

# Acts Week 14

## Chapter 5, Deception and self-deception

We read at the end of chapter four how the early church members sold their possessions and gave to the church as needed in order to strengthen and spread the gospel message. I made the comment that we are not required to do so today and I joked, “please, don’t run home and sell your house and give the profit away.” This was not what is being addressed here. We are able to witness where the heart of the people was at the time. When Twin Cities Church in Grass Valley was being built there were some extremely large donations given that paid for the building of the church and those who had means felt compelled to give, however, they were never forced. I want to look at this for just a moment. And we will begin with Ananias, and his wife Sapphira, Acts 5:1, 5:5. What I wish to achieve more of what is at play here than just their lie, it is more about where the heart of man is and how self-deception ruins one’s life and perhaps the health of a strong church or nation.

The early church had no buildings of their own, they used people’s houses, preached in the streets, in the synagogues, Jesus preached on the side of a hill under the sky, no matter where they were they preached. However, there was money needed to feed and care for the sick, the widows, the orphans, the poor, and of course those spreading the word. This was not as communism... as some have used it to justify the taking of private property or of owning those who have less. Equity and Equality was never the focus, salvation was, and sharing the gospel was for teaching those who began to follow Jesus and His disciples, setting examples would be established to lead people to a better and new life.

I want to share something though that has taken place in our own nation in regard to the giving. These offerings we read of here were contributions from the heart, we find not one verse that indicates these givers were ordered to do so, so I want to share this about our nation so that you can see how the devil works through a society.

“That brings us back to Browder’s May–June 1938 speech and booklet, A Message to Catholics. Browder and CPUSA made an appeal to Catholic workingmen and immigrants, especially those in union organizations like the C.I.O. and A.F. of L., insisting that “the Communist Party heartily agrees” with “progressive Catholic sentiments” that stand in solidarity with working people. Browder and the CPUSA National Committee presented their offer to Catholics, appealing to “democracy.” “Within the camp of democracy,” asserted Browder, “are included the great majority of the members of the Catholic Church. We communists extend the hand of brotherly cooperation to them, and express our pleasure to find ourselves fighting shoulder to shoulder with them for the same economic and social aims.”

This claim of shoulder-to-shoulder aims could not have been a more gross misrepresentation. There may have been similar desires for higher employment, more welfare, poverty reduction, a more “equitable” wealth redistribution, a smaller income gap, but a careful read of the Communist Manifesto or anything by Lenin and Stalin showed no similarities whatsoever with the language of the Old and New Testaments or the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This point deserves a little more elaboration here, because it is based on a surprisingly common assertion by “social justice” and progressive Christians to this day—namely, that communism and socialism have attractive similarities with Christianity, and thus should not be dismissed by Christians. No, no, and no. That is a very foolish and shallow conclusion,

One will immediately notice that they are completely different in every meaningful respect, irrespective of whether they share a specific commonality such as sharing of resources or giving up property—which, notably, is a fully voluntary choice and endeavor for any Franciscan (for instance) who chooses to join the order, and which is not voluntary for the 100 percent of individuals compelled by the coercive hand of the state in totalitarian communist societies. Moreover, the Bible repeatedly offers vigorous defenses of private property and property rights, as rudimentary as the understanding implicit in the Ten Commandments laid down by the Creator: thou shalt not steal. To steal is to take someone’s property, which is a sacred and natural right according to both biblical law and natural law. The assertion by Marx and Engels that “the entire communist program may be summed up in the single sentence: abolition of private property” is completely antithetical to the teachings of God.<sup>1</sup>

I wanted to take this section from the book that you may see and understand how the Devil uses good to subtly achieve his goals. These are words from a book but they are much more than just that, it has been the deception of evil throughout the history of our nation that has brought us where we are today. Communism under FDR was welcome into our government by the means of an all welcoming painting, a portrait of beautiful colors, attractive to many but the canvas on which it was painted was of evil.

I want you to see how easy it is to fool even some of the brightest minds of our leaders. Far too often evil finds an open door where dreams rest and visions of grandeur dance.

