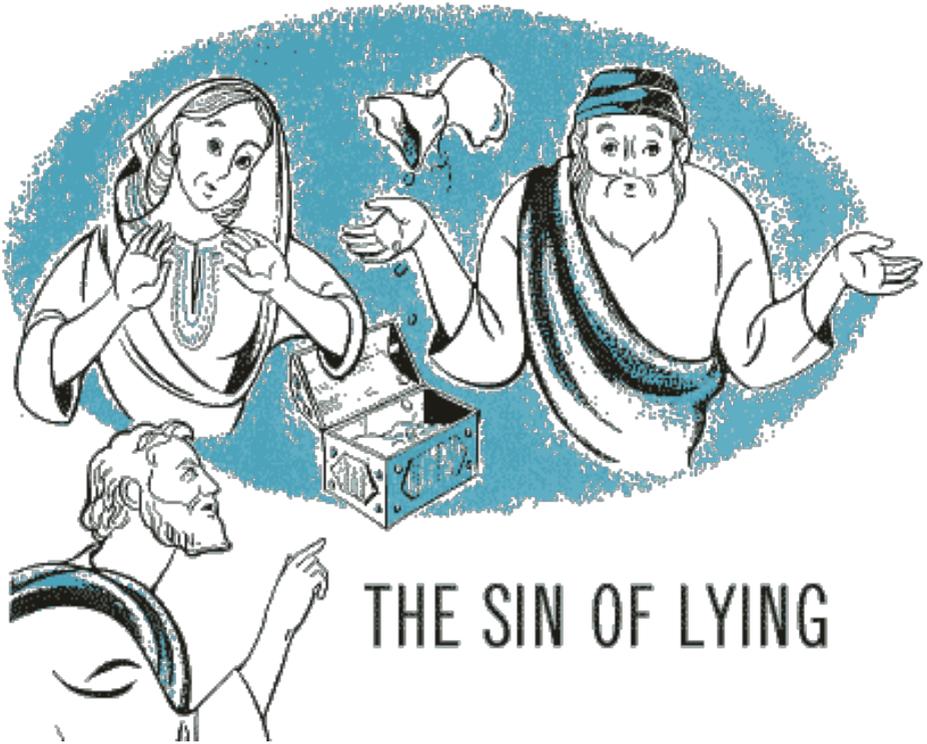


THE SIN OF LYING



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WHAT do you think should be done with a man and his wife who told a lie to one of Jesus' disciples? There was such a man and a woman who did this very wicked thing. The man's name was Ananias, and his wife's name was Sapphira. The disciple to whom they lied was Peter. It is wrong to lie about anything. It is even worse to lie about the things we do in the service of God, and it was this kind of lie that Ananias and Sapphira told to Peter.

Peter and another disciple of Jesus, named John, were working together preaching the Gospel. In my last story I told you about the healing of a lame man, which was a wonderful miracle performed by Peter. Because of this good deed there were many people who believed what Peter and John told them about Jesus and the wonderful blessings which he will, by and by, give to all the people in the world.

Peter and John were preaching in Jerusalem, and in the temple of God. The religious rulers of the Israelites became jealous of them, just as they were of Jesus, and told them that they would have to stop preaching about Jesus. But these two disciples believed that it was their duty to obey God, who had told them to preach the Gospel of Jesus in Jerusalem and wherever they could throughout the whole world. So when they were told to stop preaching they asked:

“Is it right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God? We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”

So they continued to preach.

The religious rulers of the people were really afraid to punish Peter and John, because so many people in Jerusalem believed that they were servants of God. The good news about the crippled man who had been healed caused them to think a great deal of these two servants of God. Thousands of people believed the story of Jesus, and decided that they would become his disciples.

These people were all very enthusiastic, and they wanted to do all they could to tell others about Jesus. In order to do this, they decided among themselves that they would put all their belongings together just as though they were one large family, and in this way use everything they owned in the service of God. Those who owned land or had other valuable belongings sold what they had and put all the money into the one common treasury. Then this money was used to buy food and clothing for all the disciples, so they could be free to preach the Gospel of Jesus.

Now, Ananias and his wife learned about the arrangement of the disciples to sell everything and use the money in the service of God, and they pretended to do this just as the other believers had done. But they lied about it. And it was Peter who discovered that they had told an untruth. No one told Peter that they had lied. The power of God helped him to know that Ananias and Sapphira were deceiving him. They sold a valuable possession, and kept part of the money for themselves. The Bible says that Satan filled their hearts and

caused them to lie to Peter, telling him that they had put all the money into the treasury of the disciples.

Satan causes people to lie whenever he can. Probably that is because he lies so much himself. I wonder if you remember the wicked lie Satan told to mother Eve in the Garden of Eden? He said to her:

“You will not surely die.”

God had told Adam and Eve that if they ate the fruit of the tree of which he told them not to eat they would surely die. But Satan lied about it, telling them that they would not surely die. Of course they did die, as we know, and that is why everybody dies now. And because Ananias and his wife lied to Peter, God caused them to be put to death suddenly so that everybody knew they had done wrong.

Then, more than ever, the people knew that God was blessing Peter and John, so the religious rulers became even more jealous, and they caused these two servants of God to be put into prison. But that night one of God’s angels opened the prison doors and set them free, and told them to return to the temple and continue to preach about Jesus. They did this, and still more people believed. Again the religious rulers arrested Peter and John. But this time the chief one among them advised that it was not wise to try any longer to interfere with the disciples of Jesus, because they might be working against God. The others agreed. So, after giving Peter and John a severe beating, they set them free. Thus God protected them, and they were able to continue preaching the Gospel.

QUESTIONS

- Who were Ananias and Sapphira, and what great sin did they commit?
- How was Peter able to know that Ananias and Sapphira were not telling him the truth?
- How were Ananias and his wife punished for their wrongdoing?

Dawn Bible Students Association