

3rd Sunday in Advent December 16, 2018

Also known as Gaudete Sunday or Joy Sunday or Rose Sunday

Year C – the Gospel of Luke

Lutheran

Living the [^] Lectionary

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134
- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
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<http://www.memorialpcusa.org/news-from-the-pews/3rd-sunday-in-advent/>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 345 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 60
“Hark, A thrilling voice is sounding”

“Caswall, Edward, M.A., son of the Rev. R. C. Caswall, sometime Vicar of Yately, Hampshire, born at Yately, July 15, 1814... Taking Holy Orders in 1838, he became in 1840 Incumbent of Stratford-sub-Castle, near Salisbury, and resigned the same in 1847. In 1850 (Mrs. Caswall having died in 1849) he was received into the Roman Catholic communion... His life thenceforth, although void of stirring incidents, was marked by earnest devotion to his clerical duties and a loving interest in the poor, the sick, and in little children. His original poems and hymns were mostly written at the Oratory. He died at Edgbaston, Jan. 2, 1878... Caswall's translations of Latin hymns from the Roman Breviary and other sources have a wider circulation in modern hymnals than those of any other translator, Dr. Neale alone excepted. This is owing to his general faithfulness to the originals, and the purity of his rhythm, the latter feature specially adapting his hymns to music, and for congregational purposes. His original compositions, although marked by considerable poetical ability, are not extensive in their use, their doctrinal teaching being against their general adoption outside the Roman communion...”

- [https://hymnary.org/person/Caswall Edward](https://hymnary.org/person/Caswall_Edward)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCrEt11-SFU> Sung by the Plymouth Choir and Congregation of First Plymouth Church, Lincoln Nebraska on December 2014. Arrangement by Richard Webster firstplymouth.org *The words will vary from LSB which varies from TLH.*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZnabxcaygc> An arrangement ... by Paul van der Bijl and Jason Reed and recorded at Covenant Presbyterian Church of Chicago
-

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, [English Standard Version \(ESV\)](#) Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

“Sing! Shout! Rejoice! Exult! A string of joyful commands infused with an incomparable promise -- the Lord has taken away the judgment against you! (Zephaniah 3:14-20) The Gospel in the flesh of Jesus is at hand, & God's peace engulfs our hearts, minds, emotions & wisdom. (Philippians 4:4-7) As the reign of Christ is revealed, we are privileged to witness holy healing, cleansing, resurrecting & preaching, as God's Son alone forgives & redeems us. (Luke 7:18-28)”

- <http://www.messiahgr.org/events/> MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH, 2727 FIVE MILE RD. NE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI

Zephaniah 3:14-20; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading (next week - Micah 5:2-5a; RCL, the same reading

Background to the Book of Zephaniah (Historical Background)

“The three chapters which make up the Book of Zephaniah contain all the major themes of the bigger prophetic books: judgement because of apostasy (going after pagan gods) and because of unjust practices, a call to repentance, judgement of foreign nations, the Day of the Lord, indictment of the leaders, judgement against Jerusalem followed by transformation and salvation for the city and people. Rex Mason thinks it is 'one of the most politically, socially and religiously radical of the prophetic books of the Old Testament.' (Mason: 55)

The superscription (Zephaniah 1:1) sets the time in the first part of the reign of Josiah. His grandfather, Manasseh, has been vilified as a very bad king in the Scriptures and Josiah's father Amon reigned only for two years before being assassinated by the people and Josiah put on the throne. He was eight years old. The words of Zephaniah reflect the faithless practices of the people from the time of Manasseh which Josiah later in his reign tried to correct by setting up sweeping reforms. The spoken oracles could have been in the period 635-625 BCE and later they were taken up and put into present written form. (see Literary below)

The genealogy of Zephaniah goes back four generations and is unique in the amount of information given to us. The suggestion that his father was an Ethiopian (Cush is synonymous with Ethiopia) is interesting. Although his grandfather and great-great grandfather have the same names as past and future kings of Judah, scholars do not think there is any relationship to royalty...”

