

Ananias & Sapphira - Think

Foundation

Bible passage: Acts 5.1-11 & Phil 4.8

Ananias and Sapphira

Joseph, who is better known by his nickname Barnabas, had sold a piece of land and given the money to the Apostles to help the early Christians spread the good news of Jesus, and care for those in need. It seems that many others were inspired by this example and did similar things. Among them were Ananias and Sapphira who also sold a piece of property. It is said later that they didn't have to do this (v4) and having done it they might simply have kept the money, (v4) so it was not this that was wrong. Instead, having sold the property they kept back part of the money and this appears to be because they wanted others to think they had given the whole amount when they had not. They wanted others to think well of them. When Peter confronted them he said they have lied to the Holy Spirit (v3) and so to God (v4).

Jesus warned against doing things for show (Matthew 6.3-4). Ananias and Sapphira would have been generous even if they had only given part of their money so why did they pretend to have given all? It was so that they would be praised by others, but without cause. If they had taken Jesus' teaching to heart, they would not have done what they did, but as it was they deceived others and lied to God. As we will see in the next unit we cannot deceive God because He knows our hearts.

Many see this incident as difficult because both Ananias and Sapphira died under the direct judgment of God. We are used to this sort of thing in the Old Testament, but some seem to



think it shouldn't happen in the New. But this is not the only New Testament example and like the sin of Achan in Judges 7 it comes at a crucial time for the growing community of believers. Normally God doesn't seem to act so directly, though we are warned of His judgment to come, but sometimes He does. What is more, Jesus used some of the Old Testament examples to warn and teach people (eg Lk 17.32).

"whatever is true...think about these things"

Whatever is true - think about these things

In Philippians 4 verse 8 Paul tells us to think about things that are good and worthy of praise from God. Amongst the good things we should think about what is "true". This therefore means to think about things that are true, as we have been doing in this Module, and about being truthful rather than deceitful.

If Ananias and Sapphira had thought about what was true, and what they were proposing to do, they might they have realised why it was wrong and so not gone ahead.



Ananias and Sapphira deceived people in order to be praised but they could not deceive God.