

# **The Sin, the Self-Seeking & the Self-Giving in the Community of God**

**Acts 4:32 – 5:11**

**SJSM Church  
9 Jun 2024**

# SJSM PULPIT SERIES –THE BOOK OF ACTS

	TOPIC	TEXT
18/19 May	Pentecost	Acts 2
24/25 May	The First Church	Acts 2
1/2 Jun	Healing of Lame Beggar	Acts 3-4
8/9 Jun	Ananias, Sapphira & Barnabas	Acts 4-5
15/16 Jun	Stoning of Stephen	Acts 6-7

# STRUCTURE: 2 HALVES (4 Parts)

**JERUSALEM**

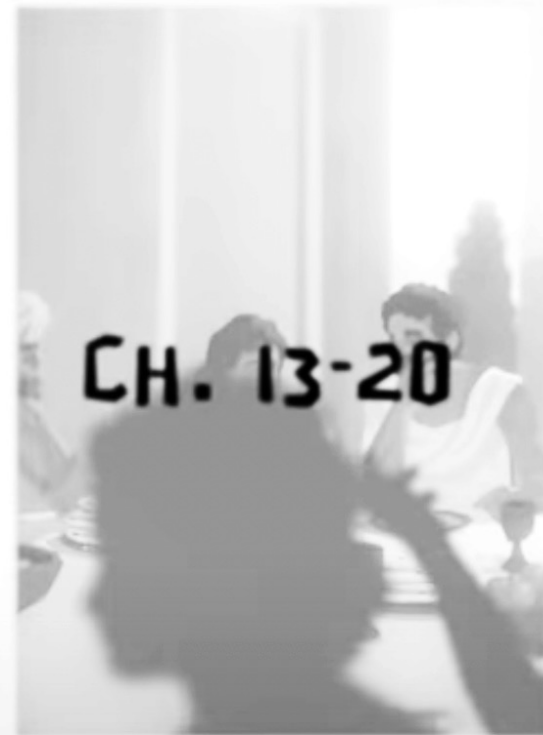
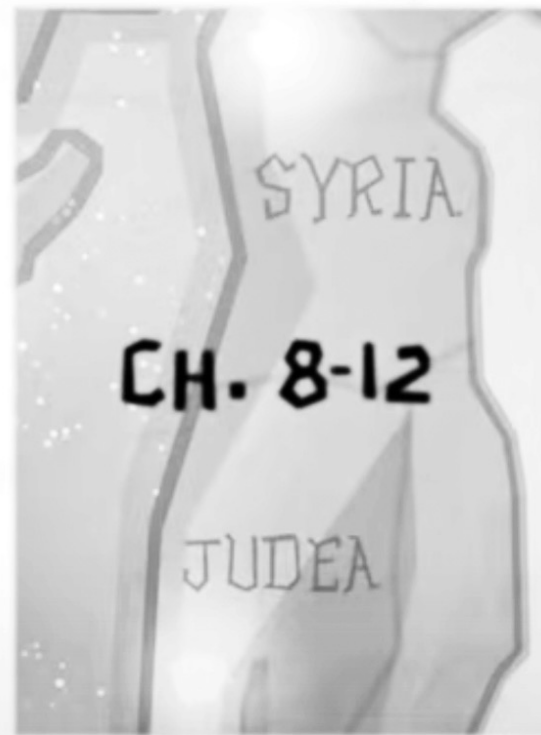
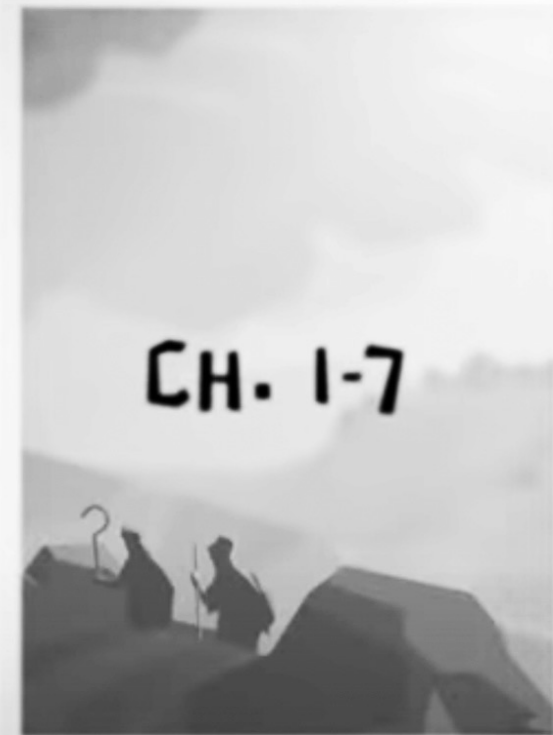
**JUDEA &  
SAMARIA**