- <http://otl.unitingchurch.org.au/index.php?page=book-of-zephaniah> Anna Grant-Henderson, Uniting Church in Australia.

Israel's Joy and Restoration

- ¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion;
shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!
- ¹⁵ The LORD has taken away the judgments against you;
he has cleared away your enemies.
The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall never again fear evil.
- ¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
“Fear not, O Zion;
let not your hands grow weak.
- ¹⁷ The LORD your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.
- ¹⁸ I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival,
so that you will no longer suffer reproach. ^[a]
- ¹⁹ Behold, at that time I will deal
with all your oppressors.
And I will save the lame

and gather the outcast,
 and I will change their shame into praise
 and renown in all the earth.
²⁰ At that time I will bring you in,
 at the time when I gather you together;
 for I will make you renowned and praised
 among all the peoples of the earth,
 when I restore your fortunes
 before your eyes," says the LORD.

- a. [Zephaniah 3:18](#) The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

"This reading from Zephaniah is marked by hope, rejoicing, and reprieve, but it comes from the end of a three-chapter book in which the first two chapters consist of horrific warnings.

Zephaniah prophesied early in the 7th century BCE, about 50 years after Isaiah and before Jeremiah.¹ The rulers previous to Zephaniah's time had generated unjust social and political policies, leaving Judah in great need of a prophet who would call the people to make changes.

Zephaniah blares out judgment against worship of false gods, rulers who act like foreigners, violence, fraud, complacency, and the faithless assumption that YHWH is powerless. Image after image builds up a portrait of the destruction that will come on the Day of the Lord: "the people... shall walk like the blind... their blood shall be poured out like dust... the whole earth shall be consumed..." (1:17-18).

Although reading the entire book does not take a long time, it will take you a vast distance into the possibility of utter annihilation. What humans have done in choosing infidelity to YHWH's steadfastness will result in Earth itself being punished.² All of creation will be obliterated on the Day of the Lord. This is not a new idea in scripture. We first hear of this day of power in Isaiah 2 and Amos 5 when "a day of clouds and thick darkness" is to come, accompanied by God the warrior who will make things right again. Because this is the third Sunday of Advent, Zephaniah's words lay down a perspective in which to appropriately receive the savior..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1483
[Melinda Quivik](#) Liturgical and Homiletical Scholar, Houghton, Mich.

"...Zephaniah is one of the grimmest, saddest most frightening books in the whole Bible (Hoezee, Advent 3C | Zephaniah). Isaiah is in a similar position. Israel is now in exile. The fires of faith have absolutely gone out (Jacobson). It is a cold, dark world..."

Today is as Gaudete Sunday, marked by the pink candle, symbolic of the growing dominance of divine light. In the midst of darkness, it really is time to rejoice... As much as Zephaniah justifiably rants about unfaithfulness, and hypocrisy, at the end of the cosmic day it is God's commitment to restoration and new life that makes the difference (Hoezee, Advent 3C | Zephaniah)..."

- <https://frscott94.wordpress.com/tag/zephaniah/> frscott94, " Priest serving Christ's ministry in the Episcopal Church in Arkansas"

Psalm 85; RCL, Isaiah 12:2-6 (Psalm 80:1-7; RCL, the same reading)

"TITLE. To the Chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah. There is no need to repeat our observations upon a title which is of so frequent occurrence; the reader is referred to notes placed in the headings of preceding psalms. Yet it may not be out of place to quote Ne 12:46. In the days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God..."

This beautiful psalm, like some others, has come down to us without name or date; the production of some unknown poetic genius, touched, purified, and exalted by the fire of celestial inspiration; a precious relic of that golden age, when the Hebrew music was instinct with a spirit such as never breathed on Greece or Rome. It is interesting to reflect on the anonymous origin of some of the psalms; to remember how largely the church of God is indebted to some nameless worthies who wrote for us hymns and spiritual songs, full of richer strains than were ever poured forth by the most illustrious of pagan name. These holy men are passed away, they have left no record of their history; but they have bequeathed legacies of rich, varied, and inspired sentiments, which will render the church debtors to them to the end of time. John Stoughton. 1852..."

