

# Joy

Joy is the sense or state of gladness or elation that people experience through their relationship with God and through good things in their lives .

## Concept Summary

Joy represents a sense or feeling of gladness, elation, or happiness in the Bible. It is an inward reality that may express itself outwardly. Joy is a response to God and/or circumstances . Several Hebrew words for joy refer both to the feeling of joy and its outward expression (e.g., שמחה [śimḥâ]). Joy is found in a literal sense in the knowledge or experience of God . When the law is read by Ezra to the people in Neh 8, they become sad, but Nehemiah tells them to not mourn, for the joy (חֵדוּוּהָ, ḥedwâ) that comes from Yahweh is their refuge (Neh 8:10). Joy also flows from the experience of many aspects of life. When Solomon was anointed to be king, the people rejoiced (שמעו, śāmēah) with jubilation (śimḥâ; 1 Kgs 1:40). Ecclesiastes encourages enjoyment of life, for there is nothing good under the sun except to eat, to drink, and to be merry (לשמוח, liśmôah) in the troubles of life (Eccl 8:15). There is also

joy at victory over enemies. In the latter case, joy describes Israel's or an individual's response to victory over an adversary, whether God is seen as the agent of the victory, or it is the rejoicing or gloating of the enemies of God's people over Israel's defeat (Hab 3:14). Joy is also used metaphorically. A city rejoices (עָלָה, 'ālah) over the righteous people in it (Prov 11:10). Isaiah predicts the mountains and the hills will break forth in cheerful jubilation (Isa 55:12).

The NT authors also express joy over God's benefits to others, as when Paul asks the Thessalonian believers how he, Silas, and Timothy are to offer God sufficient thanks for them in all the joy in which they rejoice (ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ χαρᾷ ἣν χαίρομεν, *epi pasē tē chara hē chairōmen*) before God because of these new believers (1 Thess 3:9). Paul's use of "rejoice" (χαίρω, *chairō*) for the proper response to suffering (Col 1:24) also shows a new basis for rejoicing not present in the OT. James encourages believers to consider it all joy (χαρά, *chara*) when they face trials (Jas 1:2). Paul often tells believers to rejoice (*chairō*) regardless of present circumstances (e.g., Phil 4:4; 1 Thess 5:16). Peter tells his audience that as they are sharing in the sufferings of Christ, they should rejoice in the present, in order that at the revelation of Christ's glory, they may rejoice (*chairō*) with gladness (*agalliaō*; 1 Pet 4:13). In short, both Hebrew and

Greek have several terms that express the joy that human beings experience in relation to God and other people.

## Theological Overview

For the biblical writers, joy is rooted in God and what he has done for people in general and his people in particular. As part of Solomon's dedication of the temple, the people of Israel feasted for eight days. On the eighth day, Solomon sent them home with joyful ( $\text{סָמְעָה}$ , *sāmēah*) hearts because of all the good that God had done for his servant David and his people Israel (1 Kgs 8:66). When David, the elders of Israel, and military leaders brought the ark of the covenant, carried by the Levites, to Jerusalem, they did so with joy ( $\text{סִמְחָה}$ , *simḥâ*; 1 Chr 15:25). When an angel announces to the shepherds that a savior has been born, he says, "Behold, I am proclaiming to you good news of great joy ( $\text{\u03c7\u03b1\u03c1\u03ac\u03bd \u03bc\u03b5\u03b3\u03ac\u03bb\u03b7\u03bd}$ , *charan megalēn*)" (Luke 2:10). After Peter's miraculous release from prison, he went to the house of Mary, where people had gathered to pray for Peter (Acts 12:7–11). When Mary's servant Rhoda recognizes Peter's voice at the gate, Rhoda is so filled with joy ( $\text{\u03c7\u03b1\u03c1\u03ac}$ , *chara*) that instead of letting Peter in, she runs into the house and tells the group that Peter is at the gate (Acts 12:14).

Joy marks the people of God both individually and corporately. This characteristic of God's people is present in the OT but is most evident in the NT. Paul tells the Roman believers that the kingdom of God is marked by righteousness, peace, and joy (*chara*) in or by the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17). He also tells the believers in Corinth, "I am being supplied lavishly with joy (*chara*) in all our affliction" (2 Cor 7:4).

