

Luke 1:51

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

Analysis

Mary prophetically declares God's pattern of exercising power ('strength with his arm') to scatter the proud. The aorist tense describes typical divine action throughout history. God's 'arm' symbolizes His powerful intervention in human affairs (Ps 89:10; Isa 51:9). The word 'scattered' (Greek 'dieskorpisen') indicates complete dispersal and defeat. The 'proud in the imagination of their hearts' describes those whose arrogance is rooted in internal thinking, not just external acts. This verse articulates the biblical principle that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). Mary's Magnificat prophetically applies to Herod, Jewish leaders, and all who oppose God's purposes.

Historical Context

Mary's words would prove prophetic regarding Jewish leaders who rejected Jesus and Rome's eventual downfall. Her emphasis on God scattering the proud recalls God's judgment on Pharaoh, Babylon, and all who exalt themselves against the Almighty.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does God's pattern of scattering the proud encourage humble trust?
2. What is the relationship between internal pride and external opposition to God?
3. How should this truth shape our estimation of worldly power?

Interlinear Text

Ἐποίησεν	κράτος	ἐν	βραχίονι	αὐτῶν·	διεσκόρπισεν
He hath shewed	strength	with	arm	of their	he hath scattered
G4160	G2904	G1722	G1023	G846	G1287
ὑπερηφάνους	διανοία	καρδίας	αὐτῶν·		
the proud	in the imagination	hearts	of their		
G5244	G1271	G2588	G846		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 98:1 (Parallel theme): O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

Isaiah 51:9 (Parallel theme): Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?

Isaiah 52:10 (Parallel theme): The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Romans 1:21 (Parallel theme): Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Daniel 4:37 (Parallel theme): Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

Isaiah 63:12 (Parallel theme): That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name?

Isaiah 40:10 (Parallel theme): Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

Psalms 89:10 (Parallel theme): Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.

Psalms 118:15 (Parallel theme): The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

Genesis 6:5 (Parallel theme): And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.