

Acts 5:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

Analysis

The summary statement - 'great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things' - describes the intended effect: holy reverence. The Greek 'phobos megas' (great fear) indicates more than anxiety - profound awe at God's holiness and justice. This marks the first use of 'ekklesia' (church) in Acts, defining the community as those who fear God's presence. The phrase 'as many as heard' extended impact beyond Jerusalem church to all who heard the report, serving as perpetual warning against hypocrisy.

Historical Context

This judgment occurred at the church's foundation, similar to Nadab and Abihu's death at tabernacle's dedication (Leviticus 10). Early severe judgment established standards and reverence. The widespread report (implied by 'as many as heard') spread throughout diaspora, shaping early Christian community ethics.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does 'great fear' foster healthy church life rather than paralyzing anxiety?
2. What does this being the first use of 'church' (ekklesia) in Acts teach about community purity?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἐγένετο	φόβος	μέγας	ἐπὶ	ὅλην	τὴν	ἐκκλησίαν	καὶ
And	came	fear	great	upon	all		the church	And
G2532	G1096	G5401	G3173	G1909	G3650	G3588	G1577	G2532
ἐπὶ	πάντας	τοὺς	ἀκούοντας	ταῦτα				
upon	as many as		heard	these things				
G1909	G3956	G3588	G191	G5023				

Additional Cross-References

Acts 5:5 (Parallel theme): And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

Hebrews 4:1 (Parallel theme): Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

Acts 19:17 (Parallel theme): And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

Hebrews 12:15 (Parallel theme): Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

Philippians 2:12 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Psalms 89:7 (Parallel theme): God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.

Hebrews 12:28 (Parallel theme): Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

Jeremiah 32:40 (Parallel theme): And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

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