

# Acts 23:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

## Analysis

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**Revilest thou God's high priest?** (λοιδορεῖς, loidoreis, to insult/revile)—The bystanders rebuked Paul for calling Ananias a 'whited wall' (v. 3), considering this disrespectful to the high priest's office. Their question appeals to religious propriety even while tolerating judicial injustice—Ananias had ordered Paul struck illegally, violating Roman and Jewish law by punishing before conviction. The irony is profound: they defended the dignity of an office occupied by a corrupt man who commanded lawless violence.

This confrontation reveals tension between respecting God-ordained authority and confronting its abuse. Paul's bold denunciation echoed Jesus calling Pharisees 'whitewashed tombs' (Matthew 23:27). The Greek present tense suggests ongoing reviling, implying Paul's statement was seen as sustained disrespect rather than momentary reaction.

## Historical Context

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Ananias son of Nedebaeus served as high priest AD 47-59, known for greed and violence. Josephus records his corruption and theft of tithes from common priests. He was later assassinated by sicarii at the war's outbreak (AD 66). The Sanhedrin setting required decorum, making Paul's outburst shocking to observers.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

### Study Questions

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1. How do you balance respect for authority with obligation to confront injustice and corruption?
2. When does defending institutional dignity become complicity with institutional sin?

### Interlinear Text

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οἱ	δὲ	παρεστῶτες	εἶπον,	Τὸν	ἀρχιερέα	τοῦ	θεοῦ
G3588	<b>And</b>	<b>they that stood by</b>	<b>said</b>	G3588	<b>high priest</b>	G3588	<b>God's</b>
	G1161	G3936	G2036		G749		G2316

λοιδορεῖς

**Revilest thou**  
G3058