**MISSIONARY  
JOURNEYS**

**BOUND FOR  
ROME**

**PETER**

**PAUL**



# Luke-Acts Series



CH. 1-7

CH. 8-12

CH. 13-20

the  
BOOK  
of  
ACTS



the

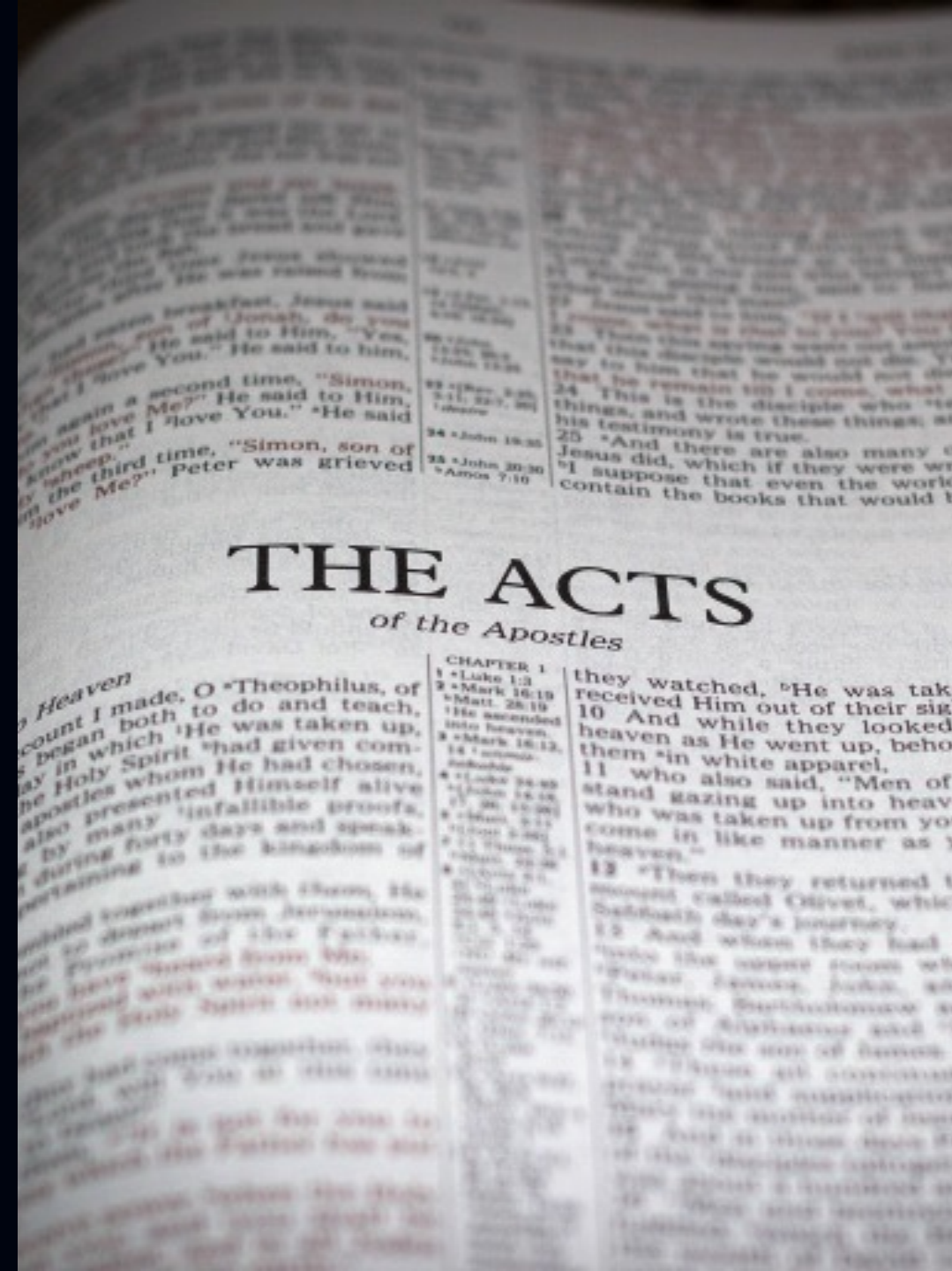
BIBLE

PROJECT



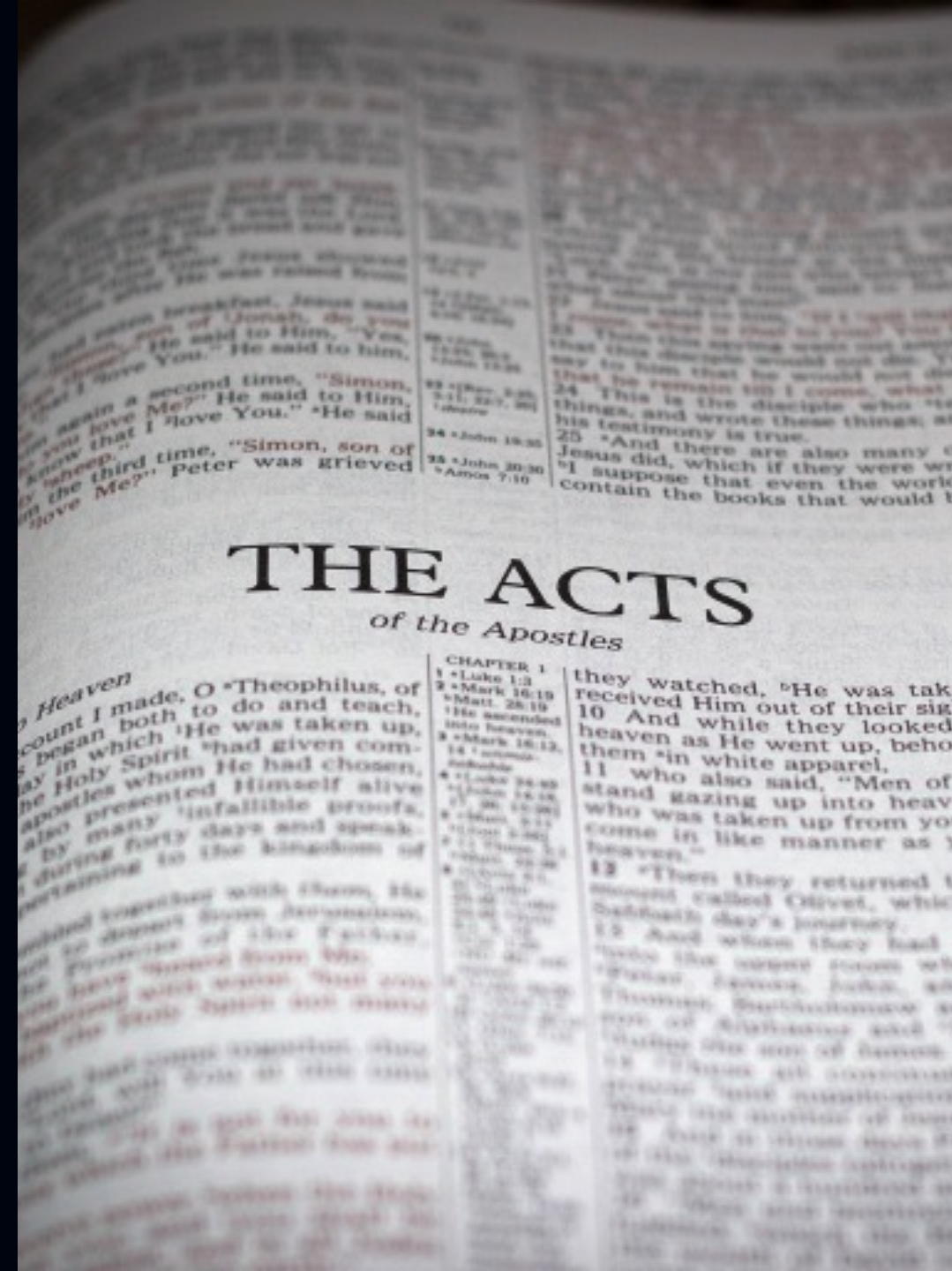
# 2 KEY THEMES

- God's Holy Presence
  - Now dwells in His people
  - We are now His spiritual temple
  - His holiness & our sin cannot co-exist in the temple



# 2 KEY THEMES

- Satan's Strategy
  - He assaults the church & battles against the Holy Spirit
  - External: persecutions
  - Internal: corrupts the church through sin, divides through conflicts







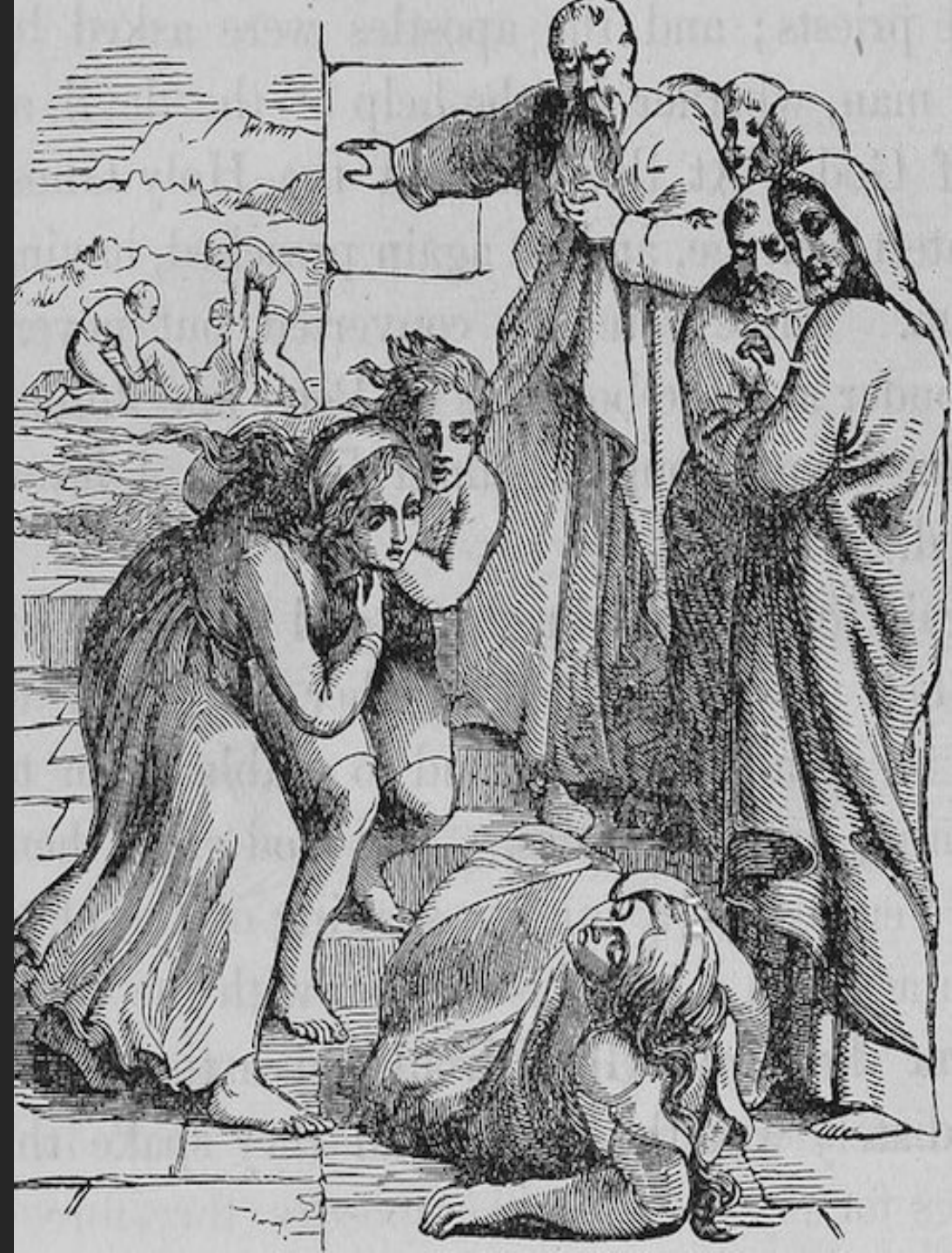
# The Sin, the Self-Seeking & the Self-Giving in the Community of God

Acts 4:32 – 5:11

1. The **Sin** that **Corrupts**
2. The **Self-Seeking** who **Cheats**
3. The **Self-Giving** who **Cares**

# THE SIN

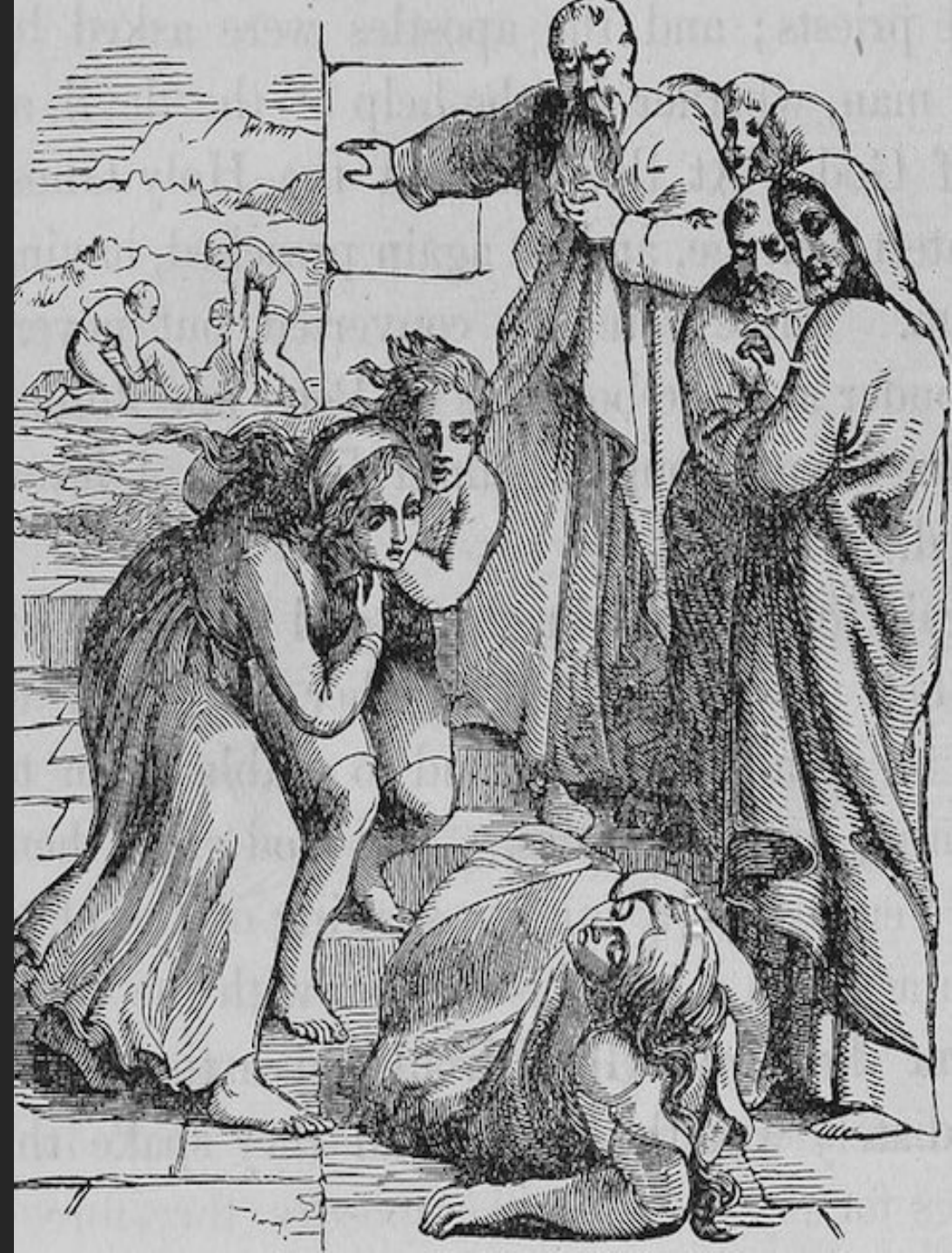
- Ananias & Sapphira (5:1-11)
  - One of the most disturbing episodes, and a very troubling passage
  - Raises many theological questions about sin, judgment, God





# THE SIN

- Sin (5:1-11)
  - What sin did Ananias & Sapphira commit that warrants a fatal punishment?



