

Mark 9:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

Analysis

Mark explains Peter's confusion: 'they were sore afraid' (ἔκφοβοι γὰρ ἐγένοντο). The term *ekphoboi* (ἔκφοβοι) indicates intense terror—literally 'out of their minds with fear.' This holy fear is appropriate response to divine glory. Throughout Scripture, theophanies produce overwhelming fear (Isaiah 6:5; Ezekiel 1:28; Revelation 1:17). Human sinfulness cannot stand before divine holiness. Peter's rambling proposal (v. 5) was defensive reaction to this fear—attempting to do something, anything, to regain control. Fear often produces hasty, ill-considered responses. The disciples needed to simply receive the revelation God was giving, not immediately act. This pattern recurs in Scripture: God reveals His glory, humans respond in fear, God provides reassurance (Isaiah 6:5-7; Luke 5:8-10). The transfiguration taught disciples that true worship means silencing human activity to hear God's voice (v. 7).

Historical Context

Divine glory terrified Old Testament witnesses: Moses hid his face (Exodus 3:6), Isaiah cried 'Woe is me!' (Isaiah 6:5), Ezekiel fell on his face (Ezekiel 1:28), Daniel lost strength (Daniel 10:8). The disciples' terror at Christ's transfigured glory was appropriate—they encountered the living God. First-century Judaism emphasized God's transcendent holiness and warned against presuming upon His presence. The disciples' fear also stemmed from seeing Moses and Elijah—Old Testament saints whose very presence confirmed they stood at the intersection of redemptive history. The cloud overshadowing them (v. 7) intensified their fear, recalling the Shekinah glory that led Israel (Exodus 40:34-35) and filled the temple (1 Kings

8:10-11). Direct encounter with God's presence is overwhelming, requiring divine reassurance.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does holy fear before God's glory contrast with contemporary casual familiarity in worship?
2. What does Peter's fearful, hasty proposal teach about the need to quiet our activity and simply receive what God reveals?

Interlinear Text

οὐ	γὰρ	ἔδει	τί	λαλήσῃ·	ἔσαν	γὰρ	ἔκφοβοι
not	For	he wist	what	to say	they were sore	For	afraid
G3756	G1063	G1492	G5101	G2980	G2258	G1063	G1630

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