

Acts 4:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Analysis

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken—Physical shaking authenticated God's presence, recalling Sinai (Exodus 19:18) and Isaiah 6:4. The church's response to persecution was corporate prayer for boldness (v.29), not safety—God answered with tangible confirmation. **They were all filled with the Holy Ghost** (ἐπλήσθησαν ἅπαντες πνεύματος ἁγίου)—a subsequent filling beyond Pentecost, showing believers need repeated Spirit-empowering for ministry challenges. **They spake the word of God with boldness** (παρρησίᾳ) fulfilled their prayer request—'parrēsia' denotes fearless, public speech despite opposition. The Spirit's filling produced proclamation, not ecstasy.

Historical Context

Followed the apostles' release from Sanhedrin imprisonment with orders to stop preaching (v.18). Instead of retreating, the church prayed for greater boldness (v.29). This pattern repeats throughout Acts: persecution intensifies witness. The prayer quoted Psalm 2, interpreting opposition as fulfilling prophecy about nations raging against God's Anointed.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why did the church pray for boldness rather than safety from persecution?
2. What circumstances in your life require a fresh filling of the Spirit for bold witness?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	δεηθέντων	αὐτῶν	ἐσαλεύθη	ὁ	τόπος	ἐν	ᾧ
And	had prayed	when they	was shaken	G3588	the place	where	G3739
G2532	G1189	G846	G4531		G5117	G1722	
ἦσαν	συνηγμένοι	καὶ	ἐπλήσθησαν	ἅπαντες	πνεύματος		
they were	assembled together	And	filled	all	Ghost		
G2258	G4863	G2532	G4130	G537	G4151		
ἁγίου	καὶ	ἐλάλουν	τὸν	λόγον	τοῦ	θεοῦ	μετὰ
with the Holy	And	they spake	G3588	the word	G3588	of God	with
G40	G2532	G2980		G3056		G2316	G3326
παρρησίας							
boldness							
G3954							

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 21:22 (Prayer): And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Isaiah 65:24 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Acts 2:4 (Holy): And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 2:2 (Parallel theme): And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

Acts 4:29 (Word): And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

John 15:7 (Word): If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John 14:12 (Parallel theme): Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

James 1:5 (References God): If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Philippians 1:14 (Word): And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

John 15:16 (Parallel theme): Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.