

## Acts 5

vv. 1-11 Ananias and Sapphira (“to rise up” and “beautiful”)

Another Ananias was a high priest and yet another cured Paul

\*withholding the money while pretending to give it all

While alive he was free to do whatever he wished with it.

\*Also the sin of lying

\*Peter is not “killing” Ananias, God is protecting the infant Church

\*lest we think this is a random coincidence, Sapphira follows

\*unity of husband and wife: they share all

\* Note that this temptation is satan trying to enter the world. The evil one cannot make us do things – he has to incite us to act. We have a unique kind of free will

\*recall the idea of the angelic fall, which was established shortly before this period of NT writing (Compare Pharisees and Sadducees) They fell out of rage

\*”three hours” same time as the Crucifixion (or) one Roman hour”

\*”fear” not terror but “timeo” as in Timothy, awe before the Lord

Vv 12-16 Signs and wonders “semia kai therate”

\*Solomon’s portico: their club house

\*note distinction between joining them and believing

\*even the shadow of the disciples has power: cf with relics

\*even from the suburbs they come

\*wonderful cures are a significant drawing point

\*compare with Meggigore: bring out healing and they will come

vv. 17-42 The most famous jailbreak in history: God protects His messengers

\*this arrest leads to more proclamation of the Lord (good comes out of evil)

\*one can imagine the exasperation of the rulers

\*a brief apostolic homily

Repetition of events, citation of the resurrection, linked to offer of salvation

\*Gamaliel: Grandson of Hillel, son of Simon, perhaps the most famous rabbi

Considered at the time a master of the Oral Law, highly respected as a teacher. At one time the nasi, or leader of the Council. Noted for his leniency of interpretation of the Law

\*principle of only the good survives (cf. charismatic movement)

Give it time, a wise precept on many issues in the church

\*”Gamaliel “have nothing to do with these men” (ref. wife of Pilate)

\*ff. by a long discussion of why hasty decisions are often poor ones

“we have lived through far worse than this.” Ref. election of 2020

\*let off with a flogging (Like Jesus) – yet they rejoice

\*”in the Temple and the homes” – the two sanctuaries

## Chapter 6: the rise of the diaconate vv. 1-7

Compare 1 Peter 5:1 and Acts 14:21

Presbyter: used of the high priestly class in Jerusalem

<sup>21</sup> And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, <sup>22</sup> strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” <sup>23</sup> So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

### \*the Hellenists vs Hebrews

Hellenists: the dominant culture of the Eastern Empire

Hebrews: a small minority except in Judea

All of these new officers have Greek names, not Hebrew

Deacons: servants, like waiters

Today deacons are older men, then prob the young and strong

\*distinction between social vs spiritual labors (ref Martha and Mary)

\*recall the advice of Jethro: delegate! Exodus 18:13

Result: the more efficient church gains more converts

“even many of the priests”

## vv. 8-13: the birth of martyrdom

false accusations are a common part of persecutions

his face shone like an angel: ref. Moses on the Mountain

(akiston phos: the uncreated light)

The energies of God apart from the divine essence, which imparts knowledge

Given as a gift of grace to those who enter into long times of spiritual contemplation. “This Light,” he said, “is filled with information. You can ask this Light different questions and it will answer them—questions of an experiential, scientific, ethical, religious, spiritual nature. And you will be filled with such answers that your mind cannot comprehend, that your mouth cannot speak; your mouth can’t pronounce them. But little by little, they are felt, understood, and perceived by the heart. “Both knowing God and beholding the Light happen gradually. Likewise, there is no end to spiritual growth, neither in this life nor in life after death. That’s why the Creed says: “Whose Kingdom shall have no end.” -Metropolitan Neophytos of Morphou