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

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Acts 5:3-4



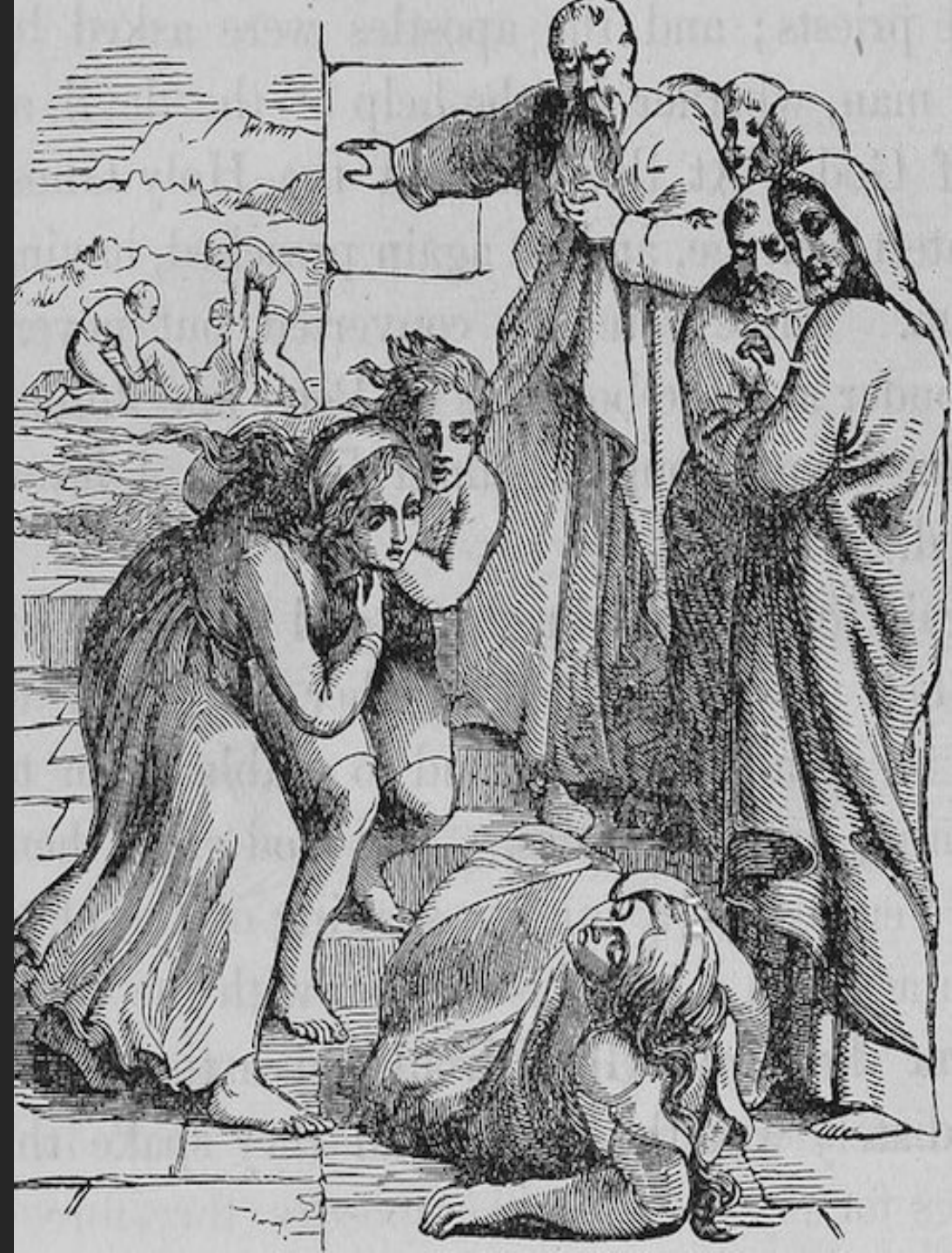
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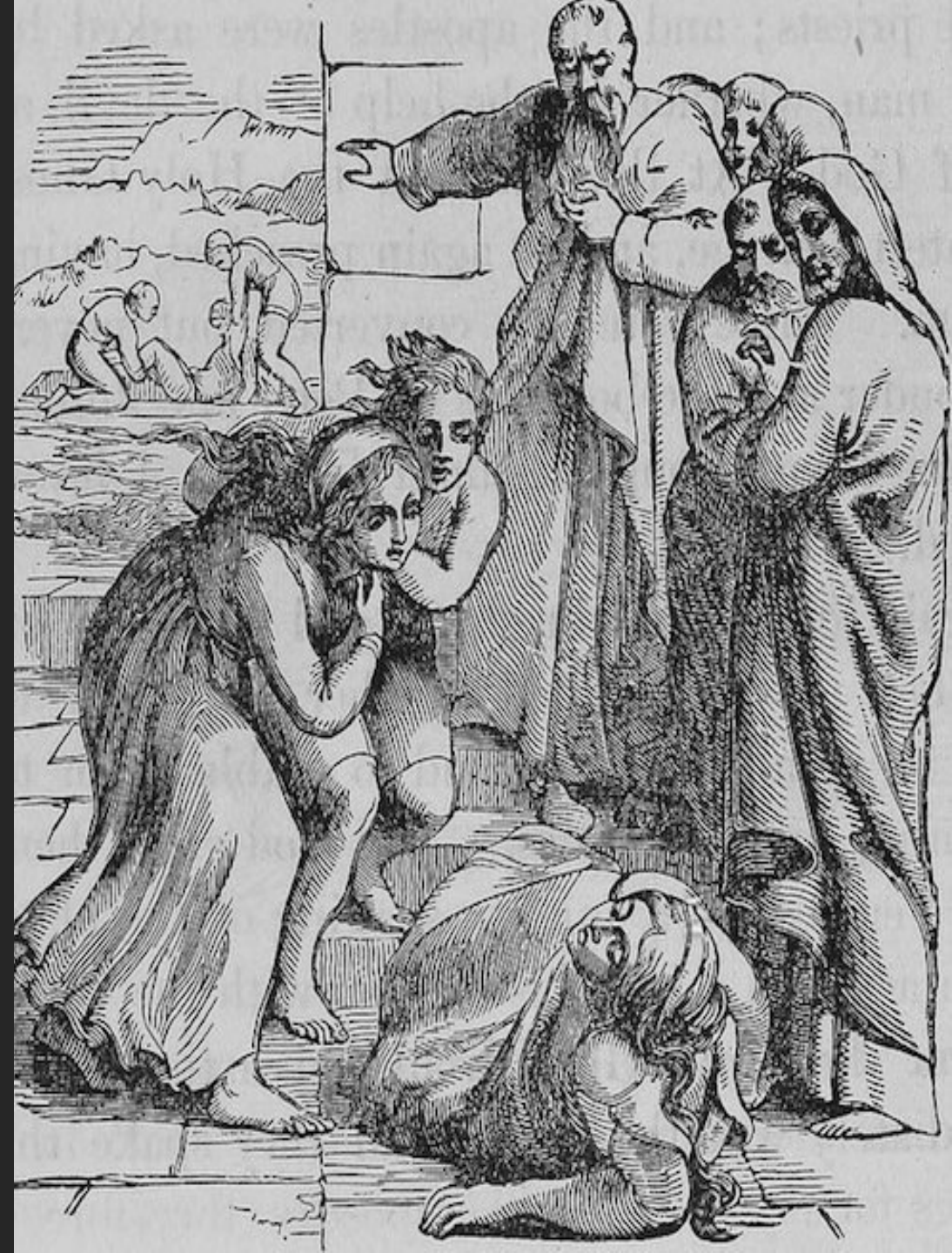
# THE SIN

- Sin (5:1-11)
  - What sin did Ananias & Sapphira commit that warrants a fatal punishment?
  - Issue is not about generosity but dishonesty
  - Lying, faking, misleading, deceiving others about their generosity: deliberate & pre-meditated



# THE SIN

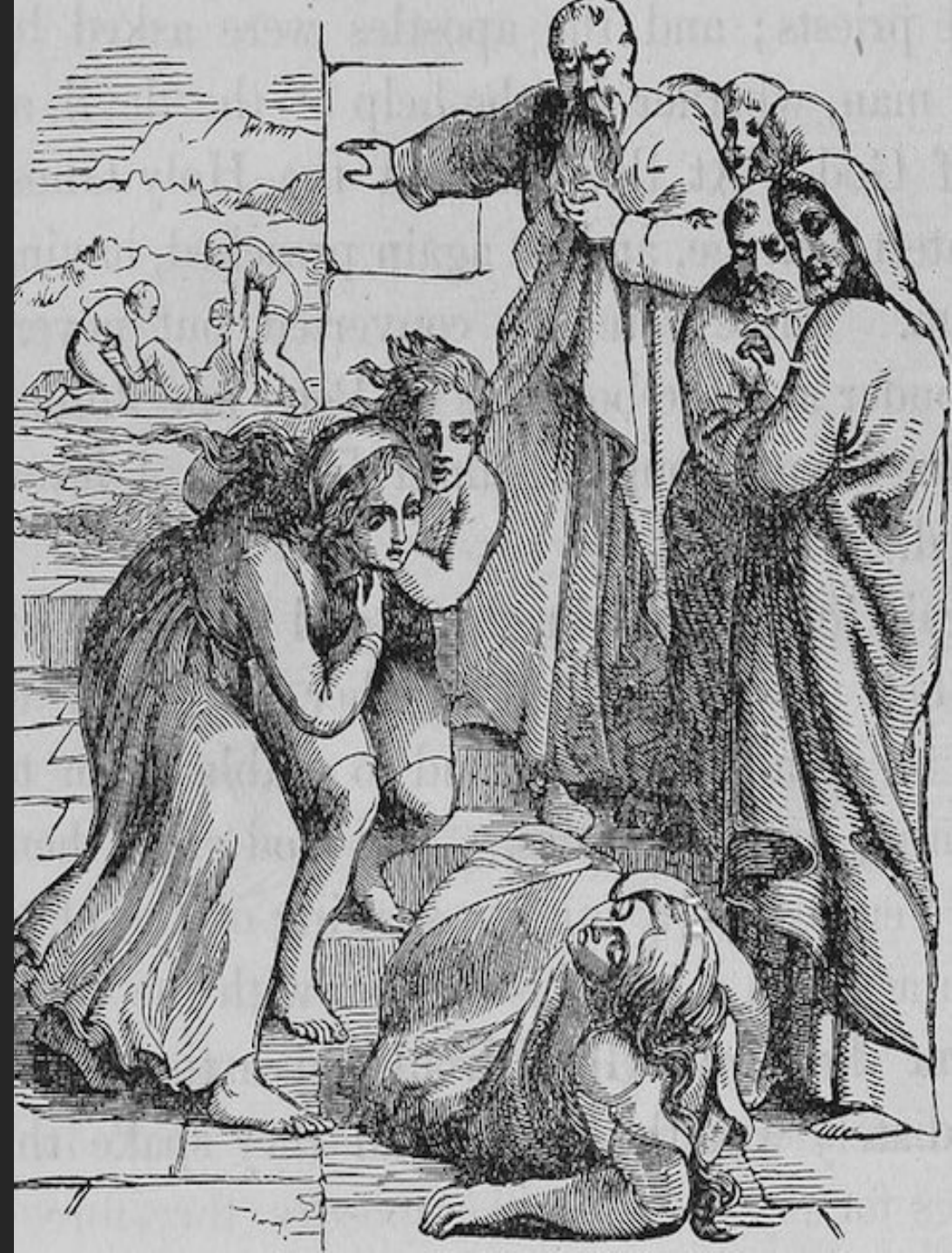
- Sin (5:1-11)
  - What sin did Ananias & Sapphira commit that warrants a fatal punishment?
  - Kept back: set aside for oneself secretly and dishonestly, associated with financial fraud & embezzlement, element of greed & cheating





