

# Severe But Strangely Comforting: The “Ice Ax” of Acts 5:1-11

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**Acts 5:1** But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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? <sup>4</sup> 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.” <sup>5</sup> When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. <sup>6</sup> The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. <sup>7</sup> After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. <sup>8</sup> And Peter said to her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for so much.” And she said, “Yes, for so much.” <sup>9</sup> 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.” <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

## AN UNWELCOME ADDITION TO SUPPLY BOX

### ACTS 5:1-11: A BIBLICAL “ICE AX”?

### REPLAYING THE ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA STORY

**Acts 4:34** ...for as many as were owners of lands...sold them and brought the proceeds...<sup>35</sup> and laid it at the apostles’ feet,

**Acts 5:2** [Ananias] kept back for himself some of the proceeds...and laid it at the apostles’ feet.

**Acts 5:3** Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart...?

**Acts 5:3 NLT** Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart?

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<sup>1</sup> Dan thanks Jo Main for producing art for this sermon. Please email Dan if you’d like an unfolded, printed copy ([danielseitz42@gmail.com](mailto:danielseitz42@gmail.com)).

## REACHING THE SANDY FLOOR

**Acts 5:5** ...And great fear came upon all who heard of it.

**Acts 5:11** And great fear came upon the whole church...

**BIG IDEA:** As in the old age, so in the new, the fear of God is fitting.

The “fear of God” is an awareness of (1) his awe-full holiness, (2) his life-sustaining providence, and (3) his ultimate determination to judge.

## CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT IT, CAN'T LIVE WITH IT (OR CAN WE?)

**2Cor. 7:1** Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

**1Pet. 1:17** And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,

**Luke 12:5** But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!

**Rom. 11:22** Note then the kindness and the severity of God:

**BIG SURPRISE:** Whereas the “fear of God” *proposition* gives a chill, the “fear of God” *practice* cheers the heart.

**Prov. 14:27** The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life...

## THE PURPOSE OF AN ICE AX: SELF-ARREST

## TAKING UP THE ACTS 5 “ICE AX”: A PRAYER FOR THE PACK

*Dear Father: You are a God of supreme goodness, a goodness we see most clearly in the giving of your Son for our sins. You are also a God of burning, awe-full holiness, one who supplies our every breath, and one before whom we will one day give “account” (Rom. 14:12). By your comforting Spirit keep me us this day on the narrow trail of the “upward call” (Phil. 3:14) with hearts warm and at rest. In Christ we pray. Amen.*