

Last week, our fearless twosome were put into jail.

(Acts 4:1 NKJV) Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them,

(Acts 4:2 NKJV) being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

(Acts 4:3 NKJV) And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.

but they put them into the hands, and under the care and custody of a set of men, to keep and guard them; that they might not go away, until they had an opportunity of bringing them before the Sanhedrin, to be examined and punished by them:

(Acts 4:4 NKJV) However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

(Acts 4:5 NKJV) And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, (6) as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

The ancient Jewish court system was called the Sanhedrin. The Great Sanhedrin was the supreme religious body in the Land of Israel during the time of the [Holy Temple](#).

There were also smaller religious Sanhedrins in every town in the Land of Israel, as well as a civil political-democratic Sanhedrin. These Sanhedrins existed until the abolishment of the rabbinic patriarchate in about 425 C.E.

The earliest record of a Sanhedrin is by Josephus who wrote of a political Sanhedrin convened by the [Romans](#) in 57 B.C.E. Hellenistic sources generally depict the Sanhedrin as a political and judicial council headed by the country's ruler.

Tannaitic sources describe the Great Sanhedrin as a religious assembly of 71 sages who met in the Chamber of Hewn Stones in the [Temple](#) in [Jerusalem](#). The Great Sanhedrin met daily during the daytime, and did not meet on the [Sabbath, festivals](#) or festival eves. It was the final authority on Jewish law and any scholar who went against its decisions was put to death as a *zaken mamre* (rebellious elder). The Sanhedrin was led by a president called the *nasi* (lit. "prince") and a vice president called the *av bet din* (lit. "father of the court"). The other 69 sages sat in a semicircle facing the leaders. It is unclear whether the leaders included the high priest.

The Sanhedrin judged accused lawbreakers, but could not initiate arrests. **It required a minimum of two witnesses to convict a suspect.** There were no attorneys. Instead, the accusing witness stated the offense in the presence of the accused and the accused could call witnesses on his own behalf. The court questioned the accused, the accusers and the defense witnesses.

The Great Sanhedrin dealt with religious and ritualistic [Temple](#) matters, criminal matters appertaining to the secular court, proceedings in connection with the discovery of a corpse, trials of adulterous wives, tithes, preparation of Torah Scrolls for the king and the Temple, drawing up the calendar and the solving of difficulties relating to ritual law.

In about 30 C.E., the Great Sanhedrin lost its authority to inflict capital punishment. After the Temple was destroyed, so was the Great Sanhedrin. A Sanhedrin in Yavneh took over many of its functions, under the authority of Rabban Gamliel. The rabbis in the Sanhedrin served as judges and attracted students who came to learn their oral traditions and scriptural interpretations. From Yavneh, the Sanhedrin moved to different cities in the Galilee, eventually ending up in [Tiberias](#).

Local Sanhedrins consisted of different numbers of sages, depending on the nature of the offenses it dealt with. For example, only a Sanhedrin of 71 could judge a whole tribe, a false prophet or the high priest. There were Sanhedrins of 23 for capital cases and of three scholars to deal with civil or lesser criminal cases.

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-sanhedrin>

(Acts 4:7 NKJV) And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?"

Since most if not all knew what had happened, the issue wasn't the healing, but under whose authority it was performed.

(Acts 4:8 NKJV) Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel:

(Acts 4:9 NKJV) If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well,

(Acts 4:10 NKJV) let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, **that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.**

(Acts 4:11 NKJV) This is the 'STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED **BY YOU BUILDERS**, WHICH HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE.' (12) Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Peter quotes from Ps 118:22...Except that Peter makes it personal "you builders". The Jewish leaders would liken themselves as 'builders'. The Psalm had always been considered as a Messianic Psalm.

the priests, elders, and Scribes; who were fond of being called builders, but made miserable work of it; despising and rejecting the stone of Israel, and instead of him as a foundation, built themselves, and others, on the traditions of the elders, and their own righteousness:

(Acts 4:13 NKJV) Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, **and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled.** And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

Perhaps they marveled that Peter could quote scripture! "oh yeah, these guys were with the man Jesus".

