

Exploring the Deaths of Ananias and Sapphira: A Study in Group-Embedded Identity and Broken Communal Trust

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Abstract:	Drawing on the socio-cultural theories of Bruce Malina and Jerome Neyrey, this paper explores the confronting and sudden deaths of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5.1–11, positioning the couple as “group-embedded persons” whose stories should be considered within the framework of ancient “trust networks.” It presents Ananias and Sapphira not merely as victims of supernatural punishment but as figures whose deaths symbolise the breakdown of essential relationships within ancient networks of trust. This approach proposes that Luke’s narrative, in this instance, serves as a cautionary tale against superficial engagement in the fledgling Jesus movement, emphasising the importance of sincere participation in the community at the time of its development.