

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XI

October 13, 2002

No. 40

LIVING WITH CERTAINTY

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Current events have created uncertainty and fear in many hearts. The recent murderous shootings in Maryland are currently creating anxiety in the Washington area of the North East. An older man mowing his yard, three men filling up their cars, a woman in front of a craft store, and a young student heading for school are not considered as life-threatening activities. But ten people have been randomly shot to death or critically injured with a single shot on each occasion.

In addition to this killing spree, many investors have seen their retirement nest egg rapidly deteriorate with a sharply declining stock market. Our country is in open debate of whether or not we will soon go to war with Iraq. Do we have any certainty to ground us in these uncertain times?

Personal invincibility, power, and material wealth are foundations that men and nations often rely upon. But our times have unmasked for us the reality that these feelings and blessings can quickly evaporate before our eyes. God reminds the righteous of the following grounding

thoughts: *“If the foundations be destroyed, What can the righteous do? Jehovah is in His Holy temple; Jehovah, his throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men. Jehovah trieth the righteous; But he wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth” (Psalms 11:3-5).*

In uncertain times we need to remember the certainty that God’s throne in heaven is not toppled by terrorists flying planes, nor does He abdicate his sovereignty because harmful chemicals are released into the atmosphere. No rifle bullet or market collapse crumbles God. He remains in control. He sees and He will judge.

We must make certain we are living righteously in accordance with God’s righteous standard: The gospel of Christ (*Romans 1:16-17*). We then can face trying times, for God does try the righteous. But we can be certain of God’s response to the unrighteous: *“Upon the wicked He will rain snares; fire and brimstone and burning wind shall be the portion of their cup” (Psalms 11:6).*

We can face anything in life when we are certain of our eternal destiny (*2 Timothy 4:7-8*). Paul exercised self control in his race of life for he knew he would receive an *“incorruptible crown” (I Corinthians 9:25)*. He says, *“I therefore run, as not uncertainly...” (I Corinthians 9:26)*. The buffeting of his body was conducted with certainty of reward. If Paul did not expend the energy in self control, he was certain of rejection (*I Corinthians 9:27*).

The loss of material wealth is a circumstance that can occur at any time. We are not to have *“our hopes set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who giveth us all things to enjoy” (I Timothy 6:17)*. Riches should be our tools for good works, not our god. We must share with others. Those who do will be *“laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on life which is life indeed” (I Timothy 6:19)*. Uncertain times demand thinking in terms of certainties. Life on earth is fragile, but our reward in Heaven is secure. With certainty, we can overcome our anxieties.