

Glad Tidings

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

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What Jesus Did

(Jerry Fite)

We do not have to wonder what Jesus would do when it comes to His returning to the glory of Heaven. We read, “. . . for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising shame, and hath set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

The cross stood in the way of Jesus and His sitting on the throne of God. The cross meant not only death in most cases, but insured a painful way to depart from this life. Preparation for crucifixion through scourging left one half dead, with a back lacerated by bones and metal on the end of a leathered whip. Nails driven through the hands provided the focus of pain when driven, but more so with the torso of the body weighted down by gravity when hanging on the cross. Additional torture arose by nailing the two feet together. When one is trying to rise up to take a breath and give oneself some semblance of relief, he feels pain from his impaled feet. While Jesus’ six hours on the cross was surprisingly short compared to some who endured

up to thirty-six hours on the cross, it still was an excruciating death.

In addition to the pain, the cross carried the meaning of a shameful death. Cicero wrote, “Let the very name of the cross be far away not only from the body of a Roman citizen, but even from his thoughts, his eyes, his ears” (*Pro Rabirio 5; ISBE, p.761*).

The cross was reserved for the vilest of criminals.

What did Jesus do? He “endured” the cross. He courageously held up under such torture. It was his burden to bear the cross as the price for man’s redemption from sin (*1 Peter 1:18-19*). One can endure something when a brighter day lies ahead. Jesus knew of the joy that awaited Him as King over a spiritual kingdom redeemed and purchased by His blood (*Acts 20:28, Revelation 5:9-10*).

We too can “endure” the burden of our own cross as disciples of Jesus (*Luke 9:23*). We are responsible to walk as children of light, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. We must not only refuse fel-

lowship with the works of darkness, but we must stand up and “reprove” them (*Ephesians 5:8-11*). Yes, it is burdensome to stand up and speak out, but such is necessary if we are to experience the joy awaiting us in Heaven. One stopping short and giving in has no inheritance in heaven (*Ephesians 5:6*). We can endure by reminding ourselves that works of darkness will not always be before us. In Heaven, only the righteous and righteousness resides. Jesus endured His cross, we can endure our cross.

What did Jesus do? He “despised” the shame of the cross. He literally “looked down” on the shame of the cross and embraced its ignominy. We can add this example of Jesus to our arsenal when combating the Devil. Sometimes ridicule or being ostracized because we are Christians is enough for some to back away from their walk as children of Light. Some will speak evil of you (*1 Peter 4:4*). But we must “look down” on such reproach and endure whatever is said about us. Jesus did. So must we as the joy of Heaven waits.