

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 ἄπαντες 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 ὧ
And had prayed when they was shaken the place where G3739
G2532 G1189 G846 G4531 G5117 G1722

ἵσαν συνηγμένοι καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν ἄπαντες πνεύματος
they were assembled together And filled all Ghost
G2258 G4863 G2532 G4130 G537 G4151

ἀγίου καὶ ἐλάλουν τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ μετὰ^τ
with the Holy And they spoke 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.