led by God's Holy Spirit...

Verse 19: *'But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, 'Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.'*

The high priest relaxed; he had them safely locked up for the night; he could, at least, get a good night's sleep, but God had other plans... so... back to the Temple grounds to continue speaking the Words of (this) Life. They weren't commanded to speak the words of life but, rather, the words of THIS life... what life... this life... all that these Apostles were experiencing was part of God's plan; they were being persecuted which was God's plan; this was God's message to all the disciples, to all the new believers: this is what you can expect! Jesus had told His disciples:

'These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' John 16:33

'And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake...' Matt 10:22

'If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' John 15:18

Now, everyone, every new believer was seeing this graphic illustration of what to expect from this new and very different way of life... persecution! It's not all power and miracles; in fact, it's going to be mostly persecution and death! and If you can't take it... get out now while you still can... this life is not for cowards, it's not for quitters; it takes courage, it takes strength and that comes only from God's Holy Spirit living within but... if He has chosen you, if He has called you and drawn you to Himself, then He will strengthen you and keep you until the moment He calls you home to Himself and then, you will find that it was all so much more than worth it!

'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; ¹⁸ While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.' 2Cor 4:17

Jesus was faithful to warn His disciples of the difficulties to come but, is it possible that His disciples, now His Apostles, had not done so with their new disciples... perhaps they had already begun to do what is done by so many, today... fail to adequately prepare new converts for the pain and persecution which was sure to come... one of the worst failures of modern 'evangelism:' 'Come to Jesus, He'll be your friend, He'll solve every problem; you'll be healthy, wealthy, happy... life will be grand!'

Today, more than ever before, our responsibility, before God is to tell the truth! The World hates the Lord Jesus Christ and Christians; they cower before Islam and loudly proclaim their hatred of Christians and Jews in the hope of currying favor with that evil, hoping to be killed last... But, 'we have overcome them because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world!' 1 John 4:4