

Luke 1:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

Analysis

Zacharias's trouble and fear upon seeing the angel reveals the natural human response to divine revelation. The Greek 'etarachthe' (troubled) and 'phobos epepesen' (fear fell upon) indicate overwhelming awe before the supernatural. Even righteous men recognize their unworthiness before God's messengers. This fear differs from terror—it's reverential awe mixed with awareness of human frailty before divine holiness. The pattern appears throughout Scripture: divine visitations produce fear that must be addressed with 'Fear not.'

Historical Context

Angelic appearances had been rare during the intertestamental period (400 years of prophetic silence). Zacharias's reaction reflects both the unexpected nature of this visitation and the weight of centuries of waiting for God to speak again to His people.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does holy fear before God's presence look like in the believer's life?
2. How should we balance reverence and confidence in approaching God?
3. Why is it significant that God broke His silence through an angel appearing to a faithful priest?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἐταράχθη	Ζαχαρίας	ἰδὼν	καὶ	φόβος	ἐπέπεσεν
And	him he was troubled	when Zacharias	saw	And	fear	fell
G2532	G5015	G2197	G1492	G2532	G5401	G1968
ἐπ'	αὐτόν					
upon	him					
G1909	G846					

Additional Cross-References

Judges 6:22 (Parallel theme): And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.

Judges 13:22 (Parallel theme): And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.