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The Sabbath School

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

First Quarter Lesson 6 Feb. 9 1902 THE SIN OF LYING.—Acts 5: 1-11.

Study Acts 4: 32-5: 11. Read James 3.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor.—Eph. 4: 25.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—A. D. 30-33. It is impossible to tell exactly when this event occurred, but probably within two or three years after the founding of the church at Pentecost.

Place.—Jerusalem.

THE CHURCH BOUNTIFUL AND BEAUTIFUL.—Vs. 32-37. Putting together the passages in Acts 1-4 relating to the church, such as Acts 1: 12-14, 15, 26; 2: 1-4, 41-47; 4: 4, 17-20, 23-31, 32-35, show how it grew in numbers, unity, and influence.

First. It was filled with the Holy Spirit, the source of all goodness and power.

Second. It was a united church. It possessed the true unity of the same spiritual life in all; the unity of aim and purpose; the unity of one kingdom, with one law and one gospel; one government under one Invisible King.

Third.—Mutual helpfulness, and fellowship, rose to a high degree, and has been an example to the church through all the ages.

Fourth. They were a witnessing church, by word, by character, by deeds.

Fifth. They had power. They gave the Lord Jesus such full control over their spirits and lives, that the power from heaven could work freely through them. Great grace was upon them all. We can easily see that a church of such a character would make rapid advances, and hasten on the day of the Lord's victory over the world.

Joseph Barnabas. Joseph is one form of the name 'Joseph' Barnabas is commonly derived from Bar, "son" and Nebuah, "prophecy" He received after his conversion the name of "Son of Consolation."

Barnabas probably had a great gift as helpful, consoling, strengthening exhortation.

Barnabas was a native of Cyprus; a Levite (not a priest, the descendant of Aaron), who had inherited property. He became a member of the church at Antioch and was joined with Paul in the first foreign mission, as we shall see in a later lesson.

Note how the history gives us the good as well as the bad. It tells the whole truth, and this is what we need to know. Barnabas is a light, streaming outward through the night, marking for the mariner the way of life; Ananias, dying with a lie on his lips, buoys a rock where many have perished and warns the wayfarer from the place of doom. One as an example the other as a warning.

In judging of human nature, we must put this story of the early church into the picture. We should always write up the credit page as well as the debit. The world has periods of darkness, but he that leaves out the sunshine does not tell us the truth about the world.

SATAN ENTERS THE NEW PARADISE.—Vs. 1-4. Satan's kingdom was in danger, and something must be done to put an end to the progress of Christ's kingdom. His first plan was by persecution. It led to more prayer, more faith, more courage, more devotion. It advertised the gospel. It scattered the seeds of truth broadcast. It led to greater miracles, to fuller grace. The next plan of Satan was to destroy the church from within, raising up false disciples, introducing evil motives. The enemy planted tares among the wheat.

Illustration. A ship is safe on the ocean so long as the ocean is not in the ship. The Christian is safe in the world so long as the world is not in the Christian.

But in contrast with Barnabas, Ananias with Sapphira... sold a possession and kept back part of the price... and bought a certain part, representing it as the whole. His wife also being privy to it. This shows that this was not a sudden temptation, but a deliberate plan. Laid it at the apostle's feet. Apparently at some public religious service, where they could be seen of men.

The crime was a complex one. (1) There was a selfish, ambitious desire to be highly regarded by their fellow-disciples. They saw how the generous Barnabas was loved and they coveted the same honor. (2) They were covetous and avaricious. They were unwilling to pay the price. They were too stingy to do that which they wanted the credit of doing. Hence (3) they were hypocrites covering their vanity and covetousness under a mask of

generosity. This led (4) to deliberate falsehood; (5) Sacrilege, since they sinned, under the strongest possible influence for good, and where the sin was an insult to God, and might be an unspeakable injury to his cause. (6) At the same time there were probably mingled with these motives some desire to help the poor. They may have feared lest if they gave all they would have to live in poverty. There was probably at least enough of these to save their conscience. It is a dangerous hypocrisy that deceives ourselves.

