

Audio Teaching Sermon

Message #20

Gospel Means Good News

[**A** Intro – Pastor Jefferson 0:00 thru 1:32]

Greetings to every one of my fellow disciples in Jesus Christ! Pastor Jefferson here. I'd like to welcome you to **Message #20** of DWJD Ministries' Audio Teaching **Sermon Series**. Our mission in this ministry is to teach and educate believers in the deeper meaning of God's Word as contained within the Holy Bible. In the last message we were discussing **John 14:26**. As I have said before, we are taking a somewhat indirect approach to explaining how we were given the **New Testament**. To refresh your memory, it reads ¹ *"However, the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom will send the Father ² in the name of Me, ³ He will teach you all things ⁴ and will bring remembrance to you ⁵ all things that I have said to you."* We fully discussed this verse in the last lesson with the exception of the final thought. Jesus told us that the Holy Spirit, our Advocate between us and God, would teach us all things. He would act in the role of an instructor who would have the power to teach as well as admonish. And then it says, *"He will bring remembrance to you all things that I have said to you."* This is the key to understanding how we came to receive the New Testament.

[**B** The Meaning of the Gospel 1:32 thru 3:04]

There is only one Greek word which appears in place of **will bring to remembrance** and it is [1] *hy-pom-NESS-ee-eye*, is only used this one time, and it means **'to remind, to remember or to recall, when prompted.'** It brings with it the idea of a gentle and deliberate act of causing someone to recall information that they have previously heard. In this case, the Holy Spirit would be the One to remind the disciples, to give them perfect recall of the words which Jesus spoke while He was with them. Christ's words were composed of important spiritual truths and instructions, which were the basis for the creation of the Gospel. This is how Jesus was guaranteeing the maintenance of doctrinal purity of His word when it became codified. The four disciples, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote the first 4 books of the New Testament, called the Gospel. **Gospel** is defined as **'good news'** and comes to us via the Greek word *yoo-ang-ghel-ID-zoe*. This word is defined to mean, **'the proclaiming of the good news, to evangelize or to preach good tidings.'** It's where we get our modern word **'evangelize'** from, which shares the exact same definition as the word Gospel.

[**C** Righteous in Behavior 3:04 thru 5:07]

The first time we see the word **Gospel** used within the timeframe of the New Testament is in **Luke 1:19**. To set the stage for this verse, the Apostle John is laying out the circumstances and events which preceded the birth of Jesus. He begins with a chief priest named **Zacharias**, whose wife was named **Elizabeth**. Open your Bible to the **1st chapter of Luke**. The Bible tells us in **verse 6** that, ¹ “*They were both righteous in the sight of God,* ² *walking blamelessly in all the commandments* ³ *and requirements of the LORD.*” The word we find for **righteous** in this verse is **dik-KIGH-oi**. It means righteous in the sense of **‘someone being virtuous or just, both in terms of their relationship with God and their conduct toward others.’** It does not mean *sinless*. Rather it conveys the idea of someone being in right standing with God, via their adherence to His laws and living a life reflective of His character. A trait that all followers of Jesus should strive for daily. **Verse 7** tells us, ¹ “*They had no child,* ² *because Elizabeth was barren,* ³ *and both were advanced in years.*” The word we find for **barren** is **[4] STAY-rah** and means **‘infertile, as in unable to conceive children.’** The Hebrew term for this word is **ah-QHAR-rah** and is used in the details regarding other barren women, namely Sarah, Rebecca, and Hannah. And the word for **advanced** is **[1] probe-BEH-ko-tes** and means **‘to go forward, to advance or to proceed in age.’** This word only appears once, as they are the only couple mentioned in the New Testament as having a child at an advanced age.

[**D** Miracle Birth to Highlight Person 5:07 thru 6:33]

The Bible doesn’t tell us how old they were but suffice it to say they were well on in years, being far past the point of childbearing for Elizabeth. The ability for a woman to get pregnant ends after menopause. And the Bible specifically tells us that **Elizabeth** was always infertile, as she never had given birth to any children. We can use the example of **Abraham** and **Sarah**, whose circumstances were essentially the same. Folks have asked me, “*Why does God work in this manner?*” Well, I think the best way to highlight someone’s birth is to bring it about in a way which local society would define as being **‘impossible.’** Therefore, God gets all of the credit of doing what can only be seen as a miracle. Had Elizabeth and Sarah already previously bore children, the birth of another child would not have seemed so special, even perhaps with them being at an advanced age. The virgin Mary, her conception and the resulting birth of Jesus was a miracle as she had never experienced relations with any man. Had she already bore children, how would

God explain that He was the Father of Jesus? So, God always chooses the best way to highlight His work before an unbelieving world.

