

# **The Purified Church**

**Acts 5:1-15**

# Acts 4:36-5:15

**...Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet.**

## **Acts 4:36-5:15, cont.**

**But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.” When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.**

## **Acts 4:36-5:15, cont.**

**After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter said to her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for so much.” And she said, “Yes, for so much.” But Peter said to her, “How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.” Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.**

## **Acts 4:36-5:15, cont.**

**And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things. Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them.**

# The Purified Church

- **“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48).**
- **Inner holiness proceeds outer holiness.**
- **We must die to live.**
- **Judgment begins in the house of the Lord (1 Peter 4:17)**
- **“Spur one another on toward love and good deeds” (Heb. 10:24)**

# The Purified Church

- The importance God places on the purity of His church
- The ways that God purifies His people
- The effect of a purified witnessing church

# **1. The importance God places on the purity of His church**

- **“As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Pet. 1:14-15).**
- **“Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).**
- **“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9).**



# David's Big Coverup

- Lusted after Bathsheba
- Adultery, murder, marriage
- “But the thing David had done displeased the LORD” (2 Sam. 11:27b)



## **2. The Ways God Purifies His Church**

- “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.’” (Acts 5:3-4)**

# The Spirit and the Word

- **“For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God” (1 Cor 2:10).**
- **The word of God “judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Heb 4:12).**
- **“We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us” (1 Cor. 2:12).**
- **The Spirit exposes our sin and reveals Christ to us and in us and through us.**

# God convicts in order to cleanse

- **“I am at the brink of utter ruin in the assembled congregation.” (Prov. 5:14)**
- **God is very patient with us: “If we judged ourselves we would not come under judgment” (1 Cor. 11:31).**
- **“Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work” (2 Tim. 2:21)**

# What if we continue in sin?

- Sometimes the sin is exposed. “The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later” (1 Tim. 5:24).
- Sometimes we must be turned over to Satan: “...Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:18-20).
- Sometimes, God makes us sick. (1 Cor. 11:30-32).

# What about death?

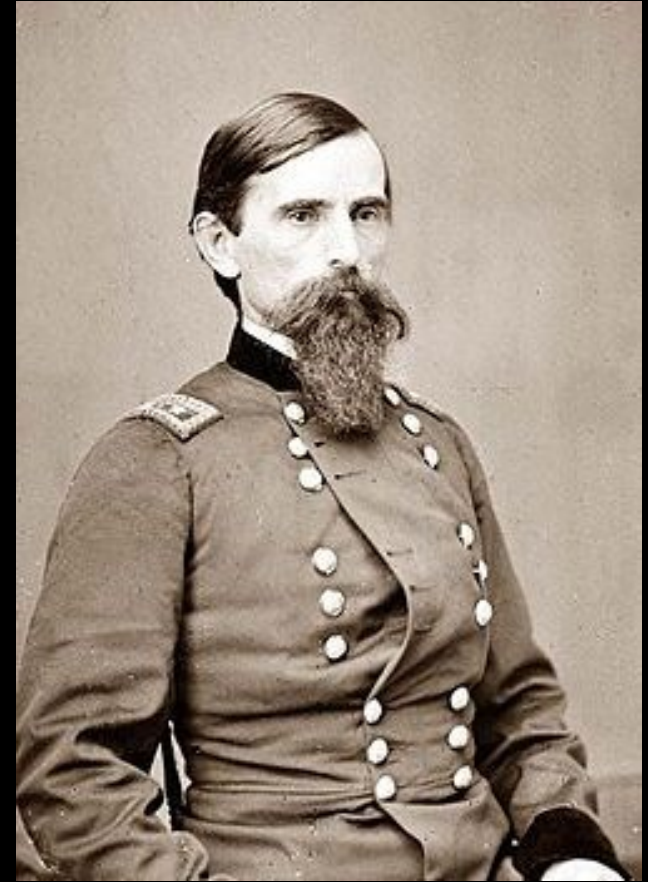
- **“That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died (sleep). But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world” (1 Cor. 11:30-32).**
- **Not all illnesses or deaths of believers are judgments of God. “The righteous are taken away to be spared from evil” (Isaiah 57:1-2).**

# 3. The Effect of a Purified Church

- **“None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed” (Acts 5:13-16).**

# General Lew Wallace, 1827-1905

- American Civil War General
- Non-religious
- The Three Wise Men
- Lost a public debate with Atheist Robert Ingersoll
- Investigated the life of Christ





# Wrote a Memorable Novel

- The story of a Jewish prince who witnessed the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.
- *Ben Hur: a Tale of the Christ*: The most popular English novel of 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- “I would not give one hour of life as a Soul for a thousand years of life as a man.”