

Audio Teaching Sermon Message #21 The Joy of the LORD

[A Intro – Pastor Jefferson 0:00 thru 1:29]

Hey brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ! It is my prayer that this **message #21** finds you in good spirits with the LORD and blessed by the mighty hand of God. I am **Pastor Jefferson**, the voice you hear on these messages. I serve as lead pastor at **DWJD Ministries**, where our mission is in our name: We are: **Doing What Jesus Did**—and that is make disciples. You know, I want to point something out, if you are indeed on the road to holiness, where you are attempting in your own mind, to make every effort to the very best of your ability, to build an intimate relationship with Jesus, I can guarantee one thing—that the joy of the LORD will be with you. Now some might be wondering, what is this thing called, *“the joy of the LORD?”* Well, would you be surprised to learn that the Joy of the LORD is just what it says—that it is actually joy which first belonged to Jesus? To understand where this concept came from we must return to our source document: the Holy Bible. The first mention of this concept is found in the book of **Nehemiah chapter 8**. Please open up your Bible to **verse 9**.

[B Jerusalem Had Been Rebuilt 1:29 thru 3:02]

To set the stage for this passage, the Hebrew people had completed their return to the Promised Land from out of their captivity at the hands of **Nebuchadnezzar** in **Babylon**. They had rebuilt their Holy City of **Jerusalem**, to include the walls and gates, and they had rebuilt Solomon’s temple. **Nehemiah** was the governor, and **Ezra** was the chief priest and scribe. All the people were all gathered together in front of the temple. It had now been **49 years** since the decree issued by **Artaxerxes**, which allowed for the Hebrew people to peaceably return to Jerusalem, and to reconstruct their new lives in their holy promised land. **Ezra** had been reading to the people from out of the **Pentateuch**—the first 5 books written by Moses, commonly referred to as *“the law.”* From out of the Hebrew, **Nehemiah chapter 8** and **verse 9** reads, *“And said Nehemiah, he was the governor, to Ezra the chief priest and scribe, to the Levites who taught the people, and to all the people, he said, ‘that this day is holy to Yahweh your God, do not mourn nor weep.’ For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law,”* being read by Ezra. It was indeed a heady day

for the Hebrew people. They were back in the Promised Land and things were going good.

[**C** Pleasing Aroma to the LORD 3:02 thru 4:33]

Now reading **verse 10**, *“And said Nehemiah to them, ‘Go your way and eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared, for holy is this day to our God Yahweh, and do not do sorrow for the joy of the LORD Yahweh is your strength.”* I just want to pause here for a moment and tell you that without knowing the history behind this verse, the deeper meaning will go right over your head, just as it did mine for many years. The word we see for the **fat** is [1] **mash-mah-NIM** and means **‘from the abundance and prosperity of the land.’** In ancient Israelite culture, fatness was a symbol of divine blessing. The fat was always the best part of the animal and was the portion offered in the sacrifices. It created the most pleasing aroma to the LORD. This word is only used **once** as this fat being mentioned is symbolic of the One great sacrifice, soon coming to Israel. The word we find for **sweet** is [2] **mam-TAK-qim** and means **‘delightful or pleasant.’** The word is used twice in Scripture and each time is a metaphor for goodness, abundance and blessing, all the result of divine favor.

[**D** Portions of Joy from the LORD 4:33 thru 6:11]

And they were to send portions of the fat and sweet mentioned to those who have nothing prepared. The word used for **portions** is **mah-NO-wt** and comes from the word **MAN-ah**. It means **‘to assign or appoint something to someone for a specific purpose.’** It carries the idea of something being weighed out, specifically a ration or a lot. It brings the concept of receiving something good for which one didn’t prepare or have to pay for. Most of us are familiar with the concept of God giving manna to the Israelites on their exodus from out of slavery in Egypt. Then the verse goes on, *“For the joy of the LORD Yahweh is your strength.”* The word we discover for **joy** is [1] **hed-WAT** and can be defined as **‘delight, gladness or bliss.’** It signifies a deep, abiding sense of joy and gladness. It reflects a state of happiness that is rooted in one’s relationship with God. This contentment comes from a profound sense of well-being due to divine presence and blessing. It is a gift from God which only comes when we begin to know the true Jesus, as we work to build up an intimate relationship with Him. It should not be surprising to you that this word for joy only appears this **one time** in the whole of Scripture.

