

manent (2 Cor. 8: 14, 15). The apostles were entrusted with the distribution of the common fund, a duty from which they afterwards asked to be relieved (6: 2). Doubtless many a one lost his situation, or found his business ruined, by becoming a christian.

36, 37. And Jo'ses, who by the apostles was surnamed Bar'nabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet—He was the cousin of John Mark (Col. 4: 10 R. V.) and became quite a prominent man in the church (see references in Bible Search Lights). His name meant rather "Son of exhortation" (R. V.), he was an eloquent preacher (11: 23; 13: 1; 14: 12). The special duty of the Levites was to wait upon the priests in the temple, but as there was not employment for them all the greater number were engaged in secular occupations, and although they had no inheritance in the land they acquired property (Num. 18: 20, 21; Jer. 32: 7-12). Either the gift of Joses was an unusually large one, or it was the one which stimulated Ananias and his wife to commit their sin.

1. But a certain man named Anani'as, with Sapphi'ra his wife, sold a possession—The "but" with which this verse begins is not emphatic, still one cannot but feel the contrast which the following narrative presents. Ananias means *God is gracious* (same as Hananiah), and Sapphira, *beautiful*.

2. And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet—The Greek word translated "kept back" is used in the Septuagint to describe the sin of Achan (Josh. 7: 1) and is rendered "purloining" in Tit. 2: 10. They gave because others did, and coveted more praise than they were willing to deserve. It was a deliberately planned falsehood.

3. But Peter said, Anani'as, why hath satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?—The Holy Spirit must have informed Peter of the facts. But there is an inspiration of the devil too. Satan could not have entered his heart if he had not listened willingly to his suggestions (Luke 20: 3; Eph. 4: 27; Jas 4: 7; 1 Pet. 5: 9; 1 John 2:

13). Ananias' fraud was an ignoring of the whole spiritual character of the apostles' ministry. (Hervey). It was dishonesty in a transaction, not with the apostles or the church, but with God really.

4. While it remained was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men but unto God—Nobody compelled him to sell it, and he need not have given any part of the price unless he chose. There was no compulsion in the matter. We have here a proof of the divinity of the Holy Spirit; a lie to him is a lie to God,—he is called God.

5. And Anani'as hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost; and great fear came on all them that heard these things—Such a terrible warning was needed for an evil which might ruin the church at the outset (Jude 4). Compare Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10: 2 and 1 Cor. 11: 17-21).

6. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out and buried him—Being active and strong they would naturally be asked to do this. Coffins were not used, the body was wrapped in his long loose robe for a winding sheet. Burial usually followed immediately after death in that warm climate (2 Kings 9: 34).

7. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in—Perhaps she waited so long for her husband's return and now came seeking him. No one had the courage to tell her what had happened.

8. And Peter answered her, tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? and she said, yea, for so much—Peter answered her inquiring looks by giving her an opportunity for confession and pardon. The very question must have aroused her fear that Peter was aware of the fraud, or at least suspected it. Her lie was therefore more daring than her husband's.

9. Then Peter said unto her, 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—Peter does not curse her but sadly pronounces the divine sentence against her, he speaks "by the Holy Ghost." They had