Joy (*chara*) is part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit that should be evident in the Christian community (Gal 5:22). When Moses is describing the covenantal curses that will come upon his people if they forsake Yahweh and his covenant with them, Moses declares that since they did not serve God with joy (*simḥâ*) as a response to the abundance that God blessed them with, they will serve their enemies (Deut 28:47). In the NT, the concept of joy also relates to the eschatological future. For instance, Revelation 19 describes future events related to Jesus' second coming and other aspects of the coming consummation of all things. The author of revelation exhorts his audience by saying, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him the glory; the wedding celebration of the Lamb has come" (Rev 19:7).

## Lexical Information

## Old Testament

עָלַץ (*‘ālaṣ*). vb. **rejoice, exult, gloat.**

*Rejoice, based in a victory that God has won or will win; gloat maliciously at the defeat or trouble of an enemy.*

This verb describes the rejoicing that stems from a victory or gloating over the defeat of enemies. This can be gladness because of a victory brought by God to his people as a whole or to an individual, as in the story of Hannah. When Hannah finally becomes pregnant and gives birth to Samuel, she rejoices in God who has now blessed her with a child, and she will no longer suffer mockery from Elkanah's other wife (1 Sam 2:1). In 1 Chronicles 16:31–33, nature rejoices (שָׂמַח, *śāmaḥ*) over God's rule. The sea roars and all that is in it; the fields rejoice (*‘ālaṣ*; 1 Chr 16:32) and everything in them. The heavens and the earth will be glad and the trees will sing when God comes to rule. By contrast, the psalmist prays for deliverance from his enemies who rejoice (*‘ālaṣ*) over him (Psa 25:2). He prays that God would keep him from being ashamed or from his enemies rejoicing or exulting over him. Like similar words used for joy, gladness, rejoicing, and so forth, *‘ālaṣ* presents joy as a response to what God has done, and the gladness of enemies for the misfortunes of the righteous.

הָלַל (*hālāl*). vb. **boast, praise, rejoicing,**

**be praiseworthy.** *To admire, show appreciation, or praise someone or something for good qualities; to rejoice or boast.*

This verb primarily has the sense of praising someone or something. In the vast majority of cases, it is praising God. Isaiah 62:9 declares that the inhabitants of Jerusalem will praise Yahweh. The predominant use of the verb for offering praise to God is in the psalms, which use an imperative form. The psalmist declares that “I will praise you (אֶהַלְלֶךָ, *’āhallekkā*) in the congregation” (Psa 22:23; e.g., Pss 35:18; 107:32). God is to be מְהֻלָּל מְאֹד (*mēhullāl mē’ōd*, “praised greatly”; Psa 48:2). It is in the Hithpael stem that the verb comes closest to the concept of joy. For example, in Isa 41:16, boasting or exulting in God is set in parallel with rejoicing in Yahweh. So, when *hālāl* means to boast or exult, it relates to the concept of joy because that can be understood as boasting, glorying, or exulting, especially in God or his name.

שָׂמַח (*śāmaḥ*). vb. **To rejoice, to be glad, to be joyful, to make someone joyful.** *Spontaneous and oral expression of joy, rather than a general disposition.*

The verb *śāmaḥ* is used many times to speak of God or his actions in the OT. The psalmist declares—using two different verbs related to joy—that he will “rejoice and be glad at your

lovingkindness” (אֲגִלָּה וְאֶשְׂמְחָה) בְּחֶסֶד, *’āgîlāa wə’ēsmēḥâ bēḥasdekā*; [Psa 31:8](#)). As this shows, there are several words for joy that are regularly put in parallel or together to express similar senses of joy or rejoicing. Joel tells the people to rejoice because God has given them early and latter rain ([Joel 2:23](#)). The verb also describes the actions of those who pillage Jerusalem after the Babylonian invasion ([Jer 50:11](#)), and the psalmist pleads for God to prevent those who are the psalmist’s enemies for no reason from rejoicing (*śāmāḥ*) over his misfortune ([Psa 35:19](#)). This use illustrates that joy can be viewed by the biblical authors as a good thing if done by God’s people or the righteous but as a bad thing if the rejoicing is done by enemies of God’s people. The verb is used, then, with God and a wide variety of people and things as both subjects and objects of the rejoicing. In the prophetic woe oracle against the king of Babylon, the cypress trees and cedars of Lebanon rejoice over the downfall of the king ([Isa 14:8](#)). Jonah rejoiced for the plant that God caused to grow up over Jonah to give him shade ([Jonah 4:6](#)). The psalmist calls upon God to make those who seek him be glad (שׂוֹשׁ, *śûš*) and rejoice (*śāmāḥ*; [Psa 70:4](#)). The psalmist, in the midst of sorrow, prays to God to make him glad ([Psa 86:4](#)).