(Acts 4:14 NKJV) And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

How can they argue with the proof in front of them?

(Acts 4:15 NKJV) But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, (16) saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that **a notable miracle** has been done through them *is* evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, **and we cannot deny it.** (17) But so that it spreads no

further among the people, **let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.**"

Even today, anti-Christian Jews will not say the name Jesus. They almost always say 'That Man' or 'Yeshu' which is a derogatory name for Yeshua. This name has appeared as early as the 2nd and 3rd centuries and it is a Hebrew acronym meaning "may his name and memory be obliterated".

(Acts 4:18 NKJV) So they called them and **commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.**

(Acts 4:19 NKJV) **But Peter and John answered** and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. **(20)** For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Their boldness continues...Peter is laying this back on their shoulders:

"you are the judges here, you have been appointed by God; you judge rightly: should we disobey what we know, what we have witnessed, is from God just to please men?"

(Acts 4:21 NKJV) So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, **because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done.**

(Acts 4:22 NKJV) For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

That is, he was of age to testify as to the truth!

(Acts 4:23 NKJV) And being let go, they went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.

(Acts 4:24 NKJV) So when they heard that, **they raised their voice to God with one accord** and said: "Lord, You *are* God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, **(25)** who by the mouth of Your servant **David** have said: 'WHY DID THE NATIONS RAGE, AND THE PEOPLE PLOT VAIN THINGS? **(26)** THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.'

Quoted from Psalm 2:1:2, long considered a Messianic Psalm.

"RAGE" the Hebrew word has the connotation of an angry mob.

Psalms 2:6-8 NKJV "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." **(7)** "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You *are* My Son, Today I have begotten You. **(8)** Ask of Me, and I will give *You* The nations *for* Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.

Psalms 2:12 NKJV Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish *in* the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

(Acts 4:27) "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together (28) to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

This is Peter's "interpretation" of what he just quoted. The unnamed has become the named: Who Killed Jesus? Leadership, Gentiles, Jews: Everyone... because all mankind sinned! Jesus, anointed by God to be The Prophet, The King and the Priest was His Father's Holy Servant – obedient, even to the death of the cross

(Acts 4:29) Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, (30) by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

They humbly ask for continued boldness to speak the Word, to speak of Jesus, to proclaim the gospel in the face of persecution and all threats made against them! And, because Jews demand signs, they asked Him to heal and give signs and wonders through the Name of Jesus, His Holy Servant!

Boldness with humility; boldness and faith IN their Savior and truly by His faithfulness to them to complete what He began.

(Acts 4:31 NKJV) And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.**

Once again, God moved mightily on these men and women – so much so that the place where they were praying was shaken. And, like the time on the Day of Pentecost, they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

And, weren't they just filled several days ago? Yes, they were. But it has been said by some that people 'leak'. So, I guess it depends.

(and, were they speaking in Tongues when they "spoke the word of God with boldness"?)

(Acts 4:32 NKJV) Now the multitude of those who believed were of **one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.**

One Heart/one Soul denotes a "close and tender union"

Evidently, having one heart (spirit) and one soul spilled over to their secular lives... More on this in a moment...

(Acts 4:33 NKJV) **And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.**

Perhaps we might read this as:

Great grace was upon them and with great power....

Grace was given to witness in a most powerful way!

His Grace is sufficient and, we are made strong in our weakness. (2 Corinthians 12:9 NKJV)

If we get all full of ourselves, we will believe we can do things by our own power; God might say “Ok mister high-and-mighty, go ahead, do that on you own – see where that gets ya”.

Grace is given in our humility; power and strength will be made manifest when it is needed.

(Acts 4:34 NKJV) Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, (35) **and laid *them* at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.**

“Joses” is better translated “Joseph”.

