

~ANANIAS 3 (66)

(An-a-ni'as) [Greek form of the Hebrew name Hananiah, meaning Yehowah Has Shown Favor, Yehowah Has Been Gracious]

- Jewish High Priest from about 48 to 58 C.E. He was the son of Nedebaeus and was appointed to office by Herod, king of Chalcis, the brother of Herod Agrippa I. [Josephus Jewish Antiquities, XX, 103, v, 2] He was sent to Rome in 52 C.E. to stand trial because of certain difficulties that had arisen between the Jews and the Samaritans, but he was acquitted by Claudius I, the emperor.
- In about 56 C.E, while presiding at Paul's trial before the Sanhedrin, Ananias ordered Paul to be struck in the face. Paul reacted to this by predicting that God would repay such wrong action, and he referred to Ananias as a whitewashed wall. Called to account for this, Paul excused himself as being unaware of the fact that the source of the order to strike him was the High Priest and quoted;
- You must not call down evil upon God nor curse a chieftain among your people. (Exodus 22:28)
- In acknowledgment of his obligation to show due respect. Some suggest that Paul's plea of ignorance was because Ananias position as High Priest was not legally certain after his return from Rome, but proof for this is not substantial. It could be simply an additional evidence of poor eyesight on Paul's part, as appears to be indicated in other texts. Ananias command may have been brief enough and sufficiently charged with emotion to make it difficult for Paul to identify the speaker.
- At this the High Priest Ananias ordered those standing by him to strike him on the mouth. (Acts of Apostles 23:2)
- Then Paul said to him; God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall. Do you at one and the same time sit to judge me in accord with the Law and, transgressing the Law, command me to be struck? (Acts of Apostles 23:3)
- Those standing by said; Are you reviling the High Priest of God? (Acts of Apostles 23:4)
- And Paul said; Brothers, I did not know he was High Priest. For

it is written: You must not speak injuriously of a ruler of your people. (**Acts of Apostles 23:5**)

- Following the Sanhedrin trial **Ananias**, accompanied by certain older men and a public orator, traveled to Caesarea to press charges against Paul before Governor Felix.
- Five days later the High Priest **Ananias** came down with some older men and a public speaker, a certain Tertullus, and they gave information to the governor against Paul. (**Acts of Apostles 24:1**)
- No further mention of him is made in the Scriptural record. Secular history, however, represents him as a haughty and cruel person, whose conduct, both during his High Priesthood and in the years following his removal, was marked by greed.
- Toward the beginning of the Jewish revolt of **66-70 C.E.**, **Ananias** was pursued by elements of the Jewish population because of his collaboration with the Roman authorities. Though hiding out in an aqueduct, he was discovered and murdered.