שְׂמֵחָה (*śāmēaḥ*). adj. **happy, filled with joy.** *The state of being joyful or glad.*

The term *śāmēaḥ* can be applied to God, people, and things. In [Isaiah 24:7](#), the word is used to describe merry or joyful (*śāmēaḥ*) hearts that now sigh because of God’s judgment ([Esth 5:9](#); [Psa 16:9](#)). The Israelites are to have a feast for seven days during the Festival of Booths and celebrate, for Yahweh will bless them and they will be joyful (*śāmēaḥ*; [Deut 16:15](#)). In [Psalm 86:4](#), the psalmist prays for the Lord to give him a joyful (*śāmēaḥ*) soul. Those who mock the poor with joy will be punished ([Prov 17:5](#)). Amos rebukes those who are joyful over Lodebar ([Amos 6:13](#)). This adjective, like the related noun and verb from the same root, relate to having a joyful feeling.

שִׂמְחָה (*śimḥâ*). n. fem. **joy, jubilation.** *The feeling or display of joy or jubilation.*

This word is used for the joy of celebrations, as when the women of Israel meet King Saul and David as they returned from killing the Philistines ([1 Sam 18:6](#)). Laban complains to Jacob for leaving secretly because Laban would have sent him away with joy (*śimḥâ*) and singing ([Gen 31:27](#)). The Israelites have great joy (*śimḥâ*) on the day of Solomon’s coronation ([1 Chr 29:22](#)). The Philistines offer sacrifices and have joy (*śimḥâ*) over the capture of Samson, their enemy ([Judg 16:23](#)). The noun is used in relation to

God and his deeds. Moses tells the Israelites that they will suffer the curses God has declared for rejecting the laws of their covenant with the Lord because they did not serve Yahweh with joy and a good heart (Deut 28:47). The word *śimḥâ* is the opposite of mourning, as when the psalmist celebrates that God has turned his mourning into dancing, loosed his sackcloth, and clothed him with joy (תִּאֲזַרְנִי שִׂמְחָה, *tē'azzērēnî śimḥâ*; Psa 30:11). God gives gladness (*śimḥâ*) to the king when in God's presence (Psa 21:6). Psalm 68:3 contains this verb, its related verb, and other verbs for rejoicing, when the psalmist prays that God would let the righteous rejoice before him. Like other words for joy, this noun can be used for human relations and activities as well as for joy connected to God and his deeds on behalf of his people.

שׂוֹשׂ / שִׂשׂ (*śûś/śîś*). vb. **to delight, rejoice.** *Rejoice in or over or take delight in someone or something.*

The verb שׂוֹשׂ (*śûś*) often occurs along with a preposition indicating what the object of rejoicing is. In Deuteronomy, it is used of God delighting in his people after he regathers them (Deut 30:9). Isaiah 65:18 illustrates the overlap in meaning among four words related to joy. The people are to rejoice and delight (שִׂשׂוּ וְגִילוּ, *śîśû wəgîlû*) in what God has done

or will do. God will create Jerusalem for rejoicing (גִּילָהּ, *gîlâ*) and its people for gladness (מְשׂוֹשׂ, *māsôs*; Isa 65:18). The psalmist in the midst of difficulty prays that those who seek God would rejoice in him (Psa 40:16). Like other verbs that mean “rejoice,” *śûś* can also have a negative use. Enemies rejoice over the misfortunes of an adversary, such as Zion's enemies (Lam 1:21). This verb reflects the general aspects of joy, including a sense of gladness in God, in favorable experiences, and exulting over the adversity of an enemy.

מְשׂוֹשׂ (*māsôs*). n. **joy, rejoicing, exultation.** *The joyfulness that accompanies music or is attached to or caused by something.*

This term points to the feeling of gladness or joy and is connected primarily with places, especially Mount Zion, or inanimate objects. Zion is the joy (מְשׂוֹשׂ; *mēsôs*) of the whole earth (Psa 48:3). Used mockingly, those who pass by Jerusalem after the Babylonians have destroyed it ask, “Is this the city of which it is said, ‘the joy of the whole earth?’” (Lam 2:15). When God brings his dispersed people back to Zion, he will make them an everlasting joy (Isa 60:15). Isaiah compares the rejoicing of a bridegroom to the way that God will rejoice over his people.

