

Luke 15:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Analysis

Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. This verse concludes the parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10) and parallels Luke 15:7's conclusion to the lost sheep parable. The word "Likewise" (houtōs, οὕτως) again connects earthly parable to heavenly reality—as the woman rejoiced with neighbors over the found coin, so angels rejoice over repentance. The phrase "I say unto you" (legō hymin, λέγω ὑμῖν) asserts Jesus' authority to reveal heavenly truths.

The term "joy" (chara, χαρά) again indicates exuberant celebration. This time the location is specified: "in the presence of the angels of God" (enōpion tōn angelōn tou Theou, ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων τοῦ Θεοῦ). The preposition enōpion (ἐνώπιον) means "before" or "in the sight of," suggesting not merely that angels rejoice but that this joy occurs in God's very presence, before His throne. Some interpreters suggest the phrase is a reverent circumlocution for God Himself rejoicing—Jewish culture often used indirect references to avoid overusing God's name. Whether angels rejoice or God Himself (or both), the verse reveals heaven's intense interest in human conversion.

The phrase "over one sinner that repenteth" (epi heni hamartolō metanoounti, ἐφ' ἐνὶ ἀμαρτωλῷ μετανοοῦντι) again emphasizes individual value and the centrality of repentance. Each person matters infinitely to God. The repetition across three parables (lost sheep, lost coin, lost son) hammers home this crucial truth: God actively seeks the lost, each individual soul has immeasurable worth, and heaven

celebrates conversion. This directly contradicts the Pharisees' attitude of contempt toward sinners and reveals God's heart of redemptive love.

Historical Context

The parable of the lost coin would resonate powerfully with Jesus' audience, particularly women who managed household finances. The ten silver coins (drachmai, δραχμαί) likely represented a significant portion of a poor family's wealth—each drachma was roughly a day's wage. For many women, such coins might constitute their entire savings or even their dowry. Losing one meant real financial loss and potential family crisis.

The woman's diligent search—lighting a lamp, sweeping the house, seeking carefully—illustrates the thoroughness of God's pursuit of the lost. Palestinian houses of the poor typically had small windows, dirt floors, and minimal light, making it difficult to find a small coin. The woman's joy upon finding it and her calling together friends and neighbors to celebrate would be culturally expected and understood. Jesus uses this everyday scenario to reveal extraordinary theological truth.

The mention of angels rejoicing over repentance reflects Jewish understanding of angelic involvement in human affairs. Old Testament and intertestamental literature portray angels as observers of earthly events (Job 1:6-12, Daniel 10, 1 Corinthians 4:9, 1 Peter 1:12). Jesus affirms and expands this view, revealing that angels don't merely observe but actively care about human salvation. This teaching encourages believers—our choices matter not only on earth but in heaven. Every conversion reverberates through the spiritual realm with celebration.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does the joy 'in the presence of the angels' reveal about heaven's priorities and values?
2. How should knowing that heaven celebrates our repentance and conversion affect our self-understanding and sense of worth?
3. Why does Jesus repeat the theme of heavenly joy over repentance across three consecutive parables?
4. In what ways should the certainty that angels observe and care about human salvation influence Christian living?
5. How does God's diligent seeking of the lost (portrayed in the woman's careful search) challenge ideas that salvation depends solely on human initiative?

Interlinear Text

οὕτως	λέγω	ὑμῖν	χαρὰ	γίνεται	ἐνώπιον	τῶν
Likewise	I say	unto you	joy	there is	in the presence	
G3779	G3004	G5213	G5479	G1096	G1799	G3588

ἀγγέλων	τοῦ	θεοῦ	ἐπὶ	ἐνὶ	ἀμαρτωλῷ	μετανοοῦντι
of the angels	G3588	of God	over	one	sinner	that repenteth
G32		G2316	G1909	G1520	G268	G3340

Additional Cross-References

Luke 15:7 (Sin): I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repented, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

2 Corinthians 7:10 (Repentance): For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Ezekiel 33:11 (References God): Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way

and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

Ezekiel 18:23 (References God): Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

Matthew 18:14 (Parallel theme): Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

Luke 13:5 (Repentance): I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Ezekiel 18:32 (References God): For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

Hebrews 1:14 (Parallel theme): Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Acts 11:18 (Repentance): When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Luke 7:47 (Sin): Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.