

# Glad Tidings

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

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## Heaven – Number One Priority

(Jerry Fite)

If we are thinking correctly, we will say that the most important thing in our life is to go to Heaven. Paul definitely had this attitude as one pressing “*on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 3:14). Notice the singularity of his focus: “the goal,” not goals; “the prize”, not prizes. He practices what he tells all of to do: “*Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth*” (Colossians 3:2). The “mind” here is not some mindset that is still wondering about the possibility of heaven, but is the thinking of heaven as one’s reality with the consequent affections. Paul’s “*one thing*” involved him “*stretching forward to the things that are before*” (Philippians 3:13). What was before him, and his future was heaven.

It has been said that we tend to focus upon what is urgent, instead of what is important. We feel the urgency of checking our email first thing in the morning, and replying to urgent requests. But in the final analysis, the hour spent may have better been spent in doing what is important in replenishing our minds with an hour of reading God’s Word. This does not mean that we should not

communicate with others, especially our close friends, but an hour of doing this urgent thing plus an hour of doing that urgent thing adds up to a day which often crowds out Bible reading. With so much urgency around us, we just don’t have the time or maybe more importantly the energy to concentrate on the revealed mind of God.

Paul’s confidence of heaven as his future allowed him to gladly accept the decaying of his outward body. He is more than a physical being. He also has an “inward man” as part of his makeup. In the midst of outward decay, his “*inward man was being renewed day by day*” (2 Corinthians 4:16). Reading our Bible “daily” and reflecting on God’s wisdom and the future glory He has promised is a great way of renewing our inward man day by day. In a day’s time how much is spent on the physical? How much time is invested in renewing the spiritual? Which of the two will help us go to heaven, our first priority (cf. 1 Timothy 4:8)?

If heaven is our priority, then being “in Christ” is important. The prize of our high calling is connected with being “*in Chr-*

*ist*” (cf. Philippians 3:14). You can be a “good moral” person, but not be “in Christ” Though possessing many good moral qualities, Cornelius needed to hear “*words whereby thou shalt be saved*” (Acts 11:14). When he was baptized, he was baptized “into Christ” like all other penitent believers and enjoyed the blessings of forgiveness of sins and the hope of heaven (Acts 10:48, Galatians 3:26-27, 1 Peter 1:3-4). If heaven is your priority, you will make sure you are “in Christ”. Is this your present reality?

We will miss heaven if we do not pay close attention and help the least of our brothers and sisters in Christ. If we do not give a helping hand to our brethren who are hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked, sick and in prison due to difficult circumstances connected with following Christ, we will suffer “*eternal punishment*” according to Jesus (Matthew 25:46). Yet, when we do help such, even “*the least,*” Jesus says we have done such “*unto Him*”, as if He were the object of our benevolent hand (Matthew 25:40). This is how personally close Jesus is with his followers (cf. Acts 9:4). Such helpers have “eternal life” as their future. Are you going to heaven?