- <https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=spur&b=19&c=85>
Charles H. Spurgeon's Treasury of David

Revive Us Again

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.

85 LORD, you were favorable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

² You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you covered all their sin. **Selah**

³ You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.

⁴ Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation toward us!

⁵ Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?

⁶ Will you not revive us again,
that your people may rejoice in you?

⁷ Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation.

⁸ Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;
but let them not turn back to folly.

⁹ Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.

¹⁰ Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.

¹¹ Faithfulness springs up from the ground,
and righteousness looks down from the sky.

¹² Yes, the LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.

¹³ Righteousness will go before him
and make his footsteps a way.

“...Scholars differ in how they understand the overall movement or argument of this prayer for help. The interpretation presented here understands the psalm as unfolding in four movements or stanzas:

The community thanks God for past deliverance (vv. 1-3)

The community calls for renewed deliverance (vv. 4-7)

The community prays for God's word to be revealed (vv. 8-9)

The community receives the promise of God's deliverance (vv. 10-13)

The psalm, then, is understood as a liturgy in which the community prays for God's intervention and receives that promise from God.

As in most psalms, the type of "restoration" that the original pray-ers of this psalm hoped for has been obscured by the passage of time. Perhaps they hoped for return from exile (vv. 1b, 4-6). Perhaps they sought forgiveness for some national sin (v. 2). Perhaps a prophet had announced some national sin that they people had committed that this psalm was a prayer seeking forgiveness (vv. 7, 9). Perhaps the land was enduring a famine and hoped for a bountiful harvest (v. 12). The obscurity of the psalm on this point is actually a blessing, since it allows communities suffering from any manner of crises to pray this prayer..."

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=189 **Rolf Jacobson** Professor of Old Testament and Alvin N. Rogness Chair in Scripture, Theology, and Ministry, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

Philippians 4:4-7; RCL, the same reading (Hebrews 10:5-10; RCL, the same reading)

“Sermon for the Fourth Sunday in Advent; Philippians 4:4-7

A Sermon by Martin Luther; taken from his Church Postil of 1521.

The text, though short, is a suggestive and important lesson in Christian faith. It teaches how we should conduct ourselves toward God and our neighbour. It says: "Rejoice in the Lord always."...

Briefly, this text is a lesson in Christian living, in the attitude of the Christian toward God and man. It teaches us to let God be everything to us, and to treat all men alike, to conduct ourselves toward men as does God toward us, receiving from him and giving to them. It may be summed up in the words "faith" and "love.""

- <http://www.martinluthersermons.com/sermons10.html> Martin Luther – read his entire sermon at this site.

"It's an exclamation we've heard time and time again, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).

But why? Today's epistle passage is an intriguing composition of seven sentences ranging from two to twenty Greek words long. The sentences have no connecting words except "but" (alla) in 4:6 and "and" (kai) in 4:7. As I said, an intriguing series of exhortations...

At this point, it is important to remember that Paul wrote this from prison. As portrayed in Acts, Paul and Silas, although beaten and in prison, sang hymns and prayed (Acts 16:25). Thus, the apostle has already demonstrated to his congregation what it means to rejoice in adversity. (At 2 Corinthians 6:10 Paul speaks of himself as "sorrowful yet always rejoicing.")..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=470
Michael Joseph Brown, Interim President and Academic Dean, Payne Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness^[a] be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- a. [Philippians 4:5](#) Or *gentleness*

"The passage before us (Philippians 4:4-7) comes in the context of an awareness that some of those who have not only begun well, but have journeyed well, and struggled for the gospel now appear to be having second thoughts. Perhaps they are counting the cost of following Jesus and are hesitating, and even now contemplating turning back.

