

Mark 14:56

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.

Analysis

For many bare false witness against him (πολλοὶ γὰρ ἐψευδομαρτύρουν κατ' αὐτοῦ, *polloi gar epseudomartyroun kat' autou*)—The compound verb ψευδομαρτυρέω (*pseudomartyreo*) means to bear false witness, directly violating the ninth commandment (Exodus 20:16). The imperfect tense suggests repeated, ongoing perjury. **But their witness agreed not together** (καὶ ἴσαι αἱ μαρτυρίαι οὐκ ἦσαν, *kai isai hai martyriai ouk ēsan*)—literally, 'their testimonies were not equal/consistent.'

Deuteronomy 19:15 required testimonies to 'agree' (LXX: συνίστημι, *synistēmi*) for conviction. The Sanhedrin's own law condemned their proceedings. Even lies require coordination to succeed; the confusion of false testimony reveals divine Providence frustrating the council's schemes. Psalm 2:4 proves true: 'He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.'

Historical Context

The Sanhedrin required unanimous agreement of at least two witnesses for capital cases. Even minor discrepancies in testimony invalidated it. The failure of false witnesses to synchronize their stories suggests hasty preparation—the arrest happened mere hours earlier (14:43-50). Professional false witnesses existed in the ancient world, but the urgency of this trial apparently prevented proper coaching.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Why couldn't evil men coordinate their lies against the Truth incarnate?
2. How does this passage comfort Christians facing coordinated false accusations today?
3. What does the inability of lies to 'agree together' teach about the nature of truth versus falsehood?

Interlinear Text

πολλοὶ	γὰρ	ἐψευδομαρτύρουν	κατ'	αὐτοῦ	καὶ	ἴσαι	αἱ
many	For	bare false witness	against	him	but	not	G3588
G4183	G1063	G5576	G2596	G846	G2532	G2470	
μαρτυρίαι	οὐκ	ἦσαν					
their witness		agreed					
G3141	G3756	G2258					

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