**שִׂשׂוֹן** (*sāsōn*). n. **joy, jubilation**. *Joy or gladness that comes in response to God's blessings.*

The term **שִׂשׂוֹן** (*sasōn*) may refer to joy that stems from human relations, such as the joy connected to the voice of the bride and bridegroom, which have ceased in the cities of Judah (**Jer 33:10**). It also refers to joy connected with God's activity, such as anointing the king with the oil of joy (**Psa 45:8**). The psalmist longs to know again the joy that stems from God's salvation (**Psa 51:13**). **Psalm 105** celebrates what God has done for Israel, including bringing them out of Egypt "with joy" (**Psa 105:43**).

**הֵפֶסֶת** (*hāpēs*). vb. **to delight, take pleasure in**. *The core idea of this verb is to experience emotional delight.*

This verb often stands in parallel with other words for joy or rejoicing such as **רָצָה** (*rātsāh*, "to delight"). However, **הֵפֶסֶת** (*hāpēs*) expresses more emotional content. The verb **הֵפֶסֶת** (*hāpēs*) can refer to delighting in a wide array of experiences and things and is used for both God and humans. **Second Samuel 22** contains a song commemorating God's deliverance of David from his enemies and from King Saul. In **2 Samuel 22:20**, David says that God delivered him because God delighted in him. Nehemiah prayed that God would be attentive to the prayer of his servants

who delight to fear God (**Neh 1:11**). God delights in "covenant love" (or "lovingkindness"; **Mic 7:18**) to display his righteousness by making the law great (**Isa 42:21**). The psalmist delights in the pathway of God's commandments (**Psa 119:35**). Men have delight in women. Shechem delighted in Jacob's daughter Dinah (**Gen 34:19**). The women viewed by King Ahasuerus were only brought back to him if he delighted in them (**Esth 2:14**). Joab said that David delighted in taking a census (**2 Sam 24:1–9**). To the extent that delighting in or being pleased by something is similar to the feeling of joy, *hāpēs* is similar to joy because God or humans can delight in people or things.

**הֵפֶסֶת** (*hēpes*). n. masc. **delight, joy**. *The joy or delight that one experiences and which comes from someone or something.*

This noun applies to a wide range of things. The psalmist speaks of the blessedness of the one who has delight in the law of Yahweh (**Psa 1:2**). All delightful things cannot compare with wisdom (**Prov 8:11**). In the future, all nations will come to Israel's land of delight (**Mal 3:12**). Hosea declares that Israel has been scattered among the nations and is now like a vessel or jar in which no one has delight (**Hos 8:8**).

**חָפֵּטֵת** (*chāpēts*). adj. **delighting in, desiring**. *One who delights in someone or something, one who desires someone or*

something.

This adjective functions as a substantive and denotes to one who delights or desires. For example, [Psalm 5:5](#) states that God is not a god who delights in evil. According to the psalmist, the works of Yahweh are studied by all who delight in them ([Psa 111:2](#)). God does not take pleasure or delight in the sacrifices of the people because of their spiritual condition ([Isa 1:11](#)). Like the verb, the adjective expresses the idea of one who desires something, whether persons or things.

**רָנָה** (*rānah*). vb. **rejoice, cry out, shout for joy**. *Shout or cry out (for joy)*.

The shouting or crying out can be done by an individual, such as the barren woman in [Isa 54:1](#), or by a group as in [Lev 9:24](#). [Zephaniah 3:14](#) exhorts the daughter of Zion to shout for joy; this passage uses several terms for joy and rejoicing, beginning with the imperative **רָנִי** (*rānî*, “shout for joy”; compare [Zech 2:10](#)). The instruction in [Lam 2:19](#) to cry out shows that this verb is not solely for joyous crying out. This verb expresses rejoicing or shouting out for joy. The negative side of it, crying out in pain or suffering, however, is not part of the semantic domain of joy. These senses of the verb are also present in the related noun **רִנָּה** (*rināh*, “shout of joy”).

**גִּיל** (*gîl*). vb. **to shout in exultation,**

**rejoice**. *The core idea of this verb is to rejoice in response to God and his deeds.*

In [Zechariah 9:9](#), the daughter of Zion is told to shout for joy (**גִּילִי**, *gîl*). One day God will increase the joy of the people to be like those who rejoice in dividing the spoil ([Isa 9:2](#)). Often used in parallel with other words for joy or rejoicing, *gîl* is frequently connected with what God has done for his people, often using Jerusalem as a metonym for his people. Other inanimate things also rejoice. In [Isaiah 49:13](#), the heavens are told to shout for joy, the earth to rejoice, and the mountains to break forth with a shout of joy. [Zephaniah](#) prophesies that God will rejoice over his people with shouts of joy ([Zeph 3:17](#)). Used in a negative way, the Chaldeans rejoice over taking captives ([Hab 1:15](#)). The psalmist prays for God’s help in order that his enemies do not rejoice when they have overcome him ([Psa 13:4](#) [[13:5](#)]).

