

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

TRUTH & LIES

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PART 4: LIARS IN THE CHURCH

Unbelievers aren't the only ones who use deception and lies and this week we will examine the duplicity of Ananias and Sapphira in the New Testament church.

CHEATING

On the day of Pentecost, the church in Jerusalem increased as 3,000 persons were born again, baptized in water and in the Holy Ghost. **Acts 2:41-43**

There was no church building in Jerusalem and the apostles stood on the temple ground and taught the new disciples and gained more converts as people stopped to listen. **Acts 3:1**

The day of Pentecost was a Jewish holiday and there were thousands of Jews from different nations who had come to Jerusalem to worship the Lord. **Acts 2:5-11**

Many of these Jews had accepted Jesus as their Messiah and were taken into the homes of Christian Jews from Jerusalem and the immediate countryside of the city. It was a common practice from the beginning to sell possessions in order to help out with the food and lodging of the strangers. **Acts 2:44-47**

The end result was that there was no lack in the newly established Christian church in Jerusalem and it was common for people who had wealth to sell some of their property. Those who sold their possessions and gave the money to the apostles were held in high regard. **Acts 4:32-37**

ANANIAS & SAPPHIRA

Ananias and Sapphira were a married couple who had been born again. They owned some property which they decided to sell and give the money to the apostles in order to receive praise from the people and achieve a status position in the church.

There was just one catch. Ananias and Sapphira did not want to give all the money from the sale to the church and agreed to lie to the apostles. Satan moved in and blinded them the moment they started to discuss cheating and lying. Ananias went to the apostles first with the money, but instead of being praised by the apostles, he was rebuked by Peter and killed by God. **Acts 5:1-6**

Sapphira showed up three hours later. Peter could have told her that Ananias had lied and died as a result, but God did not want a liar in the church that was unrepentant, and so Peter confronted her in front of the other apostles. Sapphira could have told the truth, but she also chose to lie and died at the feet of the apostles. **verses 7-11**

MODERN LIARS IN THE CHURCH

When Ananias and Sapphira lied to the apostles, the New Testament church was only a few months old and the apostles had not written down any doctrine to govern the conduct of its members. The Holy Ghost would not allow the sin of lying to go



unpunished and it brought great fear to the church members when they realized that God would not tolerate the transgression of one of His commandments. Some 2,000 years later, spirits of lying can still be found in churches. **Exodus 20:16; Isaiah 59:1-6**

When Aina and I joined Central Baptist Church in Salt Lake City in 1966, we had two pastors during our time in this church. Both of these men made it clear that lying was not an option in their church and demanded that the truth always be spoken. They put the fear of God into me because I had been a habitual liar since childhood. The Holy Spirit transformed me, and during my 49 years of walking with Christ, I have done my utmost to always be truthful in even the smallest matter. I haven't always been successful and there were a few occasions when I caught myself lying and a great grief came over me. The only remedy was to confess my sin to God and the person to whom I had lied. **1 John 1:4-10**

Having been an evangelist and pastor for some 46 years, I have learned that most people are born liars and that our society does not teach people to be honest; on the contrary, we are taught to lie without being caught.

There is no integrity when people lie! When there is no integrity, there is no trust. **John 8:44**

Even worse, when Christians lie, demons have the legal right to move in and oppress them. **Matthew 12:43-45**

If God dealt with modern liars like He did with Ananias and Sapphira, I daresay the vast majority of the church members would be dead. Does God condone lying? Absolutely not! There will be a day of reckoning. **2 Corinthians 5:10-11**

Working out schemes in secrecy is deceitful and therefore a lie. If you cannot do something in the light, it is a sin which must be repented. **Matthew 26:14-16**

The apostle Paul did not have an easy life and there were many schemers that worked to do him harm. Alexander the coppersmith was one of them. **2 Timothy 4:14-16**

SUMMARY

God hates people who lie; there will be no liars in heaven. **Revelation 21:8, 27**

Jesus has paid for all our sins, including lying, but that doesn't mean we can sin and claim the grace of God. Lying must be dealt with and needs to be confessed or your life will be nothing but a string of curses that will rob you of God's blessings and put you in an early grave. **Galatians 6:7-9**

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?