

## Chapter 5

*Ananias and his wife Saphira, for their sacrilege, at Peters word fall downe dead, to the great terrour of the rest. 12. By the Apostles miracles, not only the number, but also their faith so increaseth, that they seeke in the streets to the very shadow of Peter, the townes also about bringing their diseased to Hierusalem. 17. The Rulers againe oppose themselues, but in vaine. 19. For out of prison an Angel deliuereth them, bidding them preach openly to al: 27. & in their Councel Peter is nothing afraid of their bigge wordes: 34. Yea Gamaliel being one of themselues casteth a doubt among them, left the matter be of God, and therefore impossible to be dissolued. 40. Finally, the Apostles being scourged by them, count it an honour, & cease no day from preaching.*

**B**ut a certaine man named Ananias, with Saphira his wife sold a peece of land, <sup>2</sup> and <sup>1</sup>defrauded of the price of the land, his wife being priuie thereto: and bringing a certaine portion, laid it at the feet of the Apostles. <sup>3</sup> And <sup>1</sup>Peter said: Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy hart, that thou shouldest lie to the holy Ghost, and defraud of the price of the land? <sup>4</sup> Remaining, did it not remaine to thee: and being sold, was it not <sup>1</sup>in thy power? Why hast thou put this thing in thy hart? Thou hast not lied <sup>1</sup>to men, but to God. <sup>5</sup> And Ananias hearing these wordes, fell downe, and gaue vp the ghost. And there came great feare vpon al that heard it. <sup>6</sup> And yong men rising vp, remoued him, & bearing him forth buried him. <sup>7</sup> And it was the space as it were of three houres, and his wife, not knowing what was chanced, came in. <sup>8</sup> And Peter answered her: Tel me woman, whether did you sell the land for so much? But she said: Yea, for so much. <sup>9</sup> And Peter vnto her: Why haue you agreed together to tempt the Spirit of our Lord? Behold, their feete that haue buried thy husband, at the doore, and they shall beare thee forth. <sup>10</sup> Forthwith she fell before his feete, and gaue vp the

ghoft. And the yong men going in, found her dead: and caried her forth, & buried her by her hufband. <sup>11</sup> And there fel great <sup>a</sup>feare in the whole Church, and vpon al that heard thefe things.

<sup>12</sup> And by the handes of the Apoftles were many fignes and wonders done among the people. And they were al with one accord in Salomons porch. <sup>13</sup> But of the reft none durft ioyne themfelues vnto them: but the people magnified them. <sup>14</sup> And the multitude of men and women that beleued in our Lord, was more increafed: <sup>15</sup> fo that they did bring forth the fick into the ftreetes, & laid them in beddes and couches, that when Peter came, <sup>16</sup> his fhadow at the leaft might ouerfhadow any of them, and they al might be deliuered from their infirmities. <sup>16</sup> And there ranne together vnto Hierufalem the multitude alfo of the cities adioyning, bringing ficke perfons and fuch as were vexed of vncleane Spirits; who were al cured.

Peters fhadow.

<sup>17</sup> And the high Prieft rifing vp, and al that were with him, which is the herefie of the Sadducees, were replenifhed with zeale: <sup>18</sup> laid hands vpon the Apoftles, and put them in the common prifon. <sup>19</sup> But an Angel of our Lord by night opening the gates of the prifon, & leading them forth, faid: <sup>20</sup> Goe; and ftanding fpeake in the Temple to the people al the wordes of this life. <sup>21</sup> Who hauing heard this, early in the morning entred into the Temple, and taught. And the high Prieft coming, and they that were with him, called together the Councel & al the Ancients of the children of Ifraël: and they fent to the prifon that they might be brought. <sup>22</sup> But when the minifters were come, and opening the prifon, found them not; returning they told, faying: <sup>23</sup> The prifon truly we found fhut with al diligence, and the keepers ftanding before the gates: but opening it, we found no man within. <sup>24</sup> And as foone as the Magiftrate of the Temple and the cheefe Priefts heard thefe wordes,

An Angel leadeth them out of prifon.

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<sup>a</sup> Hereupon rofe great reuerence, awe, & feare of the vulgar Chriftians toward the holy Apoftles; for an exåple to al Chriftian people how to behaue themfelues toward their Bifhops and Priefts.

they were in doubt of them, what would befall. <sup>25</sup> And there came a certaine man and told them: That the men, loe, which you did put in prison, are in the Temple standing, and teaching the people. <sup>26</sup> Then went the Magistrate with the ministers, & brought them without force, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. <sup>27</sup> And when they had brought them, they set them in the Council. And the high Priest asked them, <sup>28</sup> saying: Commanding we commanded you that you should not teach in this name: and behold you have filled Hierusalem with your doctrine, and you will bring upon us the blood of this man. <sup>29</sup> But Peter answering and the Apostles, said: God must be obeyed, rather than men.

*Act. 4, 18.*

<sup>30</sup> The God of our Fathers hath raised up IESVS, whom you did kill, hanging him upon a tree. <sup>31</sup> This Prince and Saviour God hath exalted with his right hand, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. <sup>32</sup> And we are witnesses of these words, and the holy Ghost, whom God hath given to all that obey him. <sup>33</sup> When they had heard these things, it cut them to the heart, and they consulted to kill them.

