

## Acts 4 & 5 (NIV)

*Read aloud by Saint Andrews Study Group*

### Acts 4 - Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin

<sup>1</sup>The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. <sup>2</sup>They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. <sup>3</sup>They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. <sup>4</sup>But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

<sup>5</sup>The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup>Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. <sup>7</sup>They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

<sup>8</sup>Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! <sup>9</sup>If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, <sup>10</sup>then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. <sup>11</sup>Jesus is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone."

<sup>12</sup>Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

<sup>13</sup>When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. <sup>14</sup>But since they could see the man who had been healed standing

there with them, there was nothing they could say. <sup>15</sup>So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. <sup>16</sup>“What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. <sup>17</sup>But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”

<sup>18</sup>Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup>But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! <sup>20</sup>As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

<sup>21</sup>After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. <sup>22</sup>For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

### **The Believers Pray**

<sup>23</sup>On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. <sup>24</sup>When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. <sup>25</sup>You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

“‘Why do the nations rage  
and the peoples plot in vain?

<sup>26</sup>The kings of the earth rise up  
and the rulers band together  
against the Lord

and against his anointed one.’

<sup>27</sup>Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you

anointed. <sup>28</sup>They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. <sup>29</sup>Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. <sup>30</sup>Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

<sup>31</sup>After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

### **The Believers Share Their Possessions**

<sup>32</sup>All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. <sup>33</sup>With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all <sup>34</sup>that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales <sup>35</sup>and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

<sup>36</sup>Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”), <sup>37</sup>sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.

### **Acts 5 - Ananias and Sapphira**

<sup>1</sup>Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. <sup>2</sup>With his wife’s full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet.

<sup>3</sup>Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? <sup>4</sup>Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the

money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God.”

5When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. 6Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

7About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8Peter asked her, “Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?”

“Yes,” she said, “that is the price.”

9Peter said to her, “How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.”

10At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

## **The Apostles Heal Many**

12The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon’s Colonnade. 13No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. 14Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. 15As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. 16Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed.

## **The Apostles Persecuted**

17Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18They arrested the apostles and put them in the

public jail. <sup>19</sup>But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. <sup>20</sup>“Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people all about this new life.”

<sup>21</sup>At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin—the full assembly of the elders of Israel—and sent to the jail for the apostles. <sup>22</sup>But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, <sup>23</sup>“We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” <sup>24</sup>On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were at a loss, wondering what this might lead to.

<sup>25</sup>Then someone came and said, “Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people.” <sup>26</sup>At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.

<sup>27</sup>The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. <sup>28</sup>“We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.”

<sup>29</sup>Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings! <sup>30</sup>The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. <sup>31</sup>God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. <sup>32</sup>We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

<sup>33</sup>When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. <sup>34</sup>But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people,

stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. <sup>35</sup>Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. <sup>36</sup>Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. <sup>37</sup>After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. <sup>38</sup>Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. <sup>39</sup>But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

<sup>40</sup>His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

<sup>41</sup>The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. <sup>42</sup>Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

### Reflection questions.

1. The preaching of "resurrection" became the bone of contention between the saducees and the apostles leading to the latter's arrest in Acts 4: 1-4. Why was the resurrection a critical subject for the two parties?
2. Acts 5:1-11 highlights the fate of Ananias and Sapphira. What was the very grave sin that they committed to warrant death?
3. There seems to be a contradiction in Acts 5 13 and 14. Attempt to reconcile the seeming contradiction.