

The angel Gabriel had just told Zechariah that his wife Elizabeth would bear a son...

Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years."

*The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this **good news**. Luke 1:18-19 NRSV*

The shepherds were watching their flocks when the angels appeared...

*But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you **good news** of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." Luke 2:10-12 NRSV*

In both cases, the word translated as "good news" is **euangelizō**

Particularly in the message to Zechariah—it sounds like just good news about the pending birth

In the message to the shepherds we recognize it as more global good news about Jesus' birth

But I still wasn't aware that it was a translation of the word **euangelizō**

euangelizō can be translated as good news or Gospel and is the word we get evangelize from

But I think that we've lost the real meaning of what they are talking about here

We hear the words "good news" as good news and take meaning from the context

—sometimes just good, other times a big deal

But not necessarily life changing—nothing is the same—good news

And the words "good news" don't necessarily convey the greater meaning

We hear the good news of the gospel as an individual acceptance of forgiveness of sins

And accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior

Evangelism is simply telling others they can be forgiven and walk with Jesus

John Howard Yoder suggests the word **euangelizō** would be better translated as "revolution"¹

Originally **euangelizō** was not a religious or a personal term

It was a secular word meaning good news

It was good news that "impinges upon the fate of the community"

"Good news" is the report the Greek runner brings to a community

News that a battle is won

But not just that it was won—but it preserves their freedom

"Good news" is the message that a son has been born to the king

Which promises another generation of political stability

It is good news that has to do with the welfare of the people

It is news that shapes our common lives for the better

A prime example is the song of Mary—often called the *Magnificat*

We have this picture of Mary—a young woman, meek and mild, humbly accepting the news of the angel

Then she goes to see her cousin Elizabeth and while there sings a song of praise

The song begins with praise, but the whole of the song does not have a gentle tone

The song speaks much more broadly than Mary's experience—to what this baby will mean

Luke 1:46-55

¹ John Howard Yoder, *The Original Revolution*, Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971, reprinted in *Watch For the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas*, page 120-126.

The song of Zechariah has a similar tone to it—"*...that we would be saved from our enemies...*" Luke 1:71

In his ministry, John the Baptist, calls people to share with those who have no shirt or no food-Luke 3:11

Jesus begins his ministry with reading from Isaiah in the synagogue

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Luke 4:18-19 NRSV

God is up to something here and it will be a drastic change for people

It is good news for the poor—but bad news for the rich and proud
Everything will change, including the social economic status

The "*year of the Lord's favor*" in Luke 4:19 refers to Jubilee

—the periodic leveling-off provided for in the law given by Moses

Returning the land to the original owners, freeing the slaves, forgiving debts

With Jesus, Jubilee has come into its fullness

Jesus has come to set us free—not simply spiritually—but literally

The seeds of this truth are present in the Christmas story—it is Good News!

The intangible God has been made knowable in the baby Jesus

In coming, everything has changed

Whether or not John Howard Yoder is right that the word ***euangelizō*** should be translated revolution

I do know that we have lost the power of the word ***euangelizō***

Mary and Zechariah understood that it was changing everything for the world as they knew it

A form of ***euangelizō*** is used 132 times in the New Testament—10 times in the book of Luke

Consistently it is translated as good news in Luke

We should remember that it is life changing good news that impacts everyone

Not only did the intangible God be made real in the birth of a baby

But the Kingdom of God is made real in this life changing ***euangelizō*** Good News!

The Kingdom of God isn't just a spiritual kingdom in which we have citizenship

It is meant to usher in this good news for the poor, the captive, the lame—everyone

Because God has come—we live out this ***euangelizō*** Good News!

When we align ourselves with God and God's purposes—we are in fact changing our world

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