

# Glad Tidings

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

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## Union With Christ

(Jerry Fite)

I am sure, as Christians, we look forward to meeting the Lord in the air, and then in that caught up manner, to “*forever be with the Lord*” (*1 Thessalonians 4:17*). Such words comfort us with the hopeful expectation to see the Lord face to face and enjoy the eternal glories of heaven. What about the present time? Is there any sense of our being with the Lord now that attracts your attention?

Paul reveals that we, who are made alive spiritually, having been raised with Christ, have been “*made to sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*” (*Ephesians 2:6*). The basis for being able to sit with Him in the heavenly places is God’s grace in delivering His Son to die for our sins, and also raising Him from the dead for our justification (*Romans 4:25*). The means by which we were able to be alive and sit with Christ is that we were “*buried therefore with Him through baptism into death*” (*Romans 6:4*); “*wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God who raised Him from the dead*” (*Colossians 2:12*).

We enjoy salvation now, because we have now been united with Him in baptism. We have been raised to sit with Him now in heavenly places, alive and appreciative of the present union we enjoy with Him.

The union with Christ we have now is like the close bond between husband and wife in marriage. As the husband loves his wife as his own body, Jesus loves His church. Paul writes, “*Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the church because we are members of His body*” (*Ephesians 5:28-30*).

The union with Christ and His church is so close, that when its members are dragged out of their homes, imprisoned and killed, He says, “*Why persecuest thou Me*” (*Acts 9:4*)? We may not now be able to see Jesus face to face, but He sees us. He identifies personally with us as the church of Christ continues to submit to His authority and headship. When His bride suffers for her walk with Him, He

says it is “Me” who is being persecuted.

Many want a personal relationship with the Lord, but ignore His church. Is there a more “personal” relationship than the husband and wife relationship? The church is Jesus’ bride, and He is her husband (*cf. Revelation 21:9*). The church is the spiritual body of Christ (*Ephesians 1:22-23*). He is loving Himself when he loves the church. You cannot get any closer to the person than being the personal pronoun “Me”.

Being saved from our sins, we see yet another way we are closely identified with the Lord. We are “*partakers of the divine nature...*”. We believed in the promises of God, and fled to the Lord for salvation, “*...having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust*” (*2 Peter 1:4*). Being cleansed from our sins now, we share in God’s holy nature now. We must continue to live holy lives and manifest that nature in all facets of our living (*1 Peter 1:15*). Looking forward to seeing the Lord face to face will help us remain holy (*1 John 3:3*). There is indeed a union we enjoy now in Christ!