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# LYING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

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**Topic:** A sin which cannot be committed today.

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**NOTE:** Having said this, I would advise that you not get too comfortable. There are plenty of other sins to worry about ... just not this one particular sin.

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There are some things that you just don't mess around with because they don't give you a "second chance":

**Example: Radiation ... electricity ... explosives.**

Jim Croce wrote a song about a tough gangster named "**Big Jim Brown.**" The chorus:

***"You don't tug on Superman's cape.  
You don't spit into the wind.  
You don't pull the mask off the 'ole Lone Ranger  
And you don't mess around with Jim."***

The Holy Spirit is like this. You can't mess around with Him very much and get away with it.

## **Matthew 12:32**

32 "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but **whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.**

The Bible describes six sins that can be committed against the Spirit.

- 1) **Blaspheming the Spirit**
- 2) **Lying to the Spirit**
- 3) **Resisting the Spirit**
- 4) **Grieving the Spirit**
- 5) **Quenching the Spirit**
- 6) **Insulting the Spirit**

Two of these sins appear to be sins which can no longer be committed today:

- Blaspheming the Spirit.
- Lying to the Spirit.

In this study I will focus on: **Lying to the Holy Spirit.**

# SIN #1

## LYING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

You can read about this in Acts 5, but I want to back up to Acts 4 to get some background.

### **Acts 4:34-35**

34 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**.

**Q:** Was this communism? (Asked often by our Russian brethren.)

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**ILL:** This reminds me of the Russian school teacher: "Who were the first two humans?"

**Student:** "Adam & Eve."

**Teacher:** "And what nationality were they?"

**Student:** "Russian of course."

**Teacher:** "Excellent. And how do you know?"

**Student:** "Because they had **no clothes** to wear, **no roof** over their head, **one apple** between the two of them, and they called it **Paradise**."

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Acts 4 is not describing communism.

- The selling of property was voluntary – not compulsory. (**Communism is compulsory.**)
- The money was given only to those in need – not divided equally among all. (**Communism is sharing the wealth with all.**)

So ... here are all these people selling their land and bringing the money to the apostles.

Along comes a couple, Ananias and Sapphira:

### **Acts 5:1-11**

1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.

2 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.

3 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?

4 "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."

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

6 And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him.

7 Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

8 And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?" She said, "Yes, for so much."

9 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."

10 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.

11 So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

I must confess – in the past I have felt sorry for Ananias and Sapphira.

Here's this nice man and his wife:

- Who didn't have to sell anything, but they did and
- Who didn't have to bring any of the money, but they did and
- They're being struck dead because they fibbed about how much they got for the land.

I confess ... that seems pretty tough!

**Q1: What was the problem? Covetousness?**

**A:** No. The fact that this couple gave even some of their money, when it was not required, shows they were not covetous.

**Q2: Was the problem seeking praise from men?**

**A:** No. There's something more serious going on.

**Q3: What then was the problem?**

**Acts 5:4**

4 "... **You have** not **lied** to men but **to God.**"

**A:** The problem was **lying – not covetousness**. They lied about how much they sold the land for.

I have another confession: I still feel sorry for this couple.

- How many other people told lies in those days ... and weren't zapped?
- Isn't God showing partiality?

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**NOTE:** There was something very different about **Ananias and Sapphira lying**. They are actually committing a sin which cannot be committed today.

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Look at vv3-4:

### **Acts 5:3-4**

3 Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to **lie to the Holy Spirit** ...

4 "... **You have not lied to men but to God.**"

Think about this:

- When they told their lie, they were lying to the Holy Spirit.
- When they lied to the Spirit, they were lying to God because the Spirit is God.

**Q:** How did they lie to the Holy Spirit?

**A:** **By lying to a Spirit-led apostle.**

(This is why I say this sin cannot be committed today – because there are no apostles on earth today being led directly by the Spirit.)

### **Acts 5**

2 And he kept back part of the proceeds, **his wife also being aware of it**, ...

9 ... [they] **agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?** ...

According to this, the husband and wife were conspiring together to **"test the Spirit of the Lord."**

- When two people agree together beforehand to commit a crime, that is a conspiracy.
- They are conspiring to test whether or not the Spirit of the Lord is in the apostles.

**Q:** What will happen if this man-wife-team could prove to the apostles were not inspired?

- What if they succeed in convincing people the apostles are no more inspired (Spirit-led) than any other Christian?
- Would that not damage the apostles' ability to *"bind and loose"* laws in the Lord's church?

### **Matthew 16:19**

19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and **whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.**"

If Ananias and Sapphira can prove Peter is not being Spirit-led (not inspired), it will cause everyone to doubt whether they really have the right to *"bind or loose"* laws in the church.



## **KORAH, DATHAN, ABIRAM**

This reminds me of what happened in the days of Moses:

### **Numbers 16:2-3**

2 [Korah, Dathan, and Abiram] rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown.

3 They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"

These men were rebels. They were tired of Moses being the leader. They wanted to have equal authority with Moses. They began to cast doubts into people minds about Moses' authority.

**Q:** What was the result of this rebellion?

### **Numbers 16:31-32**

31 ... the ground split apart under them,

32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, ...