But Peter said. How did Peter know the truth? The Spirit must have revealed it to him. Why hath Satan filled thine heart? Ananias was filled with Satan. To lie to the Holy Ghost. The lie was both an acted and a spoken one (v 8). And to keep back part of the price, while representing it to be the whole. When it remained, was it not thine own? No one compelled you to sell the property and give it away. Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? What caused you to form such a plan? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. That is the real force of the lie was against God more than man. The injury was to his kingdom. It misrepresented God and his church. There was no sin that Jesus condemned so severely, with so many "woes" as hypocrisy.

THE DANGER AVERTED BY THE SIGNAL PUNISHMENT OF THE OFFENDER.—Ananias... fell down and gave up the Ghost. His death was the direct act of God. Great fear came on all. Fear of God, fear of his searching vision and judgment, and a dread conviction of the deadliness of sin. And the young men. A society of young men was attached to each synagogue, who were called the servants of the synagogue, and were held in readiness to perform any menial duties about the place. Wound him up. Wrapped around him his own mantle. And buried him. Partly for sanitary reasons, the interval between death and burial was very brief. About the space of three hours. She waited thus long anxiously for her husband's return with the news of the honor received for their large gift. Then, puzzled at his absence, his wife... came in to learn the reason. Not knowing what was done. No one had told her of her husband's doom. Peter answered unto her. Answered her inquiry. Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? pointing to the pile of gold Ananias had presented, or naming the sum. The question gave her the opportunity to state the truth. But she shut the door of repentance by telling a lie. Agreed together. Showing that the sin was deliberate. To tempt the spirit of the Lord. To tempt God is to dare him, to put him to the test whether he will see the sin and punish it or not. Behold the feet of them which buried thy husband are at the door. It is probable that, being a man of property, he had a tomb of his own. Then fell she down straightway at his feet. The death was inflicted by God.

The Severity of the Punishment. (1) It was deserved. (2) It was necessary in order to save the church from destruction from within. (3) It was thus an act of mercy. God has terrible judgments upon men, but they are always for the good of the world. Thus, the first Sabbath breaker was stoned (Num. 15: 36) for the same reason. To allow such a defiant breaking of the law to go unpunished would be to give the reins to lawlessness. The first defiant criminal when the people entered upon the possession of the Holy Land—Achan—was summarily punished (Josh. 7). The same reasons led to the sudden death of Uzzah, when he broke the law concerning the ark of the covenant (2 Sam. 6).

Lying. 1. It is of the utmost importance that we should not lie to ourselves, trying to deceive ourselves as to our motives, offering excuses to ourselves in order to hide from ourselves the real reason for our conduct.

2. We should avoid the deadly sin of lying about others, as to others. Never tell a lie. Truthfulness is the only condition on which human intercourse is possible. No matter how bad a man is, there is room for hope with respect to him if he is essentially truthful and honest; but if he is a liar, if truth and error are confounded in his own mind and character, there is nothing to build upon. Hence the terrible denunciations against liars and hypocrites in the Bible. The hypocrite is one who lies by his actions, and for a selfish purpose.

3. It is death to the soul to lie to God; to profess to worship, without the spirit of worship; to go through religious forms without the heart; to try to deceive God as to one's character and motives.

THE OUTCOME.—Acts 5: 11-16. The result was not the ruin of the church, but a firmer pity and progress in every direction. Great fear came upon all the church, great awe

in the presence of God; great reverence for the Holy Spirit, great fear lest they might themselves be deceived. This led to careful living. Upon us many as heard. They realized the terrible nature of sin, the power and nearness of God's judgments against it.

Those who were not really Christians were afraid to join a community where hypocrisy could be severely punished.

Great numbers were added to the church. Many miracles and works of grace were wrought.

Like Some Other People.

Children are always ready enough to emulate their parent's zeal, but seldom so willing to copy their discretion. A certain Episcopal bishop has a four-year-old daughter who has inherited much of her father's force of character, and is already a staunch and aggressive church woman.

The other day the family entertained some friends from Denver. In the visiting family there was a little girl of the same age as the bishop's child. Her parents were Presbyterians. It was proposed that the two little girls share the same bed, and bedtime coming, they knelt down to say their prayers together.

When the little Episcopalian was saying, Forgive us our trespasses, she heard her companion pray, Forgive us our debts, and she said sharply:

It's trespasses! No, it ain't, said the Denver Calvinist. It's debts! Tre-pas-ses! Debts! Tre-pas-ses! Debts!

