

Acts 23:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

Analysis

Ananias's command to strike Paul on the mouth violated Jewish law requiring fair hearing before judgment (Leviticus 19:15). This illegal violence revealed the Sanhedrin's corruption and prejudice. The high priest, who should have modeled righteousness, instead demonstrated the moral bankruptcy of the religious establishment that had rejected the Messiah.

Historical Context

Ananias, high priest from AD 47-59, was known for violence and corruption. Josephus records he was eventually assassinated by Jewish zealots. His behavior here exemplifies the religious leadership's decline from biblical standards.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do you respond when religious authorities themselves violate the principles they claim to uphold?
2. What does this teach about distinguishing between respecting godly leadership and condoning corrupt authority?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	δὲ	ἀρχιερεὺς	Ἀνανίας	ἐπέταξεν	τοῖς	παρεστῶσιν
G3588	And	the high priest	Ananias	commanded	G3588	them that stood by
	G1161	G749	G367	G2004		G3936
αὐτοῦ	τύπτειν	αὐτοῦ	τὸ	στόμα		
him	to smite	him	G3588	on the mouth		
G846	G5180	G846		G4750		

Additional Cross-References

John 18:22 (Parallel theme): And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

Acts 24:1 (Parallel theme): And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

1 Kings 22:24 (Parallel theme): But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?

Micah 5:1 (Parallel theme): Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.