

Luke: The Gospel of joy and praise

Luke begins with an angel in the temple foretelling joy, and ends with people in the temple joyful at what had happened. The angel who appeared to Zacharias in the temple, having told him that he was to have a son, said, "And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth" (1:14). At the end of the Gospel, after the eleven apostles had seen Jesus ascend to heaven, they "returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (24:52,53). There are more references in Luke to glorifying, praising and blessing God than in any of the other Gospels. Here are some examples:

Elizabeth said to Mary, "as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy" (1:44);

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God . . . And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen" (2:13,20);

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you . . . Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy" (6:22,23);

"there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (15:10);

"It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found" (v. 32);

Zacchaeus "made haste, and came down, and received [Jesus] joyfully" (19:6).

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