<sup>34</sup> But one in the Council rising up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a Doctor of law honourable to all the people, commanded the men to be put forth a while, <sup>35</sup> and he said to them: Ye men of Israel, take heed to your selves touching these men what you mean to do. <sup>36</sup> For before these daies there rose 'Theudas,' saying he was some body, to whom consented a number of men about four hundred, who was slain: and all that believed him, were dispersed, and brought to nothing. <sup>37</sup> After this fellow there rose Judas of Galilee in the daies of the Enrolling, and drew away the people after him, and he perished: and as many as ever consented to him, were dispersed. <sup>38</sup> And now therefore I say to you, depart from these men and let them alone: for if this counsel or

*Theudas*

it worke be of men, it wil be diffolued: <sup>39</sup> but if it be <sup>a)</sup>of God, you are not able to diffolue ‘them,’ left perhaps you be found to refift God alfo. And they confented to him. <sup>40</sup> And calling in the Apoftles, after they had fcourged them, they charged them that they fhould not fpeake in the name of IESVS, and difmiffed them. <sup>41</sup> And they went from the fight of the Councel reioycing, becaufe they were accounted worthy to fuffer reproch for the name of IESVS. <sup>42</sup> And euery day they ceafed not in the Temple, and from houfe to houfe to teach and euan-gelize Chrift IESVS.

## ANNOTATIONS

*Aug. fer. 9. in  
append. de di-  
uerfis tom. 10.*

2 Defrauded.) In that (faith S. Auguftine) he withdrew any part of that which he promifed, he was guilty at once, both of facrilege, and of fraud: of facrilege, becaufe he robbed God of that which was his by promife: of fraud, in that he withheld of the whole giuft, a peece. Let now the Heretikes come, and fay it was for lying or hypocrifie only that this fact was condemned, becaufe they be loth to haue facrilege counted any fuch finne, who haue taught men not only to take away from God fome peece of that, or al that themfelues gaue, but plainly to fpoile & applie to themfelues al that other men gaue.

Sacrilege.

3 Peter faid.) S. Peter (as you fee here) without mans relation knew this fraud and the cogitations of Ananias, and as head of the Colledge and of the whole Church againft which this robbery was committed, executed this heauy fentence of Excommunication both againft him, & his wife confenting to the Sacrilege. For it was excommunication by S. Auguftines iudgement, (*li. 3. cont. ep. Parm. c. 2. to. 7.*) and had this corporal miraculous

Excommunication  
ioyned with corpo-  
ral paines.

<sup>a</sup> Time, & the euidēt fucceffe of Chriftes Church & religion, proue it to be of God: no violence of the Iewes, no perfecution of the Heathen Princes, no endeauour of domeftical Aduerfaries, Heretikes, Schifmatikes, or il liuers, preuailing againft it; as on the other fide, many attempts haue been made by Arius, Macedonius, Neftorius, Luther, and the like, who thought thēfelues fome body: but after they had plaid their partes awhile, their memory is buried, or liueth only in malediction & infamie, and their fcholars come to naught. Therefore let no Cath. man be fcandalized that this herefie holdeth vp for a time. For the Arians & fome others florifhed much longer then thefe, & were better fupported by Princes and learning, and yet had an end.

1. *Cor. 5.* death ioyned withal, as the Excommunication that S. Paul gaue out against the inceftuous and others, had the corporal vexation of Satan incident vnto it.

4 In thy povver.) *If it difpleafed God* (faith S. Auguftine.) *to vvithdravv of the money vvich they had vovved to God, hovv is he angry vvhen chaftitie is vovved and is not performed: for to fuch may be faid that vvich S. Peter faid of the money: Thy virginitie remaining did it not remaine to thee, and before thou didft vovv, vvvas it not in thine ovvne povver? for, vvwhofoeuer haue vovved fuch things and haue not paied them, let them not thinke to be condemned to corporal deaths, but to euerlafting fire. Auguft. Ser. 10. de diuerfis.* And S. Gregorie to the fame purpose vvriteth thus: *Ananias had vovved money to God, vvich aftervvvard ouercome vvith diuelish perfuafion he vvithdrevv: but vvith vvhat death he vvvas punished, thou knovveft. If then he vvvere vvorthy of that death, vvho tooke avvay the money that he had giuen to God, confider vvhat great peril in Gods iudgement thou shalt be vvorthy of, vvich haft vvithdravven, not money, but thy felf from almighty God, to vvhom thou hadft vovved thy felf vnder the habite or vveede of a Monke.*

Vow of Chaftitie,  
and the breach  
thereof.

*Greg. li. 1. ep. 33.*

4 Not to men, but.) To take from the Church or from the Gouvernours therof, things dedicated to their vfe and the feruice of God, or to lie vnto Gods Miniſters, is fo iudged of before God, as if the lie were made, and the fraud done to the Holy Ghoſt himſelf, who is the Churches Prefident and Protectour.

15 His ſhadow.) Specially they fought to Peter the cheefe of al, who not only by touching, as the other, but by his very ſhadow cured al diſeaſes. Whereupon S. Auguftine faith: If then the ſhadow of his body could help, how much more now the fulnes of power? And if then a certaine litle wind of him paſſing by did profit them that humbly aſked, how much more the grace of him now being permanent & remaining? *Ser. 39. de Sanctis.* ſpeaking of the miracles done by the Saints now reigning in Heauen.

Peters ſhadow &  
interceſſion.