Perspective, purpose, and pressing on

Earlier Paul has reflected on his own experience and has shared key factors in what it means to "stand firm" (Philippians 4:1). Paul has had to change his **perspective** on life, now acknowledging that he considers all things as loss compared to the great value of knowing Christ (3:8). Paul's central **purpose** is now that he should know Christ and ultimately to attain to the resurrection from the dead (3:10-11). And third, Paul emphasises the need to '**press on**' (3:12, 14) 'for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.'

"Stand firm"

Now, Paul addresses directly the believing community in Philippi and encourages them to "stand firm in the Lord in this way" (Philippians 4:1)... they have stepped back from the challenge of discipleship, and no longer hold to the principles found in Paul's example of **perspective, purpose, and pressing on**.

So, for those who are struggling in discipleship; for those who are reconsidering their commitment to walk the way of Christ, for those who no longer want to take up their cross daily and to love regardless of the cost, what does our passage have to say?

First, hold on to the joy to be found in God (Philippians 4:4). Paul specifically encourages them to “rejoice in the Lord.” It is not that they are to rejoice in spite of their circumstances. It is not even that they are to rejoice through gritted teeth, but rather than they rejoice in all the goodness that is found in God and in his blessing...

Second, hold on to the character of Christ (Philippians 4:5). One of the key challenges of following the Lord Jesus, and thus the aspect most likely to be put down when the going gets tough, is the commitment to adopt the character of Christ in one’s everyday life. Paul encourages the Philippian believers, and particularly those who are reconsidering their commitment, to continue to live in the spirit of gentleness... Paul seeks to encourage the disciples to hold on to the character of Christ, because it is by living in Christ that we experience salvation.

Third, hold on to the nearness of God (Philippians 4:5). At the heart of the good news of Jesus is the announcement that God is near. God is not a distant and aloof deity, requiring sacrifice before he draws close to sinful humanity. In Christ Jesus God has come close. Whatever we experience in our lives, relationships, workplace, “the Lord is near.” Whatever we go through in the struggle to follow Christ Jesus and to witness to his Lordship, “the Lord is near.”...

Fourth, pray with thankfulness (Philippians 4:6). The encouragement to pray is one that we all need, but so often overlooked when things get tough. Here, there are four key words of inspiration. *First*, in our prayers we can and should include **everything**. Don’t leave anything out. Some things spring quickly to mind, but particularly when it feels as though the cosmos and its armies are against us, we should include everything. *Second*, in prayer **don't worry**; let anxiety drift away from us as we share our concerns and troubles and trials with our heavenly Father. *Third*, **give thanks** to God -- not for the trials -- but for God, for His goodness, for his presence, for his listening ear. *Fourth*, make your requests **known** to God. We might be reminded of the Israelite slaves in Egypt who cried out to God, making their concerns about the trials and trauma that they faced everyday known to Him (Exodus 2:23-25). God heard and responded with love, mercy, and salvation.

Fifth, God’s peace will be our guard. When the life of following the Lord Jesus gets tough we can so easily feel as though we are unprotected. It can feel as though our commitment to gentleness, love, and kindness has left us vulnerable. But, Paul is clear that if we **hold on** and we **pray**, then the wonderful, mysterious, peace of God will **guard** and keep safe our hearts and minds.”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2696 **Edward Pillar** Minister, Evesham Baptist Church, Evesham, United Kingdom

Luke 7:18-28 (29-35); RCL, Luke 3:7-18 (Luke 1:39-45 (46-56); RCL, Luke 1:46b-55)

“The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 7th Chapter”

This passage should shock us. This passage should shock us because in this passage we see the great John the Baptist engaged in a faith struggle. John is in prison; he is hearing reports about the ministry of Jesus, and he wants to know what is going on.

John is so concerned about what he is hearing that he summons two of his disciples and sends them to Jesus to ask Him, "**Are You the Expected One or do we look for someone else?**" (v.19, 20). This question should surprise us, not simply because we know John to be a godly man but, because John had previously professed Jesus to be the Messiah...

