

GLAD TIDINGS

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

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The Joy of Christ

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From the announcement of Mary’s pregnancy there was immense joy surrounding the coming of Jesus (Luke 1:42, 44, 46-55). Also at Jesus’ birth the angels, shepherds, and wise men all expressed great joy and praise for His arrival (Luke 2:10-14, 20; Matt. 2:10). Such happiness, gladness, and rejoicing was unparalleled by any other birth.

Not only we do see such great joy connected with Christ in His birth, but also in several other aspects of His life. During His ministry the disciples expressed joy for the application of the power and authority of Jesus’ name (Luke 10:17). Jesus knew the connection of His ministry to joy when He said in John 15:11, “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” Christ’ joy was for the disciples to love God and one another by being obedient to His commands (John 15:7-17).

While there was much rejoicing at the birth and life of Christ it is a bit of a paradox then to find any joy in His death. Yet, it is through His death that His follow-

ers can be partakers of joy. It is by Christ death that we are reconciled to God and in this reconciliation and atonement we find joy (Romans 5:9-11). Even though the crucifixion is one of the saddest events to consider, it is also where we gain our freedom from sin (Romans 6:3-4).

The disciples were at one of their darkest hours after the crucifixion of Jesus, however, they would soon be met with tremendous joy and gladness at His resurrection. At the news of His resurrection both Mary’s had great joy as they returned to the disciples with the news (Matthew 28:8). Also after Jesus had spent time with disciples and ascended to heaven, the disciples experienced immense joy and were continually praising and blessing God (Luke 24:52-53).

Another important connection of Christ with joy is that we find so much joy and gladness in the preaching of Christ. In Acts 8 we note that the preaching of Christ resulted in joy. “Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them.” After this occurrence and the confirmation of the Word by miracles, Luke

records that the people were obedient and “there was great joy in that city” (Acts 8:5-8). Also in that very chapter we see the Ethiopian eunuch rejoicing after he heard Christ preached and was obedient to the word (vs. 39). In Acts 20:24 we find what Paul’s joy was: that he would finish his ministry and “testify of the gospel of the grace of God.”

The preaching of Christ brings the joy of forgiveness, but also the joy of the hope of His return. Showing the glory and hope of Christ’ return in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, Paul then instructs the brethren to “comfort one another with these words.” The hope and trust of Christ’ return is truly a comfort and joy to the faithful here on this earth.

As much joy as we see connected with Christ the question now stands: are we partakers of that joy? We must be in Christ to have that joy, there is no other way. If we are in Christ we will then be bringing the gospel (the good news) of joy to all men. May we be preaching and living the joy of Christ!