

Mark 14:47

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

Analysis

And one of them that stood by drew a sword—John 18:10 identifies this as Peter wielding a μάχαιρα (machaira, a short sword or large knife). **And smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear**—the violent verb ἀφαίρεω (aphaireō, "cut off, remove") describes the blow that removed Malchus's ear (John 18:10). Peter's action reveals misguided zeal attempting to defend Christ through fleshly means.

The irony cuts deep: Peter defends the One who needs no defense, employs violence for the Prince of Peace, draws a sword for Him who will rebuke "all they that take the sword" (Matthew 26:52). Luke 22:51 records Jesus healing the ear, demonstrating grace toward enemy and correction of disciple in single act. Peter's sword-swing shows how religious zeal divorced from understanding of God's ways produces harmful action masquerading as faithfulness.

Historical Context

Carrying swords violated Roman law for Jews, but the disciples apparently had two (Luke 22:38). Malchus, as the high priest's servant, represented establishment power. That Peter attacked a servant rather than a soldier suggests either poor aim, divine providence, or instinctive targeting of the Jewish authority figure rather than Roman force.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does Peter's violent defense of Jesus teach about the danger of carnal methods for spiritual purposes?
2. How does Jesus' healing of Malchus's ear demonstrate that the kingdom advances through grace, not force?
3. In what areas might you be tempted to "draw a sword" for Jesus rather than trusting His sovereign purposes and methods?

Interlinear Text

εἰς	δέ	τις	τῶν	παρεστηκότων	σπασάμενος	τὴν
of them	And	one	G3588	that stood by	drew	G3588
G1520	G1161	G5100		G3936	G4685	
μάχαιραν	ἔπαισεν	τὸν	δοῦλον	τοῦ	ἀρχιερέως	καὶ
a sword	and smote	G3588	a servant	G3588	of the high priest	and
G3162	G3817		G1401		G749	G2532
ἀφείλεν	αὐτοῦ	τὸ	ὠτίον			
cut off	his	G3588	ear			
G851	G846		G5621			