We can just imagine the reaction of John's disciples: 'You want us to ask Him what?! John, you have been preaching for years about the coming of the Messiah, then you tell us that this Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and now you want us to ask Him if this is all true?!'..." (Continued after the reading)

Messengers from John the Baptist

¹⁸ The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, ¹⁹ calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" ²⁰ And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'" ²¹ In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. ²² And he answered them, "***Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers^[a] are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. ²³ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.***"

²⁴ When John's messengers had gone, Jesus^[b] began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "***What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ²⁵ What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts. ²⁶ What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ²⁷ This is he of whom it is written,***

***"Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way before you."***

²⁸ ***I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.***" ²⁹ (When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just,^[c] having been baptized with the baptism of John, ³⁰ but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)*

³¹ ***"To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? ³² They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another,***

*“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.”*

³³ For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ ³⁴ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ ³⁵ Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.”

- a. [Luke 7:22](#) Leprosy was a term for several skin diseases; see [Leviticus 13](#)
- b. [Luke 7:24](#) Greek *he*
- c. [Luke 7:29](#) Greek *they justified God*

* “...Although verses 29-30 do not occur in the parallel section of Matthew 11, that is not sufficient reason to assume that the words are a comment of Luke rather than the words of Jesus. Luke had other historical resources available to him than the book of Matthew. There are words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 21:31-32 that are similar in content to Luke 7:29-30, and there is no good reason to assume that these words in Luke were not part of the speech of Jesus...”

➤ http://www.academia.edu/4180493/Who_spoke_in_Luke_7_29-30

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” “Praise to You, O Christ”

How are we to understand John the Baptist's lapse in his faith? To understand why John was experiencing these doubts, it will be helpful for us to examine the context. Do you remember John's message? **"You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee the wrath to come?"** (3:7). Quite a striking introduction to an evangelistic sermon, wouldn't you say? John's message is a severe message. It is an urgent message, **"the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire"** (3:9).

The context behind John's question is a ministry of preaching that spoke of imminent wrath and judgment. John the Baptist expected the Messiah to set the world straight in a very definitive manner. John expected wrath and judgment. The only kind of judgment John could see, however, was the poor judgment of Herod that landed him in prison! The unrighteous were not being judged, John was being judged!

A key verse to unlocking our passage today is verse 18, **"the disciples of John reported to him about all these things"**. What are **"all these things"**? This, of course, refers to what Jesus had been doing in His ministry. Jesus had not been traveling from town to town pronouncing judgment. Rather, we read that Jesus has healed a leper (5:13). We read that Jesus has healed a paralytic (5:25). He has called a despised tax-collector to follow Him (5:27). He has healed a Roman officer's slave (7:10). He has brought a dead man back to life (7:15).

John the Baptist heard these reports and realized that Jesus' miracles did not match up with the content of his own preaching. John's message of wrath and judgment was not even remotely close to what Jesus was presently doing in His ministry. John expected the Messiah to

bring everything under control. But, from John's perspective-in prison, everything was not under control...

In a nutshell, Jesus' response to John's disciples was, 'Look around you . . . I've got everything under control. Tell John what you see; the blind receive sight, the lame walk. Tell John that I most certainly have everything under control... And please, tell him one more thing: Blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me'...

When adversity causes us to doubt either the existence or the reliability of God, we should recognize that this is normal. Yet, at the same time, lengthy battles with doubt are not appropriate for the Christian. Listen to how Jesus concludes His response to John, "**Blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me**". John is doubting; he is stumbling in his faith. What is Jesus' response? 'John, stop stumbling!'...

Examining this passage helps us to see that struggling with one's faith is normal, for we see even John the Baptist struggling with his faith. Yet, at the same time, we see that faith struggles are clearly inappropriate. Just because faith struggles are normal, does not mean that we shrug our shoulders and accept them. Jesus could not be any more clear on this: "**Blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me**".

If faith struggles then, are not appropriate for the Christian, what should we do when we find ourselves doubting? We should do exactly what John the Baptist did: We should investigate. John may have struggled with doubt, but one thing he did not struggle with was apathy! John wanted to know for certain whether Jesus was the Christ and so he sent his disciples on a mission to find the answer...