Here we are back at the theme of ALL THINGS FOR ALL PERSONS type of economy.

My reading on this indicates that they were not obliged to share all they had in common...it was a free and voluntary action; this may have grown out of 2 considerations:

1. They knew from Jesus that persecutions were coming and might include the seizure of their possessions.
2. Even though they were warned against setting dates, most people expected Jesus to return soon, so putting all their goods into one pot seemed reasonable to properly care for all of the believers and to help support their common cause of spreading the Good News of Jesus!

(Acts 4:36) And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, (37) having land, sold *it*, and brought the money and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

This is the first mention of Barnabas. He was noted here as selling all his land and giving all that he earned to the cause of Christ!

This is important to understand when we continue the saga of our trusty band of warriors!

(Acts 5:1 NKJV) **But** a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.

And BUT is the key word here! And, that's a BIG BUT.

They may have witnessed the generosity of Barnabas, and wanted the same kind of recognition from the church AND the Apostles!

(Acts 5:2 NKJV) And he kept back *part* of the proceeds, his wife also being aware *of it*, and brought a certain part and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

This was perfectly fine. BUT, they evidently made it appear (or actually said) that it was all of the proceeds.

“laid *it* at the apostles' feet” – this is the 3rd time this phrase was used (twice in chapter 4) and here. It's an expression of respect and even veneration, like those who sit at the feet of their teacher.

(Acts 5:3 NKJV) But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself?"

We need to separate the issue from the act. Peter was given a word of knowledge from the Holy Spirit. It must have been a very strong word to then accuse someone of lying to God!

“why as satan filled your heart” – why have you allowed satan to fill your heart? Or, why have you believed such a lie as to allow it to move you to sin so greatly!

Remember: There was NO requirement to give all they had to the Apostles. However, there WAS an expectation to tell the truth!

Satan can influence the life of a believer, even a spirit-filled believer, but he can't do your sinning for you. Ananias had to conceive it in his heart. (Guzik)

As the next verse clarifies.

(Acts 5:4 NKJV) While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

Everything that happened was under the control of Ananias. There was no “need” to lie. Peter would not have berated him for wanting to keep a portion for himself and his family.

But this wasn't a lie just to men, or to the church, but to God! The lie was born in **Greed** in wanting to keep some back and **Pride** in wanting everyone to think he was giving it all!

Peter clearly identifies the Holy Spirit as God! You lied to the Holy Spirit and you lied to God!

The spirit of Ananias is alive and well in the church today. Far too many want to be considered “spiritual” while refusing to pay any kind of price in their service to God. (Guzik)

(Acts 5:5 NKJV) Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.

Peter said nothing about sentencing him to death or declaring a curse upon him. “The death of Ananias was the act of God.”

(Acts 5:6 NKJV) And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried *him* out, and buried *him*.

(Acts 5:7 NKJV) Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

(Acts 5:8 NKJV) And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?" She said, "Yes, for so much."

That's my lie and I'm stickin' to it!

(Acts 5:9 NKJV) Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband *are* at the door, and they will carry you out."

Peter says that they were also 'testing' the Spirit of the Lord. Did they really think that they could get away with it? Do we, when we do something we know to be wrong? Or, perhaps, knowing that it is wrong but believing that by His Grace and Mercy, there will be no consequences?

(Acts 5:10 NKJV) Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying *her* out, buried *her* by her husband.

(Acts 5:11 NKJV) So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

Here we have the rudimentary beginnings of a church. But more...the building up of the Body of Christ! Some had suggested that to ensure purity in the Body that God took these two people out. That certainly reasonable. In this time and place, people knew that they were accountable to God. People knew that there are always consequences for sin. The timing and the severity of the consequences for sin are in the Hands of God. Some have commented that the greater point is, not that God acted so swiftly in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, but that He is often so longsuffering and merciful!

AND SO...

Let's talk about the elephant in the room: Did Ananias and Sapphira go to heaven or go to hell?