# THE SIN

- Sin (5:1-11)
  - What sin did Ananias & Sapphira commit that warrants a fatal punishment?
  - Lying not just to leaders & church but to God
  - Letting Satan fill their heart & influence them, instead of being filled with & moved by the Spirit



# THE SIN

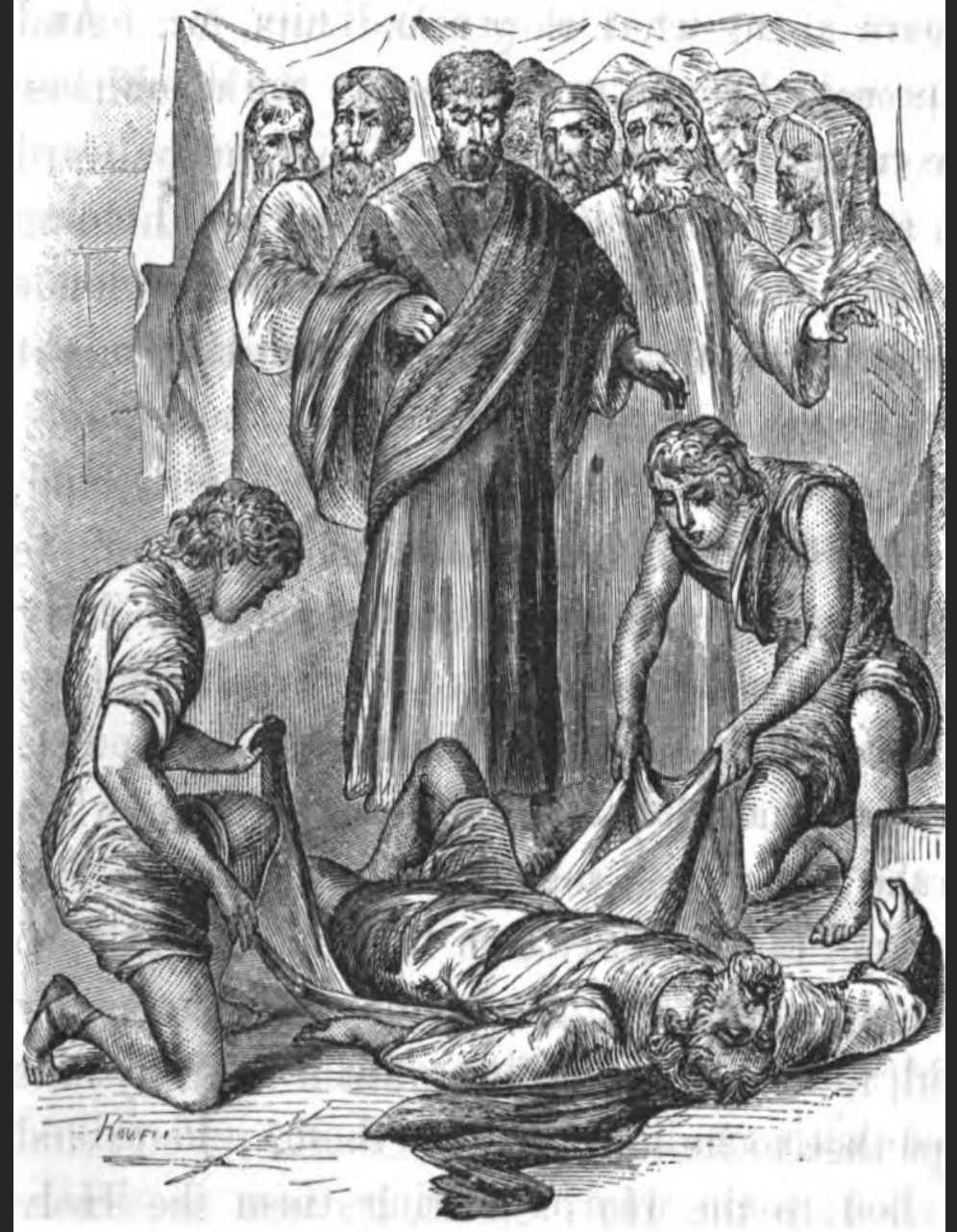
- Sin (5:1-11)
  - What sin did Ananias & Sapphira commit that warrants a fatal punishment?
  - Gone to the dark side: Satan gets us so obsessed with an idea or course of action that we get carried away & are blinded to the consequences (A Fernando)





# THE SIN

- Judgment (5:1-11)
  - Why is the punishment so harsh? Aren't Christians under the covenant of grace?
  - Arguments: Ananias & Sapphira are not Christians, they died from natural causes (heart attack)





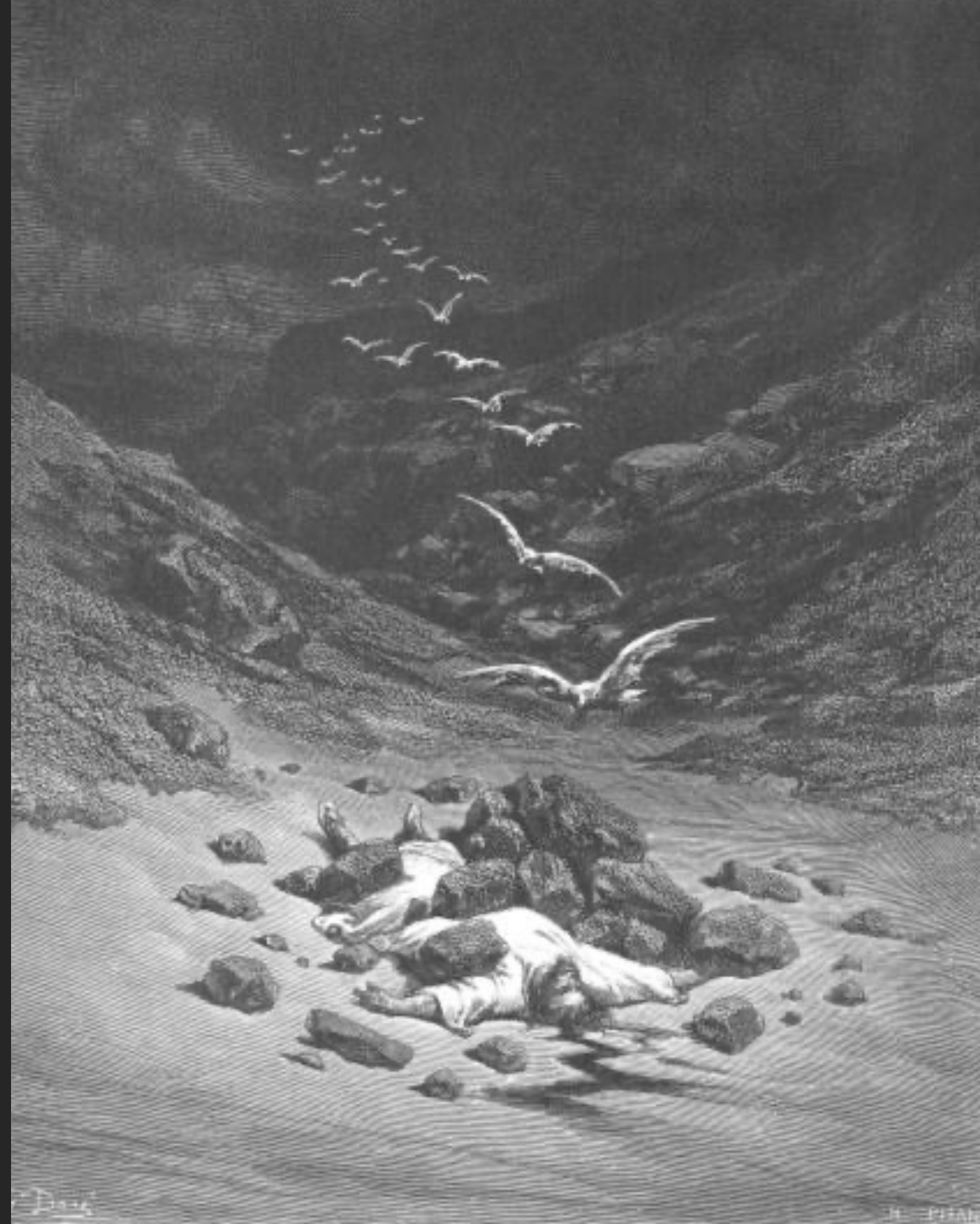
# THE SIN

- Judgment (5:1-11)
  - Divine judgment: similar OT examples
  - Nadab & Abihu offered “strange” fire in tabernacle, irreverently and disrespectfully (Lev 10:1-2)
  - Among those who are near Me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified (v3)



