

Fear in Luke's Gospel

The following verses represent the occurrences of the Greek words, φοβέω, φόβητρον, and φόβος in Luke. The English translation here is NRSV.

I've divided the verses into general categories and find these things noteworthy about the findings:

- Eight times in the gospel, someone is exhorted, "Do not be afraid."
- Seven times in the gospel, Luke reports that someone respond to Jesus' wonder-working with fear. (These are in addition to the apparent fear in the "Do not be afraid" passages.)

Together, these two contexts account for about half of the mentions of fear in the gospel.

"Don't be afraid."

An angel says, "Do not be afraid."

Luke 1:12 When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.

Luke 1:30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

Luke 2:9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:

Jesus says, "Do not be afraid."

Luke 5:10 ...Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people."

Luke 8:50 When Jesus heard this, he replied, "Do not fear. Only believe, and she will be saved."

Luke 12:4 "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more. 5 But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!

Luke 12:7 But even the hairs of your head are all counted. Do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Luke 12:32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Fear of God.

Luke 1:50 His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

Luke 18:2 He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people.

Luke 18:4 For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone,

Luke 23:40 But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"

Fear at a miracle.

Luke 1:65 Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea.

Luke 5:26 Amazement seized all of them, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen strange things today."

Luke 7:16 Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has looked favorably on his people!"

Luke 8:25 He said to them, "Where is your faith?" They were afraid and amazed, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?"

Luke 8:35 Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

Luke 8:37 Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned.

Luke 9:34 While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud.

Fear connected to Passion predictions.

Luke 9:45 But they did not understand this saying; its meaning was concealed from them, so that they could not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

Fear of those seeking to harm Jesus.

Luke 20:19 When the scribes and chief priests realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to lay hands on him at that very hour, but they feared the people.

Luke 22:2 The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to put Jesus to death, for they were afraid of the people.

Fear associated with the apocalypse.

Luke 21:11 there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

Luke 21:26 People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Fear in a parable.

Luke 19:21 for I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man; you take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.'