But the question remains of whether Ananias and Sapphira were saved in the first place, as nothing in the text rules out their salvation, or indicates their possession of it.

The problem is, it appears to fall into camps, such that many Baptists (as read on the internet)

1. The Word of God does not say they were saved.
2. The Word of God records that they lied to the Holy Ghost.
3. When their great sin was revealed, they both dropped dead immediately with no repentance.

They both are in Hell.

It appears to me that Ananias and Sapphira were not of the believers who were mentioned in the previous chapter. Why, because the previous chapter said they indicating all brought the price. The two in the following chapter did not bring the price. They had heard of the others giving to help and the blessings and thought they would jump on the bandwagon without the full sincerity of giving that the ones in chapter 4 showed.

Yes, maybe they really were not Christians. But what if they were Christians? Would it make a difference if a Christian did this and died or an unbeliever?

You seem to be looking for loopholes in God's Word. As I stated in the other thread, a lying tongue is one of the abominations mentioned that God hates. They died after lying not to man, but to God.

Revelation 21:8 clearly says:

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, **and the abominable**, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, **and all liars**, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

There should be no doubt whatsoever that these two that lied to the Holy Ghost and did not repent went to hell, and will ultimately go to the lake of fire.

Since the Word of God does not say, then we simply do not know. However, if they were saved, then they are in Heaven. Christ's death was enough.

The last verse says that this made those in the church fear - I think that was the point. God did take people out - see 1 Cor about those believers who abused communion. Paul said that is why many of them "sleep," meaning they were killed for this. But they died believers. "Sleep" is never used to mean death for unbelievers.

How can an unbeliever lie to the HS? They don't know the HS nor are they indwelt by the HS.

The last verse says that this made those in the church fear - I think that was the point. God did take people out - see 1 Cor about those believers who abused communion. Paul said that is why many of them "sleep," meaning they were killed for this. But they died believers. "Sleep" is never used to mean death for unbelievers.

I have to disagree with you on sleep never used to mean death for unbelievers. The Bible also disagrees with you.:

Daniel 12:2 And **many of them that sleep** in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and **some to shame and everlasting contempt.**

Do you think that God is going to hold contempt for those who have placed their trust in His Son?

Believers can be taken by God -- there is the "sin unto death" which my pastor explained to us in terms of a believer being in habitual sin that he does not get out of and God takes him. Some believe this was done primarily in the early church and not now. Different views on it.

So if we believe that they were genuine believers then does this lie commit them to hell? No. There is nothing in the story that indicates that they went to hell and this was not a sin that Jesus didn't pay for when He died. As believers they had already passed from death unto life (John 5:24). But coming at the very start of the church, with God incredibly active and the great need to start in purity, it was a sin that required swift and firm judgement - **and the result was that which was needed with a holy fear coming upon the believers.**

1 Corinthians 11:29-30 NKJV (29) For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (30) For this reason many *are* weak and sick

among you, and many sleep.

1 Corinthians 5:1 NKJV It is actually reported *that there is* sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!

1 Corinthians 5:4-5 NKJV (4) In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, (5) deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

And finally, there's Peter's denial of Jesus...

So, Mr. Elephant, what's the answer? Scripture is VERY clear about this situation: Scripture clearly DOES NOT SAY! It does not say whether or not Ananias and Sapphira were believers; It does not say where they went, heaven or hell.

What strikes me is that perhaps this story says more about us than about them. I'm not accusing anyone of being judgmental, except for myself when I struggled with these questions and tried to build a theology around them (meaning, what did I think of God in this situation rather than those who sinned).

Beloved, let's not go down unfruitful bunny trails that lead to dead ends. Let us rather fall on our knees and humble ourselves before God; Let us have an awestruck reverence for God, His Son and the Holy Spirit. When we don't know how God dealt with a situation, the only thing we can say that is absolutely True, is that God did the right thing. Why?

Our God is an awesome God
He reigns from heaven above
With wisdom, power, and love
Our God is an awesome God