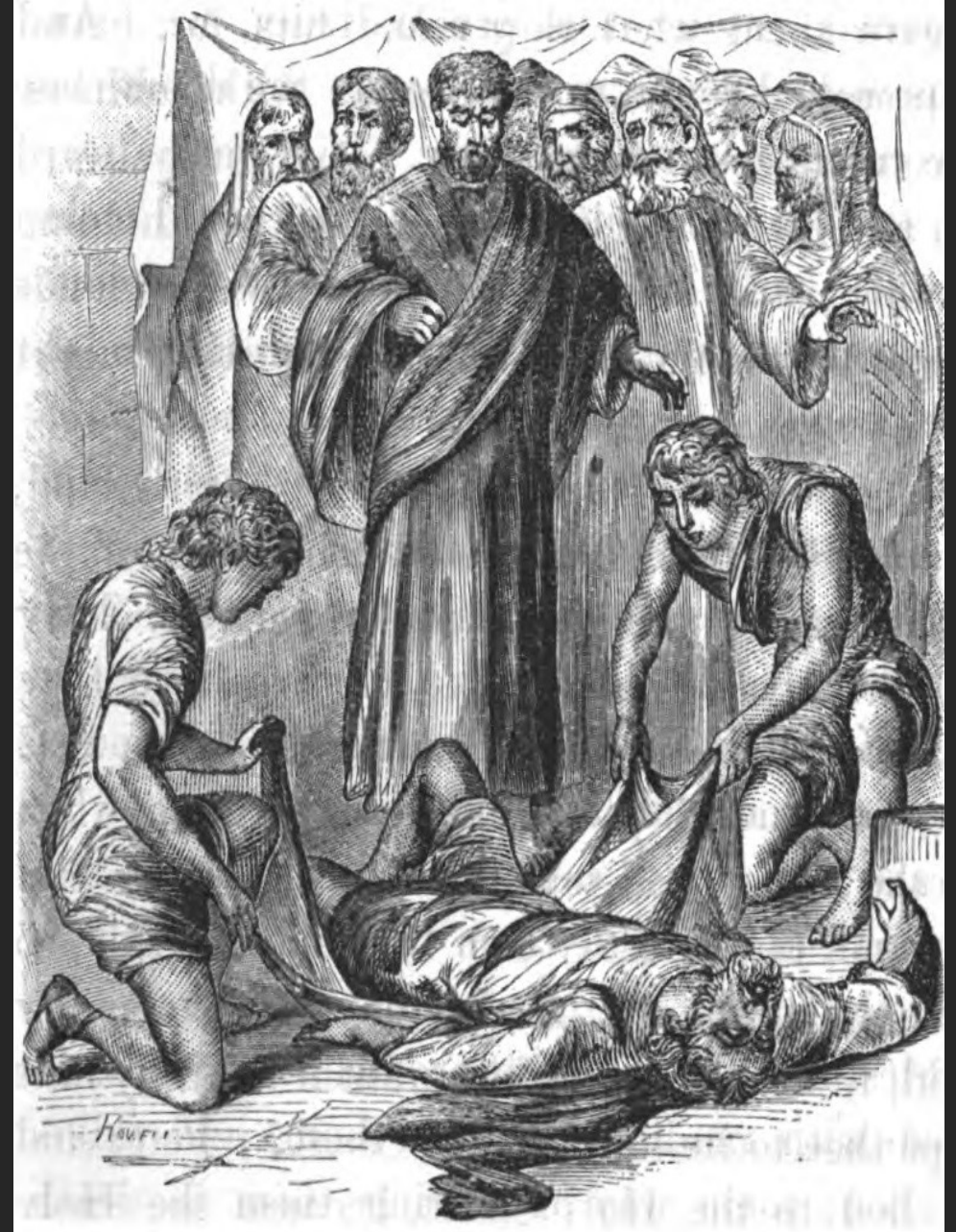
# THE SIN

- Judgment (5:1-11)
  - Divine judgment: similar OT examples
  - Achan kept back spoils from Jericho against divine orders (Josh 7)



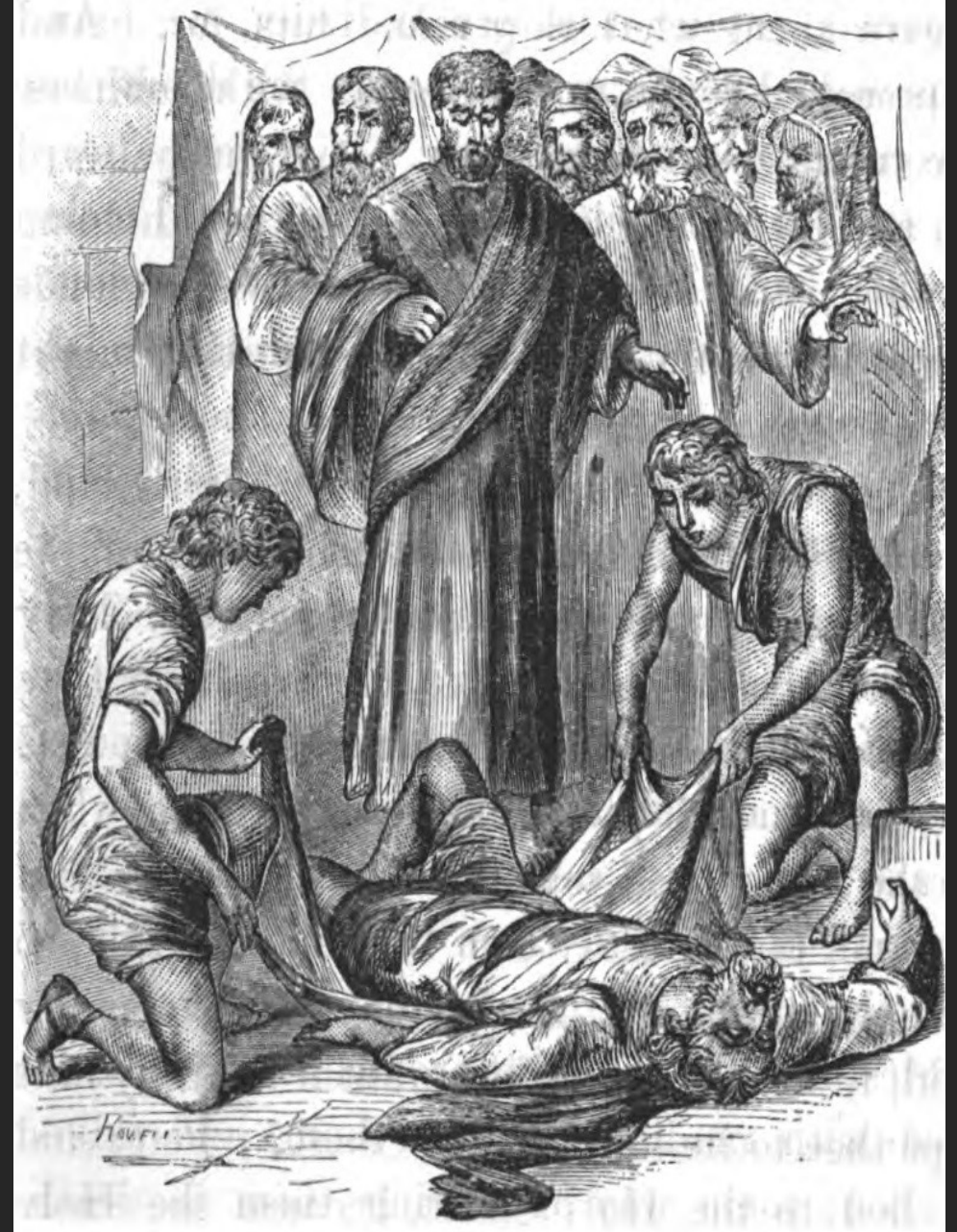
# THE SIN

- Judgment (5:1-11)
  - Divine judgment: a pattern?
  - Nadab & Abihu: just after first setting up of the tabernacle
  - Achan: just after Israel entered the Promised Land



# THE SIN

- Judgment (5:1-11)
  - Divine judgment: a pattern?
  - God had to judge sin in a more severe manner at the beginning of a new period in the history of the people of God?
  - Judgment on Ananias & Sapphira: start of early church, holiness & purity of community at stake

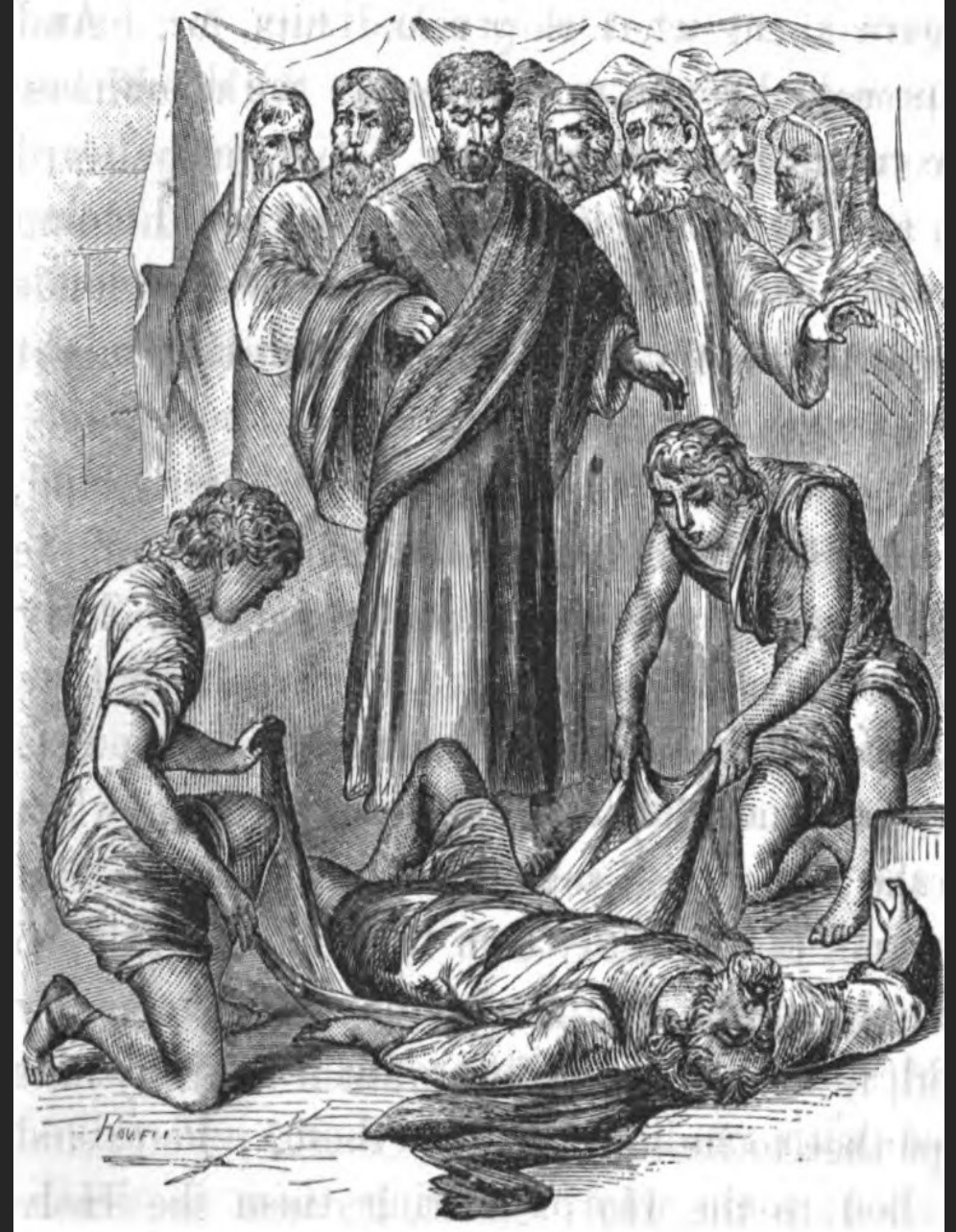




# THE SIN

- Judgment (5:1-11)
  - Divine judgment: testing the Spirit (5:9)