[**E** Three Parts of the Hebrew Temple 6:33 thru 8:14]

Zacharias and Elizabeth were the parents of **John the Baptist**. We see in **verse 8** that it was Zacharias' turn to enter the temple and burn incense as part of His priestly duties. A little history here will help us understand the story better. The Hebrew Temple back in that day was organized into three equal sized parts. The first part was the **Holy-of-holies** and was the place where God Himself inhabited the Temple. One priest was permitted to enter it only one day per year. It was separated from the middle section by a thick curtain. The middle section was where the temple priests conducted the daily sacrifice. There were three priests, each chosen by lot, to perform this duty. And there were three parts to this service. The first part took place when the first priest entered this part of the temple and carried away the ashes left on the altar from the preceding service. After he exited, the next priest would bring in a fresh tray of burning coals and place it on the golden altar. And when he was finished, the third priest went in and sprinkled incense on the burning coals. And while the smoke ascended he would make prayerful intercession for the Hebrew people. This was considered the most honorable part of the whole service. And while this was happening, the third part of the temple, as mentioned in **verse 10**, was the sanctuary filled with a whole multitude of praying people.

[**F** Elizabeth Would Bear a Son Named John 8:14 thru 9:53]

So, we read in **verse 9** that it was Zacharias' who was selected to be the priest to burn the incense. Custom from back in that day was to choose the priest by drawing lots to determine which priest would be permitted to do each deed. This was a big deal. To be chosen to conduct the daily sacrifice was a once in a lifetime honor. The daily sacrifice was conducted **365 days** per year. This tells us that only **1,095 priests** would be chosen annually to conduct the daily sacrifice. This means a priest had a less than **10% chance** of ever being selected for this duty over the course of their temple service. God controls the odds for our selection to do His work—never forget that. While men chose lots, Zacharias was chosen by God to be the one on inside the temple, sprinkling the incense on that day. While he was inside, **verse 11** tells us an angel of the LORD appeared before him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. **Verse 12** reveals that Zacharias was gripped with fear

at the sight of the angel. As God usually does, the angel in **verse 13** told him to not be afraid, that his prayer has been heard, and that his wife Elizabeth would bear him a son, and that they were to give him the name of **John**.

[**G** John Filled With Holy Spirit 9:53 thru 11:25]

In **verse 14** the angel informs Zacharias that he will have joy and gladness, and that many will rejoice at his birth. In **verse 15**, he explains why. ¹ “For he (his promised son) will be great ² in the sight of the LORD; ³ and he will drink no wine or liquor, ⁴ and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit ⁵ while yet in his mother’s womb.” The word we see for in the sight of is *en-NO-pee-on* and means ‘before, in the presence of or in front of.’ The word is used to denote being in the presence of someone or something, implying a sense of accountability or witness. John was prophesied to be a great witness for the soon-coming **LORD**. Notice the phrase *and he will drink no wine or liquor*, this plainly means that John during his life would not drink any wine or liquor. The word for wine is *OY-non* and simply means ‘wine.’ In case you were wondering the word wine is defined as ‘the alcoholic fermented juice of fresh grapes used as a beverage.’ It does not, and never means grape juice anywhere in the text of the Bible. I am well aware that there are those who deny that Jesus or His disciples ever drank alcohol. This is simply another statement of **Christian mythology**.

[**H** Wine & Liquor Contain Alcohol 11:25 thru 13:08]

If this were true, then we would in effect be denying the first miracle that Jesus did—the turning of **water** into **wine**. You can read the full passage for yourself. It’s located in the **2nd chapter** of **John**, verses **1 thru 11**. The word *OY-non* appears six times in the passage and each time it means wine—an alcoholic beverage served at weddings and other such celebrations. Notice that this restriction in **Luke 1:15** regarding **John the Baptist** not drinking wine is paired up with the word liquor. We find the word for liquor to be *SEE-keh-rah* and it means ‘strong or intoxicating drink.’ It refers to any alcoholic beverages other than wine. Historically it was any fermented drink made from grains, fruits or honey. These were not the distilled beverages that we know today, such as **whiskey, gin** or **vodka**, as these were not known in the ancient world. Combining the mention of wine and other alcoholic drinks tells us in effect that John was never to drink alcohol. Again, why would God prohibit grape juice if that is what the verse is saying? The

mission God assigned to John was such that I believe God wanted there to be zero doubt concerning the authenticity and legitimacy of the words he was going to speak regarding the coming of the LORD. And even the appearance of John drinking might have tainted the validity of his message.

