

Luke 5:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying,
Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

Analysis

When Peter sees the miraculous catch, he 'fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' The Greek 'kyrie' (κύριε, Lord) acknowledges Jesus' divine authority. Peter's response—falling down, confessing sinfulness, asking Jesus to depart—shows proper reaction to encountering holiness. Awareness of Jesus' power triggers awareness of personal sinfulness. Like Isaiah (Isaiah 6:5), Peter recognizes that sinful humans cannot stand in holy God's presence. Yet Jesus doesn't depart but calls Peter to follow—grace meets confession, and divine calling overcomes human unworthiness.

Historical Context

Peter's response echoes Old Testament theophanies where humans encountering God's holiness expressed terror and unworthiness (Isaiah 6:5, Ezekiel 1:28, Daniel 10:8). The miraculous catch revealed Jesus' supernatural knowledge and power over nature—attributes of deity. Peter's recognition of Jesus as 'Lord' (kyrios, often used for God in the Septuagint) suggests dawning awareness of Jesus' divine identity. His plea for Jesus to depart reversed his earlier request to use his boat (v. 3), showing how divine encounter shatters human self-confidence and reveals our true condition before holy God.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does Peter's response of confessing sinfulness upon seeing Jesus' power teach about the relationship between divine holiness and human sin-awareness?
2. How does Jesus' call to follow despite Peter's unworthiness demonstrate grace's triumph over deserved judgment?

Interlinear Text

ἰδὼν δὲ Σίμων Πέτρος προσέπεσεν τοῖς γόνασιν τοῦ
saw When Simon Peter it he fell down at G3588 knees G3588
G1492 G1161 G4613 G4074 G4363 G1119

Ἰησοῦ λέγων, Ἔξελθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἀμαρτωλός
Jesus saying Depart from me for man a sinful
G2424 G3004 G1831 G575 G1700 G3754 G435 G268

εἰμι κύριε
I am O Lord
G1510 G2962

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 6:5 (References Lord): Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

Revelation 1:17 (Parallel theme): And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

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

Job 40:4 (Parallel theme): Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

Exodus 20:19 (Parallel theme): And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

1 Samuel 6:20 (References Lord): And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?

Matthew 17:6 (Parallel theme): And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

John 11:32 (References Jesus): Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

1 Kings 17:18 (Sin): And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?

2 Samuel 6:9 (References Lord): And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?