*“How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?”*

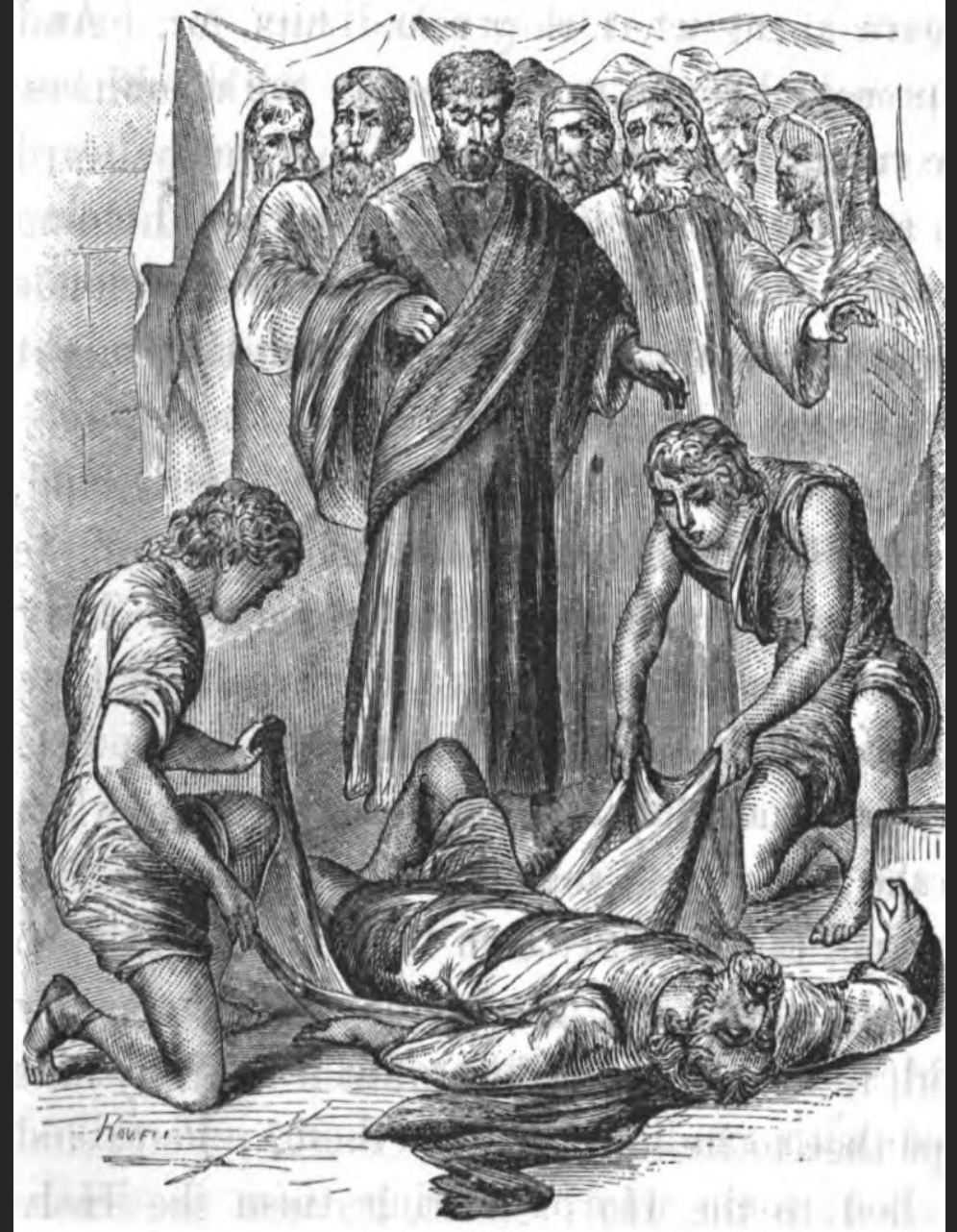


Peter is saying to Sapphira & Ananias that in spite of the evident presence in the church of the Spirit of the Lord, they had chosen to attempt to “pull a fast one” on God. Their lie contained within it the assumption that the Spirit would do nothing. Conscious or not, it was a challenge as to whether God was really present in the church. Will God respond, or will He turn a blind eye to their deception? This is a dangerous challenge. God responds, and they die.

PH Davids

# THE SIN

- Judgment (5:1-11)
  - Divine judgment: testing the Spirit (5:9)
  - Result of judgment: great fear came upon the whole church and on all who heard about it (5:5, 11)



***“Is he—quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.”***

***(Susan)***

***“If there’s anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they’re either braver than most or else just silly.”*** (Mrs. Beaver)

***“Then He isn’t safe?”*** (Lucy)

***“Safe? Who said anything about safe? Course He isn’t safe. But He’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”***

***(Mr. Beaver)***





# EXHORTATION

Don't "play play" with God. Don't put Him to the test. Fear Him and never forget that He is a holy God.

God is indeed good & merciful but don't take advantage or treat Him like we can fool Him or pull a fast one on Him.

And don't treat Him like He is blind or oblivious to the sins we have allowed in our life, or believe that He will close His eyes to whatever deeds of darkness we may be engaged in.



# EXHORTATION

The reason we are not struck dead yet is due to His great mercy, but don't presume on His graciousness, and then choose to remain unrepentant.

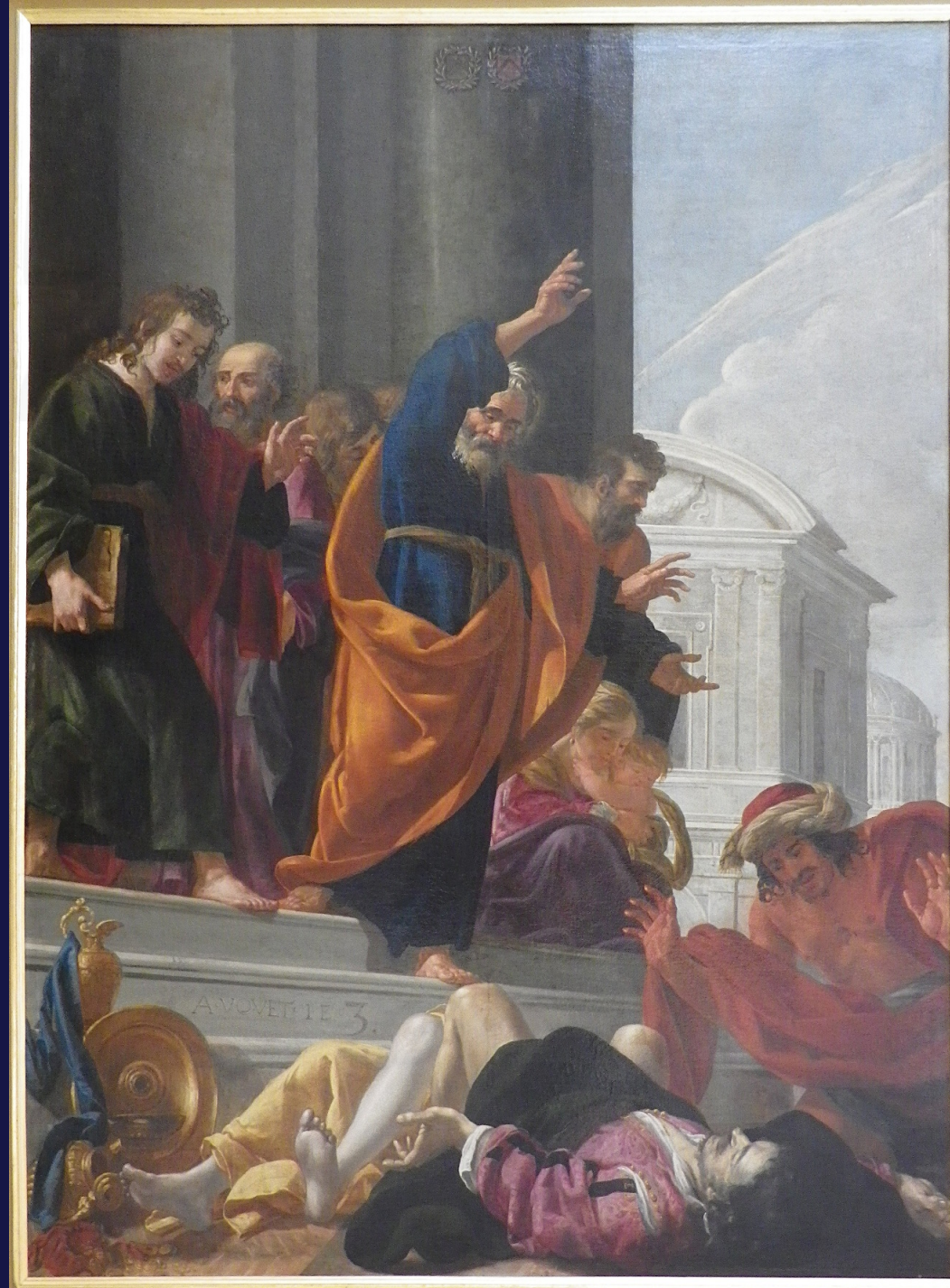
If we continue to live a sinful life, then don't say that we have not been warned – He is not safe!