[**I** No Alcohol With the Holy Spirit 13:08 thru 14:42]

Notice the final thought of the verse: *and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb.* While John the Baptist was still born a sinner like the rest of us, God gave him a huge advantage so as to be successful in his assignment. He was to be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. I think this explains why he would never drink alcohol. This restriction then would be explained by **Leviticus 10:9** where the priests of God were instructed to not drink wine or strong drink prior to entering the **tent of meeting**. This was where people met up with God Almighty. It was established as a perpetual statute throughout the Hebrew generations. I would say the same rule applies to participating in discipleship training. There is to be no alcohol consumption prior to anytime we are expecting to meet with Jesus, God or the Holy Spirit. God demands a clear mind, unencumbered by any of the things which would distract us or dull our senses. This is why I teach that the disciple needs to enter into their training alone and free of all distractions. No cell phones, radio, television, tablet, etc. And no alcohol or drugs or anything which might reduce the sharpness of one's perception.

[**J** Humanity is Called to Convert 14:42 thru 16:28]

Continuing on now in **Luke 1:16**, we discover the root mission of **John the Baptist**. The angel says to Zacharias, ¹ *"And many of the sons of Israel* ² *he will turn to the LORD,* ³ *the God of them."* The word we see for **he** **will** **turn** is [1] *ep-pis-TREP-see-eye* and it translates to **'to turn, to return or to convert.'** The idea of this word is primarily to get people to turn or return to a place where they have previously been, implying a change of direction or a conversion. This is yet another word that we see used only one time in the Bible. This is because John's purpose was unique. He would be the person who would announce the coming of the Messiah, and whose efforts would result in great numbers of men to return to God. The word we find in the verse for **many** is *pol-OOS* and means **'much, great or a large quantity.'** This is the message of the Gospel. And while the angel used the term the *"sons of Israel,"* he was using symbolic language to include all of God's

people throughout the ages. Adam and Eve had a perfect, unencumbered relationship with God in the Garden of Eden, at least until the moment of their sin. God desires that this rift between Him and His creation is closed. So, He brought down His Son as the One who was going to close that gap. The message of the Gospel is for all men, of all ages.

[**K** A New Heaven & Earth 16:28 thru 17:52]

Now, I know what some of you are thinking. You're saying, *"Jesus wasn't born until 4,000 years past the creation of Adam. How can Jesus save those persons long dead."* Great question! And the answer to that is there is a time coming, when God will drain the oceans and return the earth back to a Garden of Eden state. And every person ever born, apart from those who have viscerally rejected Christ, such as those who accept the Mark of the Beast during the Great Tribulation, will be resurrected back to life. That's the purpose of God draining the oceans, making room for the billions of folks who previously lived. They will be segregated into their associated living zones around the earth. It makes sense God would return people to cities bearing conditions which were similar to when they lived. They will still be sinners, and it will be the job of those followers of Christ to teach them all about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit during the 1,000-year reign of Christ. People who have never heard the Gospel are therefore unable to reject it. To believe otherwise makes God out to be horribly unfair and goes opposite of what the Bible teaches.

[**Z** Some Final Comments 17:52 thru 19:08]

When we consider the words, **Good News**, what do they truly speak to your soul? If nothing ever changed, as sinners we'd all be headed for the Lake of Fire. An eternity away from God in perpetual torment. I cannot think of anything worse. Thus, in my opinion, anything which diverts us away from that path would be viewed as **"good news."** Am I right? Even if God said, *"Hey, your new job is to scrub toilets for the whole of eternity."* I'd happily do it, as that would seem like heaven as compared to the horrible alternative. God made a way, and thankfully it doesn't involve scrubbing toilets. Instead, He sent down His Son to take away our sin. Our only job now is to build an intimate relationship with Him. That's it. This is truly good news! Hey friends, we are now at the end of our time together for this message. **So, until next time my beloved, this has been Pastor Jefferson, speaking in God's Holy name and for His glory alone. Amen!**