

# GLAD TIDINGS

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

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## IN THE GARDEN

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**I** come to the garden alone... These are the beginning words of the Charles Austin Miles' hymn, IN THE GARDEN; a very spiritual and soulful song inspired by the book of John chapter 20, which was according to history, C. Austin Miles' favorite. He told the story in 1912 that he had started out to be a pharmacist, and drug stores haven't changed that much in all these years. He was sitting in his photo dark room, where he had his photographic equipment, and reading John chapter 20, he felt that he was spiritually moved to write this grand old hymn. Before his death in 1946 he said; *of all his accomplishments he was most proud to have been a writer of gospel songs, although he didn't believe he was as efficient as had been his desire.* We will always be grateful for his endeavors.

As we look at the wording and message in this hymn, and the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter of John we can see how this hymn brings these passages of scripture to life. As we read the words, the song makes these verses come alive, this hymn enhances the day to day lessons we find and apply in John

chapter 20.

In John 20:1 and 2 we have Mary Magdalene discovering Christ's body missing from the tomb. In verses 3 to 11 the two disciples discover for themselves that Jesus body is missing, and not understanding the scriptures about the Lord rising from the dead, they go home, leaving Mary standing outside the tomb weeping. In verses 12 to 16 Mary meets the angel, and turns to see the risen Savior, Jesus Christ, our Lord. In verses 17 and 18 it is written; *Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.' Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord,' and that He had said these things to her."*

*and the voice I hear, falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses.*

Notice the joyful facts Jesus personally discloses to Mary: ascending to the Father, not staying on earth was the joy set before Him. Also, Jesus' Father and God is the same Father and God with whom the disciples, including

Mary, have a spiritual relationship.

*And he tells me I am His own, and the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.*

While this song is based upon the personal experience Mary had with the Lord, we can share in the joy of a resurrected Lord who ascended to Heaven. Just to be raised from the dead and continue on earth was not Jesus' goal. He was raised to ascend into Heaven so those obedient to him can be translated into His spiritual kingdom, which is His spiritual body, the church (*Colossians 1:13, Eph. 1:22-23*). While at the end of John 20 we hear Thomas confess Jesus as "My God", and observe that the miracles of Jesus pointed to Jesus as the unique "the Son of God" (*John 20:28, 30-31*). Mary's experience helps remind us that we share with Jesus the same Father and God. As sons of God we are joint-heirs with Christ (*Romans 8:17*).

So when we sing, In the Garden, remember Charles Miles, his favorite chapter and above all remember what it should mean to us as Christians.