## New Testament

**χαρά** (*chara*). n. **joy**. *The experience of gladness.*

In the NT, the term *chara* often denotes a primary response to the reception of the event of eschatological salvation by human beings. There are other cases in which joy is attributed to God or his representatives. The term *chara* often comes as a result of people experiencing God’s

presence by the [Holy Spirit](#). Joy is part of the fruit of the Spirit's presence and work in the lives of believers ([Gal 5:22](#)). Joy enables believers to endure trials and suffering of the Christian life. 🌟 The Thesalonians received the Word "with much suffering and with the joy of the [Holy Spirit](#)," which probably means joy given by the [Holy Spirit](#) ([1 Thess 1:6](#)). At the same time, believers are to count their difficulties as joy ([χαράν](#), *charan*; [Jas 1:2](#)), and God gives joy along with patient endurance ([Col 1:11](#)). In an analogy between parental discipline and God's discipline, the author of Hebrews acknowledges that discipline does not seem to be joy ([Heb 12:11](#)). Joy is connected with and is an evidence of faith ([Phil 1:25](#) 🌟). For example, Peter tells his audience that though they do not see [Jesus Christ](#), they believe and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and full of glory ([1 Pet 1:8](#)). Paul experiences joy when he prays for believers ([Phil 1:4](#)). [Jesus](#) teaches that one who finds the kingdom of God will, with great joy, give up all of one's possessions to gain it ([Matt 13:44](#)). *Chara* thus refers to both an internal emotional response and an action that one does. 🌟 In both ways, this noun is similar to many other words for joy.

[χαίρω](#) (*chairō*). vb. **rejoice, be glad**. *Be in a state of gladness, happiness, or well-being.*

The kind of rejoicing the term *chairō*

denotes is not only a feeling and expression of joy but also an action one chooses.

🌟 For instance, Paul exhorts his believers to "rejoice with those who rejoice ([χαίρειν μετὰ χαιρόντων](#), *chairein meta chairontōn*)" ([Rom 12:15](#)). Like other verbs for rejoicing, *chairō* can be used in a positive way (e.g., [1 Cor 13:6](#)) and in a negative way (e.g., [Rev 11:10](#)). [Jesus](#)' disciples are instructed to rejoice when they are persecuted ([Matt 5:12](#); [Luke 5:23](#)) and believers are to rejoice as they share in the sufferings that Christ experienced ([1 Pet 4:13](#)). While the world may rejoice now, when [Jesus](#) returns to the disciples they will rejoice ([John 16:20–22](#)). Paul exhorts believers to rejoice in the Lord ([χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ](#), *chairete en kyriō*; [Phil 3:1](#)). This again emphasizes that joy or rejoicing is the appropriate response to what God has done 🌟. [Philippians 4:4](#) suggests that the believers who are at Philippi need extra encouragement to choose to rejoice, as Paul says it twice: "Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, 'Rejoice.'" The stress that this rejoicing is in the Lord implies gratitude for what God has done for them 🌟. As with other biblical words for rejoicing, *chairō* has both positive and negative uses, points both to an emotional state and a chosen behavior, and can be a response to people, things, events, and is especially connected with God and his actions among humans 🌟.



εὐφροσύνη (*euphrosynē*). n. **joy, gladness, cheerfulness.** *State of joyful happiness.*

This word, frequent in the LXX, occurs only twice in the NT. The term appears in [Acts 2:28](#) as part of Peter's Pentecost speech, which interprets [Ps 16](#) as a psalm about the resurrection of Christ. Thus, [Acts 2:28](#) uses the term *euphrosynē* because it cites the Septuagint, which translates the Hebrew שִׂמְחָה (*śimḥâ*) with *euphrosynē*. The other instance is in [Acts 14:17](#). Paul tells the inhabitants of Lystra that God fills their hearts with joy. These two examples present εὐφροσύνη (*euphrosynē*) as one of many Greek words for joy that relate to an emotional state.