# THE SELF-SEEKING

- Why
  - What motivated Ananias & Sapphira's lying & deception?
  - A self-seeking heart: they wanted the same attention, accolades, recognition, praise, status as Barnabas?
  - To look good in the eyes of people



# THE SELF-SEEKING

- Looking Good
  - We are all driven by desire to look good



# THE SELF-SEEKING

- Looking Good
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# THE SELF-SEEKING

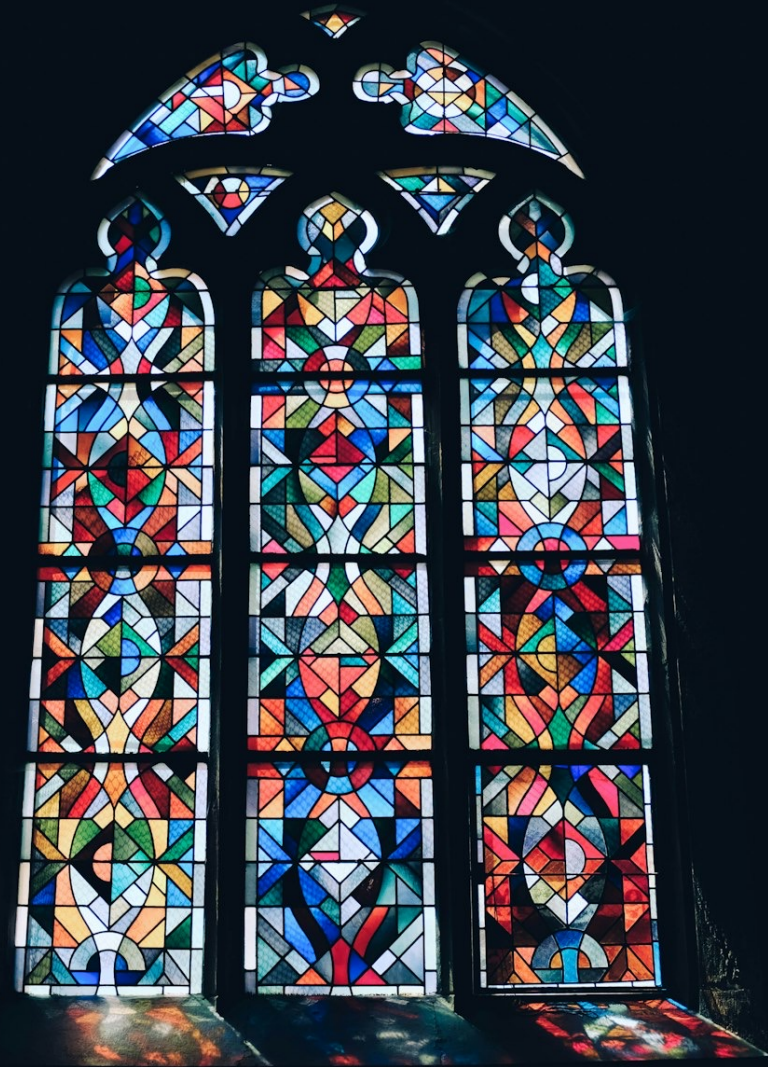
- Looking Good
  - Dishonest means in the office
  - Lying on your resume
  - Fake degrees & certificates
  - Manipulated results & profits
  - Character assassination & slander





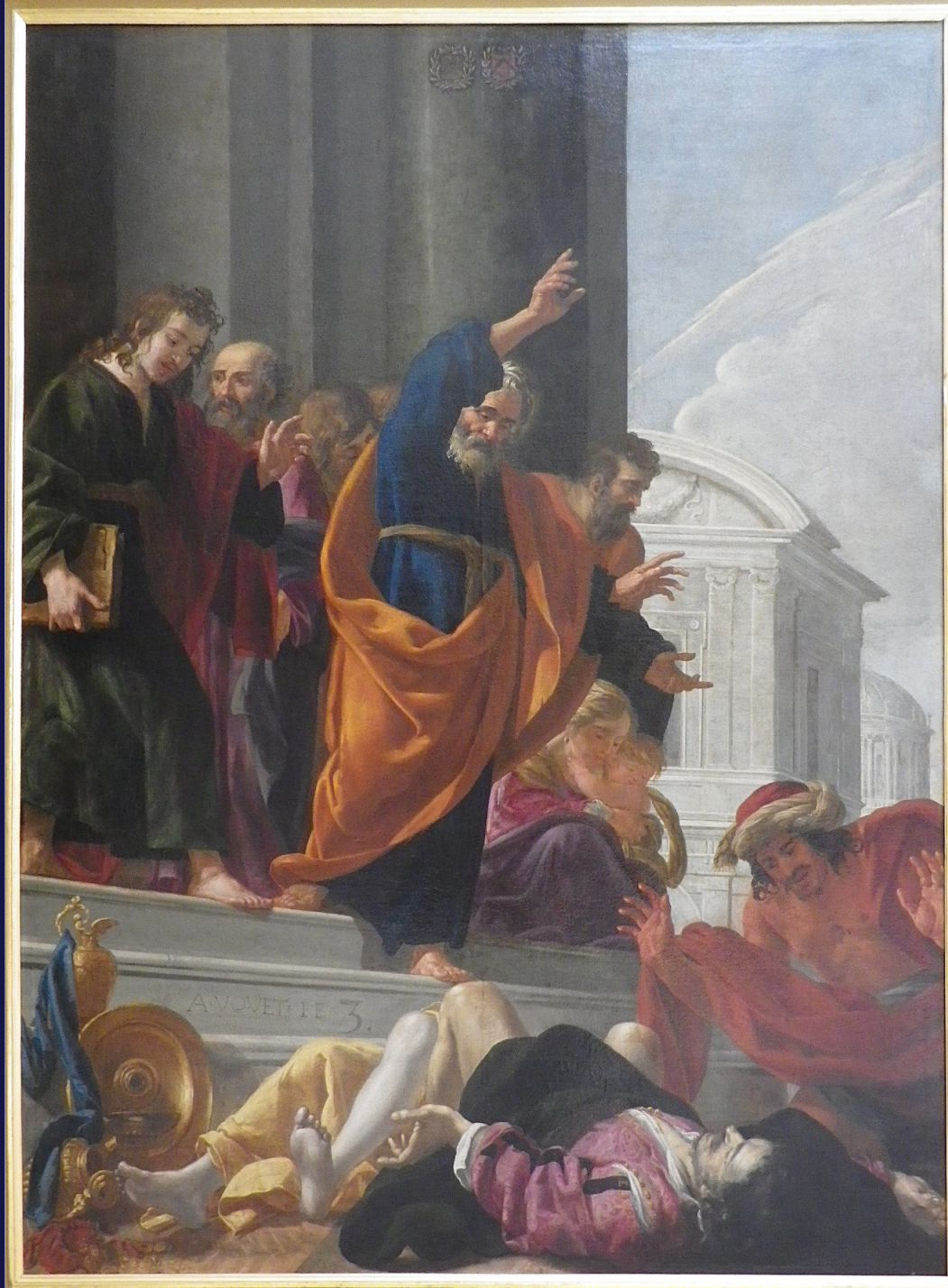
# THE SELF-SEEKING

- Looking Good
  - Dishonest means in the church
  - What a US pastor did to get his book into the New York Times bestseller list so that he can refer to himself as a “New York Times bestselling author”



# THE SELF-SEEKING

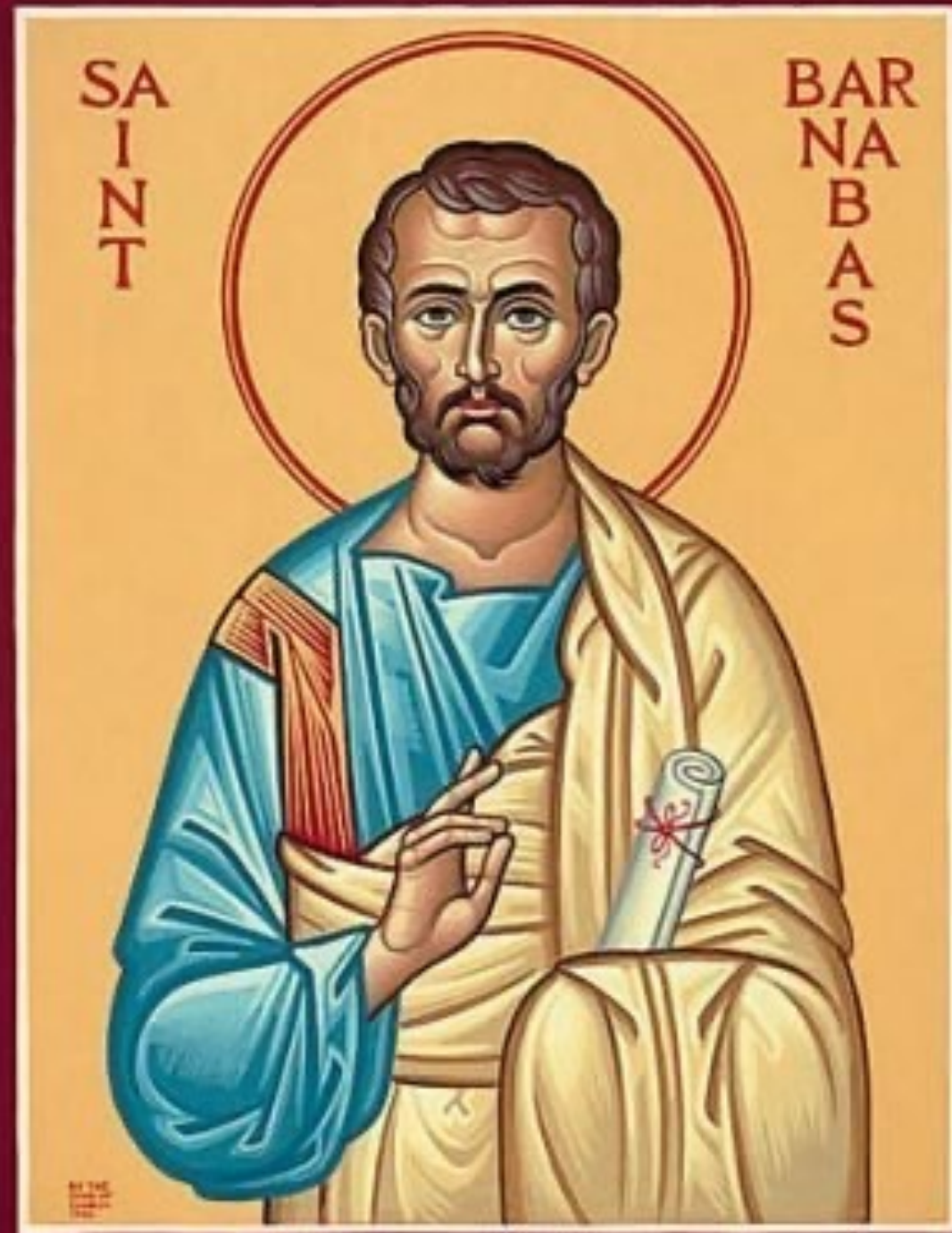
- It's Sad
  - How does God feel about our dishonest ways to look good?