Out flew a chubby Episcopalian first and struck a Presbyterian eye. There was a mix-up immediately. Now it's trespasses, ain't it? No, said the other, stoutly, It's debts. But peace was restored, and the two consented to go on with the prayer.

When they came to the end the little Presbyterian said Amen, giving the flat 'a' of the dissenters, while the little Episcopalian intoned 'Ah-men,' with the broad sound to the first vowel.

'Amen,' repeated the Presbyterian.

'Ah men,' said the Episcopalian, with conviction. They were only saved from another encounter by being bundled into bed. When the door was closed upon them each was still maintaining her idea of pronunciation.—Chicago Chronicle.

A writer's first business is to tell the truth.—Andrew Lang.

Our happiness in life will always be in proportion to our faculty for seeing good, and our capacity for godliness will always be in proportion to our faculty for seeing good.

Oregon scientists are credited with the discovery that from refuse and unmerchantable prunes can be produced in four weeks' time vinegar of the highest quality containing a higher percentage of acetic acid than does the best cider vinegar.

The profits of the present season to the fortunate apple growers of Washington and Oregon have led to a great apple planting boom, especially in the former state.

Great cracks and sink holes are appearing suddenly in Kansas alfalfa fields to the complete mystification of the farmers.

The pine needle industry is a new enterprise of the northwest. The needles of the yellow pine are woven into coarse cloth and made into fiber for filling mattresses and pillows.

Good Health is Impossible Without regular action of the bowels. Laxa-Liver Pills regulate the bowels, cure constipation, dyspepsia, biliousness, sick headache, and all affections of the organs of digestion. Price 25 cents. All druggists.

Used internally Hagyard's Yellow Oil cures Sore Throat, Hoarseness, Quinsy, Pain in the Chest, Croup, etc. Used externally cures Rheumatism, Stiff Joints, Contracted Cords, Sprains, Strains, Burns, Scalds, Cuts and Bites of Insects.

THE IMMENSE PINES OF CANADA furnish the basis for that peerless cough and cold remedy, Piny-Balsam. It cures quickly and certainly. Of all druggists, 25c. Made by proprietors of Perry Davis' Pain-Killer.

Mr. Thomas Ballard, Syracuse, N. Y., writes: "I have been afflicted for nearly a year with that most-to-be-dreaded disease Dyspepsia, and at times worn out with pain and want of sleep, and after trying almost everything recommended, I tried one box of Parnee's Vegetable Pills. I am now nearly well, and believe they will cure me. I would not be without them for any money."

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"I have used Ripans Tabules for a number of years and would not be without them. I used to be troubled with indigestion and constipation, and have noticed since I have been using them that I am getting rid of those terrible bilious spells which explained me to bed on account of the distress. Of late I have not had any. I had just got over a bad spell of bilious fever and was sitting on the step, when a neighbor came to me and remarked how I looked. I told him I had just got over the fever and that I was afraid to eat anything on account of indigestion, from which I had suffered since I was quite young. He advised me to take Ripans Tabules. I said I would try them, and from then I haven't been without them. I can eat anything, providing I finish with a Tabule instead of dessert. I feel very thankful that I have found something that will prolong my life."

GASTRIC TROUBLES.

"I had suffered three years at least from gastric troubles. I could not sleep at night. My head ached and my feet would be cold as ice. My bowels were not regular and I would have such cramps from gases forming on my stomach that I would faint away. I was in such distress that I would have sooner died than live. About three months ago I was suffering and all my relief came from Ripans Tabules. My brother recommended Ripans Tabules to me. My husband obtained some for me from the nearest drug store and I would not now be without them. They relieved me of all the foul gases that formed in my stomach and they gave my bowels regularity. I have no more headaches and can sleep well. In fact, I feel as light as the air which I breathe, and that is saying a good deal for a woman who weighs 100 pounds. I am sorry that I did not commence using the Tabules a year ago, for they would have saved me a great deal of pain and suffering."

One gives relief

Ripans Tabules, now and then, will benefit the wisest men. And if dyspepsia is their war, Continued, R.I.P.A.N.S. make it go.