God could not tolerate someone casting doubt about Moses' inspiration. If Moses was not inspired (Spirit-led) then nothing he said was binding.

## **RETURN TO ACTS 5**

The same thing is happening in Acts 5 with Ananias and Sapphira.

This man and wife have conspired to test whether the Spirit of God is really guiding Peter and the other apostles. They cooked up a plan:

- They will sell some land for money.
- They will bring **only part** of the money, but **pretend it's all the money**.
- If the apostles are Spirit-led (like they claim to be), they will know not all the money was brought. Ananias and Sapphira would then have to admit, "**Okay ... you win! You caught us. You're inspired.**"
- But if the apostles are fooled, it will prove to everyone they are not Spirit-led. Christians, then, won't have to do everything the apostles say.

It was a good plan (they thought) – but it had a flaw: Ananias and Sapphira weren't counting on the death penalty!

Because this plan had the potential of undermining the authority and leadership of the apostles, God had to act in a decisive way.

This is why they were zapped.

I don't feel the sorrow for this man and woman after I realize what they were trying to do.

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**NOTE: They were striking at the very foundation of the church.**

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### **Ephesians 2:20**

20 [the church has] been built on **the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,

In Acts 5, God showed in a decisive way the apostles were being directly-led by the Holy Spirit.

- Ananias' and Sapphira's plan didn't work.
- The entire church learned a lesson.

## THE RESULTS

Notice what happened as a result:

### **Acts 5:11-14**

11 So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

12 And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch.

13 **Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly.**

**"Yet none of the rest dared join them"** – What does this mean?  
People were afraid to be around the apostles?

**A:** It means no one else dared (like Ananias and Sapphira) to join-the-ranks of the apostles.

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**NOTE:** On this day the church had its respect for the apostles renewed.

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### **Acts 2:42**

42 And they continued steadfastly in **the apostles' doctrine** and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

**Q:** Why did the church continue in the teachings of the apostles?

**A:** Because the church recognized the apostles were special – they were guided directly by the Holy Spirit like no other Christians were. They were inspired.

Notice:

**Acts 5:14**

14 And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women,

People weren't frightened off because of what happened to the man and wife. People now FLOCK to the church in mass numbers.

**Q:** Why?

**A:** Because everyone knows, beyond all doubt, that the apostles truly have the words of eternal life ... and people wanted to know, "*What does God want me to do?*"

**MORMON "APOSTLES"**

This story has implications regarding men today who claim to be apostles are not – **they lack the proper credentials.**

## **Revelation 2:2**

2 "[To Ephesus Jesus Himself said] I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And **you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;**

- When false apostles were exposed ⇒ **the Lord praised** the ones who exposed them.
- When real apostles were tested ⇒ **the Lord destroyed** the ones who tested them.

This is serious business! This is a life/death matter.

On **September 27, 2001**, I shook hands with a man in Independence, MO who claimed to be an apostle of the Lord. I did not lie to this man. I would never recommend that you lie to anyone – even for an experiment – because lying is wrong.

But I know this: If someone does lie to this Mormon apostle:

- This so-called "apostle" will not know he's being lied to and
- No one will be struck dead by God right then and right there.

## APPLICATION

Since the apostles were the Lord's official spokesmen, everything we do must be authorized by either **(a) The Lord Himself** or **(b) one of the apostles**.

If the apostles "loosed" on earth:

- Instruments of music ...
- Church yard-sales ...
- Women's retreats with women speakers ...
- Meeting in motel rooms for worship as we travel on vacation ...
- Individual communion cups ...
- Christians wearing shorts ...
- Christians wearing tight, form-fitting clothes ...
- The lottery and gambling ...

But if the apostles did not loose these things, let's leave them alone.

Let us be like the church on the day Ananias and Sapphira died:

### **Acts 5:11**

11 [May] **great fear [come] upon all the church**  
and upon all who [hear] these things.

- May we respect the teachings of those inspired men who "bound on earth the things bound in heaven"
- And "loosed on earth the things loosed in heaven"

May we, like the early church:

**Acts 2:42**

42 ... [continue] steadfastly in **the apostles' doctrine** ...

For these men were the foundation of the church – "**Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.**"

**CONCLUSION**

May this short study give us renewed respect for the apostles and the place they occupy in the Lord's church.

The Catholic Church teaches the church of the Lord was built upon Peter – but that's not accurate:

**Ephesians 2:20**

20 [the church has] been built on **the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,



Peter is part of the foundation, but he is not the only apostle upon which the church is built.

- All of the apostles were Spirit-led.
- All of them delivered the NT laws to the world.
- BUT **Jesus** is the "**chief cornerstone.**"

We must, as the early church, "continue in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42) because they spoke on behalf of the Lord Himself. This explains why we cannot deviate in the slightest from the pattern delivered by the apostles to the church.





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# LYING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

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## Questions:

- 1) What are the six sins against the Holy Spirit?
- 2) What two sins can no longer be committed?
- 3) What nationality were Adam and Eve?
- 4) How did Ananias and Sapphira lie to the Holy Spirit?
- 5) According to Acts 5:9, what were Ananias and Sapphira trying to test?
- 6) Who was swallowed up by the earth?
- 7) Who did I shake hands with on September 27, 2001?
- 8) Who has authority to authorize things done in the church?