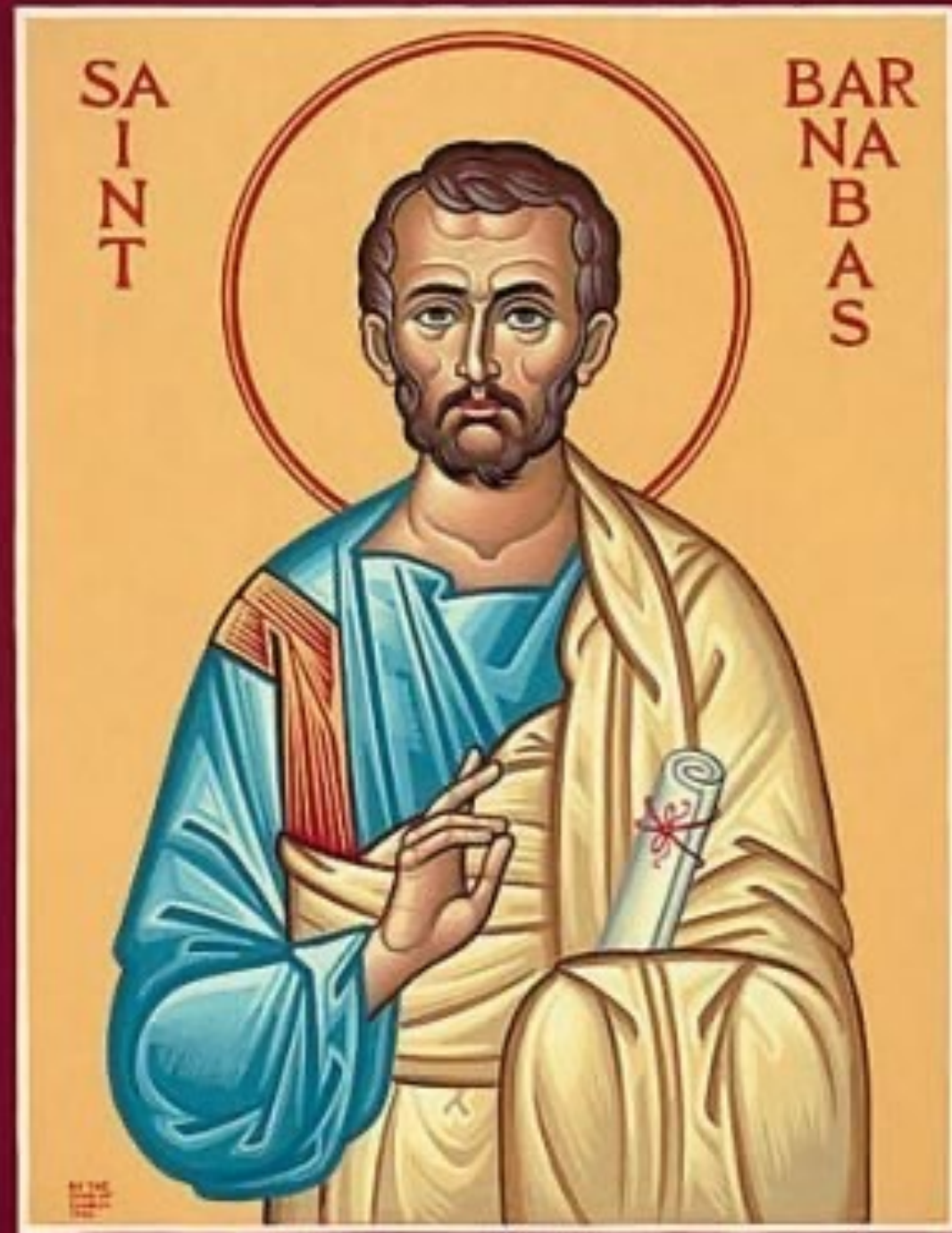
# THE SELF-GIVING

- Barnabas (4:32-37)
  - Paul's partner in 1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey
  - Joseph, Levite from Cyprus (v36)
  - Apostles called him the son of encouragement



# THE SELF-GIVING

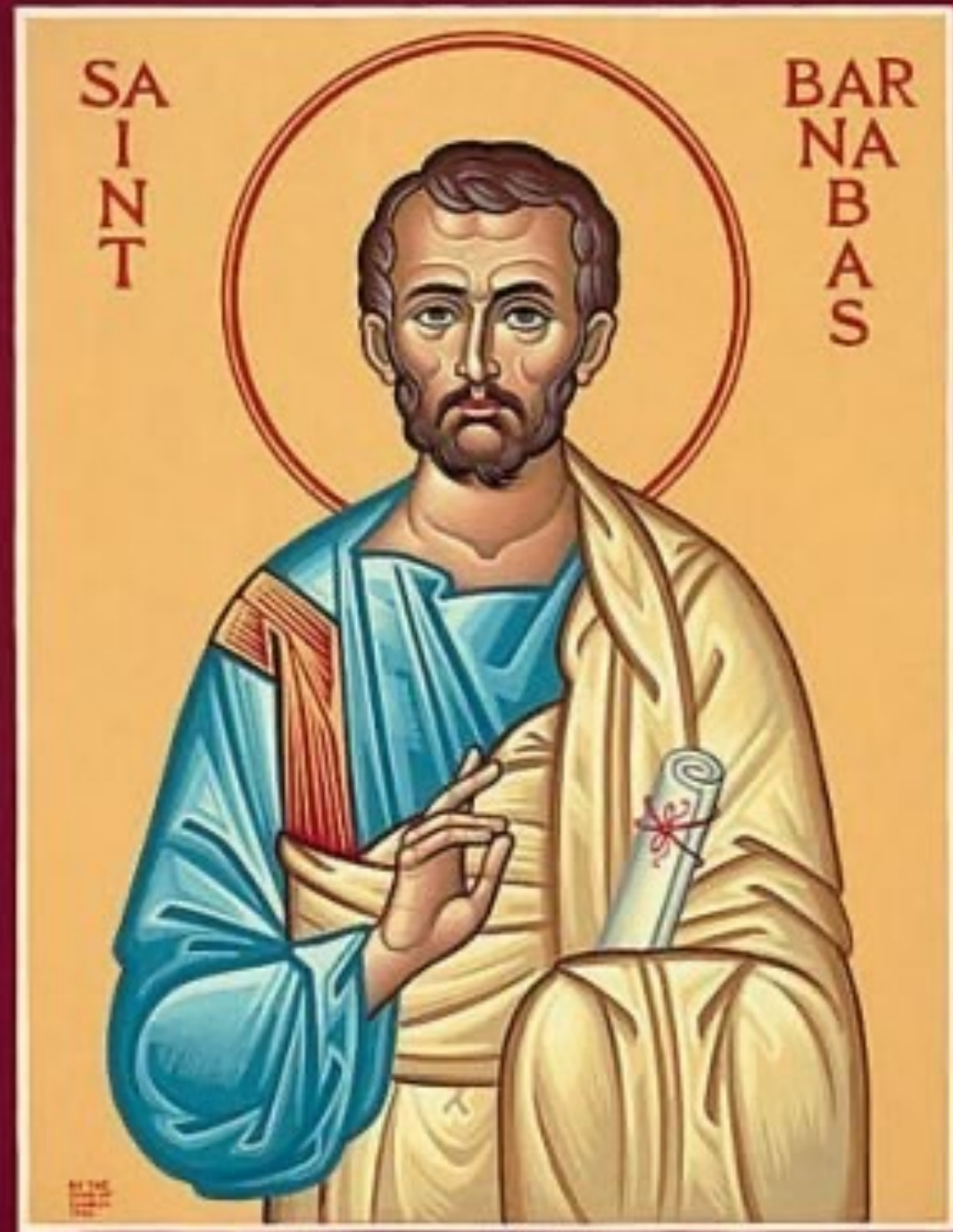
- Barnabas (4:32-37)
  - Acts 9: believed in Paul, cared & encouraged him
  - Acts 11: brought Paul to Antioch, encouraged him in ministry
  - Sold his personal field: donated full proceeds voluntarily & selflessly





# THE SELF-GIVING

- Hospitable Generosity
  - Generosity that provides the needy with a welcoming break from worrying about their essential needs
  - Generosity that makes recipients feel welcome into their caring embrace and feel well taken care of



# THE SELF-GIVING

- Hospitable Generosity
  - Immensely grateful and very blessed by many Barnabas in SJSM who have shown my family & me “hospitable generosity” in this season of God’s calling





# THE SELF-GIVING

- Hospitable Generosity
  - Cultivate a self-giving & caring heart that is
    - Always on the lookout for those with needs
    - Ready to respond hospitably and generously



We should not ignore the New Testament witness to the importance of the gift of hospitality (Rom 12:13; Gal 6:10; Col 4:10; Philem 22). Even if not sold so as to increase our giving to God's work, **our homes and properties are not to be hoarded as if 'only ours'... A home is a gift from God which He wants us to invest in the interests of the kingdom of God.** Jesus immortalized this ministry [when He said], 'I was a stranger and you invited Me in' (Matt 25:35).

Bruce Milne

# THE SELF-GIVING

- Hospitable Home
  - Not many will be called by the Lord to sell our house and give everything to the poor
  - How can we still be hospitably generous with our homes and possessions?
  - Examples of friends who maintain a hospitable home



Fear the Lord and remember that He is holy. Don't forget we are the temple of the Holy Spirit and His Holy Presence dwells in all of us.

Be on guard against the schemes of Satan. Don't let him drag us into the dark side. But if we should fall, then repent and be purified. Don't remain in the dark side.





Learn to cultivate a heart of self-giving and be like Barnabas. Care for others and be hospitably generous.

Don't be like Ananias & Sapphira but watch out for the spirit of self-seeking. Don't be obsessed with wanting to look good, and don't resort to lying & cheating just for that. It saddens God & breaks His heart.