“America was far from excluded from this Soviet effort—quite the contrary. Franklin Roosevelt was lobbied hard, by the Kremlin, by Earl Browder, by communists operating secretly from within his administration, and by duped liberals throughout his administration and within the Democratic Party.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kengor, Paul. *The Devil and Karl Marx: Communism's Long March of Death, Deception, and Infiltration* (pp. 201-202). TAN Books. Kindle Edition. Also in the printed book, same pages.

<sup>2</sup> Kengor, Paul. *The Devil and Karl Marx: Communism's Long March of Death, Deception, and Infiltration* (p. 200). TAN Books. Kindle Edition.

I would say the Dreams and ambitions of Franklin Roosevelt were sincere, but over ambition has been the downfall of many throughout history. The results of Roosevelt's decision plagues our country more so today than throughout our nation's history. When we openly have members in both houses and the presidency seek the ruin of our nation one must realize God has been cast aside and the door to evil has been pried wide open and left that way for decades.

As we are reading of the ambitions in those of the early church we must be observant of Satan's tactics throughout history. How many slithered their way into the early church to deceive the membership, how many came to steal and destroy using the very words of the Scripture? "Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die."<sup>3</sup> The churches strongest enemies have been those who infiltrated the church itself. Today we look at the thousands of diseases we face, all of which come to us from the outside, the results of Adam's action in the garden, but every one of them destroys us from within. The greatest attacks come from within and it has been said our nation will not be overthrown, no, it will fall from within, destroyed by the cancer of evil we seem so eager to support. Jesus said in Matthew 26:11; "The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me." Economic equality appears to never have been Jesus' focus, man has used this idea to achieve control of the masses where those who believe the lie latter discover a government of totalitarianism.

When we study our bibles we must find and understand all the deception the Scripture warns us of. The ugliness we see today was present in the beginning, Satan's tactics remain the same but I would say he has gotten much better at deception, due to false promises and illusionary desires of those who live to the world. Utopia - An imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect. The word was first used as the name of an imaginary island, governed on a perfect political and social system, in the book Utopia (1516) by Sir Thomas More. The name in modern Latin is literally 'no-place', from Greek ou 'not' + topos 'place'. How misguided are our nation's people and government who are constantly searching for a place that does not exist.

Perhaps I jumped the gun here, when I say this, there is no place such as this, there is, but it will never be found on earth, it exists only in heaven.

**Deuteronomy 32:4; He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.**

**Psalms 18:32; It is God who arms me with strength, And makes my way perfect.**

**Matthew 5:48; "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.**

**James 1:17; Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.**

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<sup>3</sup> Genesis 3:4, New King James Bible.

**1 John 4:18; There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.**

So if it is a perfect society you are seeking then look up, place your faith in our Holy God who wants that none perish but that all come to repentance, 2 Peter 3:9.

I said earlier I can find no place in the Scripture where we are forced to sell and give in order to serve others. Yet I know someone will bring up the young rich man in **Matthew 19:20-22; The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."** But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. This was not an order, it was a choice, the man had the ability to accept the challenge or reject it. Ananius was free to do as he wanted with his land but when he said he gave all of it he chose to lie, this was the violation, had he not said that and merely kept some for himself and his wife there would have been no punishment, but he wanted others to think well of him and therefore pride saw to his and her deaths.

**Acts 5:3-5; But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."** Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.

**Acts 6-11; And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him.**

**Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?"**

**She said, "Yes, for so much."**

**Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.**

What do you think God wants us to learn in this? Why in the middle of all we have been reading it seems as though we have taken a break in the teaching to look at this thing Ananias did. Jesus said in **Luke 6:26; Woe to you when all men speak well of you, For so did their fathers to the false prophets.** Why would this be important to us? Why would this punishment be so severe? What was Ananias wanting to achieve?

This line from Luke is only a part of all Jesus would have us understand. Ananias's heart was filled with hypocrisy, he sought to have praise above others as did those who earlier spoke well of the false prophets. We can look back to the writings from the Devil and Karl Marx and see how the closeness of language is often a disguise to infiltrate the truth and twist it to achieve dishonest gain.

Look here at Achan and his treachery,

**Joshua 7:19-20; Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me." And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done:**

Luke wrote; **So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. Verse 5.** Is this not a time of teaching of what happens to those who seek dishonest gain? Achan and all that belonged to him was destroyed in the valley of trouble, the valley if Achor.