If we are eager to identify with John because of his doubt, let us be equally eager to identify with John because of his desire to know the truth about Jesus Christ.

No, we can't go to Jesus in person with our questions, but we can go to the Bible. All that we need to know for salvation and godliness is to be found in the pages of Scripture. It is better to approach the Bible with your doubts than it is to avoid reading the Bible because of your apathy.

"**Blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me**". Jesus calls us to stop our stumbling. Jesus calls us to stop being tripped up. He has also given us a map. The Bible leaves us without excuse. If you want to know Christ; if you want to honour Christ; you must study the Scriptures. You must investigate. Doubting should only last for a season. Investigating the Scriptures should transform your doubt into faith.

"**Blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me**".

- <http://www.reformedtheology.ca/luke7b.html> Rev. Bryn MacPhail, Pastor of [St. Andrew's Presbyterian Kirk](#), Nassau, Bahamas

"While John the Baptist was a great man, he was not a perfect man. This was the worst moment of John's life, so far as the biblical record is concerned. We will not appreciate this passage of Scripture and its relevance to our lives unless we begin by understanding the seriousness of the error which is depicted here. Set aside your pre-conceived opinions of what happens here for a moment and consider exactly what is taking place when John sends two of his disciples to Jesus with this question, "**Are You the One who is coming, or do we look for**

someone else?” ([Luke 7:19, 20](#)). (Read more about what he means by “error” in his complete article.)

- <https://bible.org/seriespage/22-johns-problem-jesus-luke-718-35> Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh ...is a pastor/teacher and elder at Community Bible Chapel in Richardson, Texas.

NOW TO GOD WHO IS ABLE TO STRENGTHEN YOU
ACCORDING TO THE PROCLAMATION OF JESUS
CHRIST, THE MYSTERY THAT WAS KEPT SECRET
FOR LONG AGES BUT IS NOW DISCLOSED,
TO THE ONLY WISE GOD,
BE THE GLORY FOR EVER! AMEN.

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ROMANS 16:25-27

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“...Style

Luke had outstanding command of the Greek language. His vocabulary is extensive and rich, and his style at times approaches that of classical Greek (as in the preface, [1:1–4](#)), while at other times it is quite Semitic ([1:5–2:52](#))—often like the Septuagint (the pre-Christian Greek translation of the OT).

Characteristics

The third Gospel presents the works and teachings of Jesus that are especially important for understanding the way of salvation. Its scope is complete from the birth of Christ to his ascension, its arrangement is orderly, and it appeals to both Jews and Gentiles. The writing is characterized by literary excellence, historical detail and warm, sensitive understanding of Jesus and those around him.

Since the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) report many of the same episodes in Jesus’ life, one would expect much similarity in their accounts. The dissimilarities reveal the distinctive emphases of the separate writers. Luke’s characteristic themes include: (1) universality, recognition of Gentiles as well as Jews in God’s plan (see, e.g., [2:30–32](#) and notes on [2:31](#); [3:6](#)); (2) emphasis on prayer, especially Jesus’ praying before important occasions (see note on [3:21](#)); (3) joy at the announcement of the gospel or “good news” (see note on [1:14](#)); (4) special concern for the role of women (see, e.g., [8:1–3](#) and notes); (5) special interest in the poor (some of the rich were included among Jesus’ followers, but he seemed closest to the poor; see note on [12:33](#)); (6) concern for sinners (Jesus was a friend to those deep in sin); (7) stress on the family circle (Jesus’ activity included men, women and children, with the setting frequently in the home); (8) repeated use of the Messianic title “Son of Man” (used 25 times; see [19:10](#); Da [7:13](#) and notes); (9) emphasis on the Holy Spirit (see note on [4:1](#)); (10) inclusion of more parables than any other Gospel (see chart, p. 2130); (11) emphasis on praising God (see [1:64](#); [24:53](#) and notes).

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