εὐφραίνω (*euphrainō*). vb. **gladden, cheer up, be glad, enjoy, celebrate.** *Make someone glad or happy; be glad.*

This word is often connected to food, as in the parable of the rich fool ([Luke 12:19](#)), Stephen's reference to the golden calf incident, and the celebration held because the lost son returned ([Luke 15:23–24, 29](#)). Several references show that being glad and celebrating are responses to what God has done in the world (e.g., [Rom 15:10](#)). The verb is used negatively in Revelation for inappropriate human rejoicing ([Rev 11:10](#)), and twice the heavens and those who dwell in them are told to rejoice because of the woes taking place upon the earth ([Rev 12:12; 18:20](#)). Most often *euphrainō* is linked to humans in relationship to God, indicat-

ing as other words for joy do, that God is the source of joy and rejoicing for humans, most often flowing from experiencing God's presence or his saving acts.

ἀγαλλιάω (*agalliaō*). vb. **to be overjoyed, glad, extremely joyful.** *The state of experiencing such great joy and gladness that it is expressed outwardly.*

The verb *agalliaō* and the related noun ἀγαλλίασις (*agalliasis*) refer to joy that is expressed outwardly. These words are only used in biblical and ecclesiastical writings. The rejoicing or joy that this word points to can be experienced in the present, such as Luke's recording of Mary's song in which she declares, "My spirit rejoices in God" ([Luke 1:47](#)). The Philippian jailer rejoiced greatly that he and his household had come to believe in God ([Acts 16:34; 1 Pet 1:8](#)). At other times it is clearly something for the future eschatological consummation of all things (e.g., [Rev 19:7](#)). This word is basically synonymous with other words for being joyful in the NT, but it has the sense of "great joy," and that joy generally is displayed in some way.

ἀγαλλίασις (*agalliasis*). n. **extreme joy, be extremely joyful, extreme gladness, rejoicing greatly.** *State of intense joy and gladness, often expressed verbally or through bodily movement.*

This noun is used five times in the NT. Gabriel tells Zechariah that there will be "joy and great gladness (χαρά σοι καὶ

ἀγαλλίασις; *chara kai agalliasis*)” at John’s birth (Luke 1:14, 44). In Luke’s description of the events that followed the Holy Spirit being poured out at Pentecost, he says that they were continually in the temple, breaking bread from house to house and sharing food in or with great gladness (ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει, *en agalliasai*) and humility of heart (Acts 2:46).

συγχαίρω (*synchairō*). vb. **to enjoy with, rejoice with.** *The state of experiencing joy or enjoyment together with someone.*

This verb points to a communal time of rejoicing, usually in response to an event. For example, Elizabeth’s neighbors and kin rejoice with her at the birth of her baby (Luke 1:58). This verb also appears twice in Luke 15. The shepherd who finds his lost sheep and the woman who finds her lost coin call people to rejoice with them (Luke 15:6, 9). There are also times when this word seems to be equivalent to χαίρω (*chairō*), as when Paul says that love does not rejoice at evil but rejoices in the truth (1 Cor 13:6).

εὐδοκέω (*eudokeō*). vb. **to be pleased with, take pleasure in.** *Be pleased with someone or something because the person or thing leads to pleasure.*

The verb *eudokeō* typically means to be well pleased with something or delighting in it. One important use is for God’s approval of Jesus. Twice in Matthew’s Gospel, God speaks from heaven and declares that Jesus is God’s beloved Son,

in whom he is well pleased—an allusion to Psalms 2 (compare 2 Peter 1:17). In Matthew 12:17–18, after Jesus has healed many people and told his followers not to tell anyone what he has done, Matthew says that Jesus has fulfilled the Scriptures and cites Isaiah 42:1, which refers to the Servant of Yahweh as one who is chosen and well pleasing to God (compare Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22). The verb *eudokeō* also can mean to consider something good and therefore worthy of being chosen. God determines to save those who believe through the foolishness of preaching (1 Cor 1:21). Paul employs this verb with negation to say that God was not pleased with those in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:5). Similarly, the author of Hebrews cites Habakkuk 2:4 to say that God is not pleased with those who do not continue in faith (Heb 10:38). In his response to false teaching at Colossae, Paul issues the (somewhat enigmatic) statement that all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Jesus (Col 1:19).

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## See Also

- **Related Concepts:** [Beauty](#); [Reward](#); [Salvation](#)
- **Bible Sense Lexicon:** [joy \(emotion\)](#), [joy \(source of\)](#), [joy \(source\)](#), [joyfully](#), [to jump for joy](#), [to rejoice \(feeling\)](#), [to rejoice \(expression\)](#), [to rejoice together](#), [to shout for joy](#)