[**E** Timing for the Coming of the LORD 6:11 thru 7:49]

And the word we find for **your strength** is [1] *mah-UZ-ze-kem* which comes from the word *mah-OZ*, which means **'stronghold, fortress, or refuge.'** It denotes a place or means of safety and protection. It is often used to describe God as a refuge or stronghold for His people. Jesus is our salvation. He is the source of our protection and our rescue. So, we must now determine how all of this fits together. The key is found in the phrase, *"For holy is this day to our God Yahweh"* The word present for **holy** is *kad-DO-wos* and means **'sacred, to be set apart, separation from the common or profane.'** So, the question now is, *"Why is this particular day holy to the LORD?"* The big clue is when **Nehemiah** told us that the Joy of the LORD would be our strength. You see, it all goes back to the prophet **Daniel**. He was taken while yet a teenager by Nebuchadnezzar back to Babylon in **606 BC** to work in service to the king. Babylon had just made Israel a vassal state in what was essentially a bloodless coup. A group of intelligent young people were taken back Babylon to serve as translators and other such duties. Interestingly, it was **Daniel** who wrote about the timing for the coming of the LORD.

[**F** Date of Artaxerxes Decree 7:49 thru 9:42]

Daniel issued a prophecy for the coming of **Messiah**. In the book of **Daniel**, **9th** chapter and **24th** verse, He describes a period of **70 weeks of years** decreed for the Hebrew people and the city of Jerusalem. He says in **verse 25** that from the issuance of the **Artaxerxes** decree, calling for the restoration of Israel until Messiah the Prince would arrive, would be a period of **69 weeks of years**. There would be **7 weeks** for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and then **62 weeks** for the arrival of the Messiah. One other thing, a 'week of years' is 7 years. A week has **7 days**, thus a week of years is **7 years**. So, 7 weeks of years equals **49 years**. The **Artaxerxes** decree was issued on **5 March of 444 BC**. Adding **49** Biblical years to this date yields a date of **20 June 396 BC**. By the way, a **Biblical year** is defined in Scripture **'to be 12 months of exactly 30 days each.'** God foreknew that man would alter his calendar many times, so He defined a Biblical year as **360 days**. That's how we arrived at **20 June 396 BC**. $49 \text{ years} \times 360 \text{ days} = 17,640 \text{ days}$. This was the date when Nehemiah gave his speech before the city of Jerusalem. This date marked the completion of the first 49 years of the Daniel prophecy. Pretty cool, huh?

[**G** The Joy Allowed Jesus to Endure 9:42 thru 11:42]

So, we now know that this date was also the starting point for the **62 weeks** of years until Messiah the Prince would enter Jerusalem. That is a period of **434 Biblical** years, or **156,240** days. That’s why God said it was a holy day! It was the day from which the Hebrews would be able to calculate exactly when Jesus would enter the city at the start of **Holy Week**, the final week of His life. When we add 156,240 days to **20 June 396 BC**, we arrive at a date of **29 March 33 AD**. This was **Palm Sunday** of Holy Week, when Jesus riding on a donkey and His disciples entered Jerusalem. This explains why Nehemiah said the Joy of the LORD would be our *mah-UZ-ze-kem*. Our rescue, our salvation, our joy of the LORD. The next reference we find for the phrase **joy of the LORD** is found in **Hebrews 12:2**. That part of the verse reads, *“Jesus, who because of the joy lying before Him, endured the cross, having despised its shame, and at the right hand of the throne of God sat down.”* The word we see for **joy** is *KHAR-as*, which shares the exact same meaning as the Hebrew word *hed-WAT* that we just studied in Nehemiah. It was this joy which allowed Jesus to endure His crucifixion, and to suffer all the despicable shame which went along with it. It was this joy which allowed Him to get through it, and then sit at the place of honor on the right hand side of the throne of Almighty God.

[**H** Faith is Assurance & Hope 11:42 thru 13:14]

When we read Hebrews **chapter 11**, we discover a long list of God’s promises made to His people throughout the ages. It begins with **Abel**, then **Enoch** as men who acted by faith. **Abraham** and **Sarah**, **Jacob** and **Joseph**—all people who died while yet living within their faith. It was their human belief which carried them through, as they did not yet receive the Holy Spirit nor see the birth of the Messiah. Look at the first half of **verse 1**. It says, *“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for,”* The word we see for **the assurance** is [1] *hy-PO-stas-sis* and means the *‘substance, reality or proof of something promised.’* The word is used to describe the essential nature or underlying reality of a thing. The word is only used this once and so it is speaking specially of the faith of those who lived prior to Christ. The word for **of things hoped for** is [1] *el-PIZ-zoe-men-on* and means *‘confidence in, anticipation for or expectation of.’* These pre-Christ believers trusted in God, taking Him completely at His word. Again, here is yet another word only

used this once. It carries a very strong connotation of certainty mixed with trust.

[**I** Conviction of Things Unseen 13:14 thru 15:06]

The second half of the verse reads, *“the conviction of things not seen.”* The word we see for **conviction** is [1] *EL-en-khos* and translates *‘to convict or to reprove.’* It means to provide sufficient evidence or proof which will lead to a conviction. This word too is seen just once in Scripture and applies only to those followers of God born and living prior to the birth of Jesus. It brings with it the idea that the proof or evidence of their belief was in how they acted and behaved, which fully validated their faith. The word used for **being seen** is [2] *BLEP-om-men-on* and means *‘to see, to look at, or to behold.’* These folks who lived prior to Christ were convinced via things unseen. The two places this word is used appears only in this chapter, and both times it is speaking of things which were unseen. In **verse 11**, Noah responded to the coming flood, despite never having seen rain. He still trusted God and went on ahead and built the ark. It was this level of faith and trust whereby **verse 2** says, *“In this the ancients were commended.”* The word we see for **commended** is [1] *eh-mar-tye-RETH-eh-san* and used just on time, is a term which means *‘to bear witness, to testify or to give evidence.’* The term implies a solemn and accurate declaration of truth. So, God here is stating that these men of old affirmed the truth of their faith via their actions which bore witness to that belief.

[**J** Let Us Run With Perseverance 15:06 thru 16:44]

Skipping down to **verses 39 & 40** we read *“And all these ancient people, having been commended through their faith, yet did not receive what was promised, because God provided something better for us, that they would not be made perfect without us.”* Jesus is fully aware of the faith driven sacrifices these ancient people demonstrated towards God. It is this body of evidence which gave Him the joy to face His crucifixion and the shame of bearing the sins of the world. Paul is now exhorting us to lay aside our troubles and get on with the business of becoming disciples of Christ. Continuing on in **Hebrews 12:1 & 2**, He says, *“Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us.”* Next he tells us why, *“And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, by fixing our eyes upon Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith.”* **Perseverance** means *‘to*

continue effort to do or achieve something despite difficulty. And when we do that, my dear friends, is when we are then able to experience ***the joy of the LORD***. For the joy of the LORD is given to us by Christ as a sign of approval and is the source of our strength.

[**K** **Do Not Grow Weary** **16:44 thru 18:20**]

Then Paul identifies the reason for Jesus giving us His joy. Look now in **verse 3**: *“Then fully consider Him, the One who endured such great hostility from sinners against Himself so that you shall not grow weary in your life here on earth and lose heart.”* Jesus knows that our journey down the road to holiness is tough! He knows Satan and his cohorts are going to be coming after us. That’s why He explains how the men of old endured far worse than us, not having the Holy Spirit to assist them, and not even the codified word of the LORD did they possess. And yet, Jesus as our example, fully endured all that sinful men threw at Him, so that we might be made righteous in Him. When you stop and think about it, Moses had the Law delivered to him on the top of Mount Sinai in the year **1448 BC**. This means humanity went the first **2,500** years not having even the **10 Commandments**. And, despite the Hebrew people receiving them at that time, still doesn’t tell us how long before the rest of the world would eventually learn of them. The final book of the Old Testament, **Malachi**, wasn’t completed until **400 BC**. It took another 500 years before the New Testament was completed, roughly around 90 – 100 AD.

[**Z** **Some Final Comments** **18:20 thru 19:33**]

From the giving of the Law until the arrival of the Holy Spirit, we see a span of 1,480 years. The Holy Spirit was first given to man in **33 AD**. This means nearly the first 4,000 years of the age of Adam took place before the arrival of the Holy Spirit. So, the men of old were truly persons of great faith. And while they did see many miracles and at times even converse with God and His angels, we are all much more fortunate today. Those of us who occupy this modern age, have not only been given the full text of the Bible, but we also have Jesus and the Holy Spirit. With this knowledge comes bigger responsibility. God holds us to a higher standard because of it. We will be discussing this topic on our journey to learning how we received the New Testament in the next message. That’s all the time we have for now. **So, until next time my beloved, this has been Pastor Jefferson, speaking in God’s Holy name and for His glory alone. Amen!**