

# Glad Tidings

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

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## Troublesome Times

(Joel Meier)

Standing one crisp autumn morning years ago on a bluff at West Point, we were amazed by the incredible beauty of God's creation of fall foliage. But in this reverie our minds were brought back to the human realm by our guide pointing out a small white dwelling on the other side of the Hudson. She told us about two sisters who lived there, penning in 1860 the words that were destined to be on the tongues of millions of the world's children, "Jesus Loves Me".

Think of the irony that on this side of the river, a few years before that song's existence, men were learning the martial arts that later they would use against each other, leaving our country's future existence in question, and on that side of the river the simple assertion was made, clear even to our young, that the One who created us clearly teaches us in His Word of His love for us, a love demonstrably expressed by His self-sacrifice for us.

Just a few years later, in our time as well as in history, the scene shifts to the rolling farmland surrounding the small town of Gettysburg. At one point the CD guide in our car tells us that here one evening, the voice of a wounded soldier lying on the field momentarily stilled the surrounding moans of agony, singing these words in the night air:

Come ye disconsolate, where'er  
ye languish,  
Come at the mercy seat, fervently  
kneel;  
Here bring your wounded hearts,  
here tell your anguish;  
Earth has no sorrow that heav'n  
cannot heal.

His young voice soon was to be still, along with those around him.

Closer to our time, and within the memory of some still living, a song is composed in 1942 about troublesome times when we as a country found our freedoms at stake. No benefit of knowing the eventual outcome of the worldwide war would relieve the writer at the time, but the blessed assurance that Jesus is

Coming Soon did. Once I recall discussing this song with a loved one; she was troubled with the supposed conflict that we would sing that He's coming soon, when we also knew that the time of His coming was not revealed. But we like Paul and Silas in Acts 16 can sing in the midst of trials knowing that we all live in the last days regardless of century or circumstance, that our lives on this side of eternity are so short that James compares them to a mere vapor (*Jas 4:14*), and that whether or not we stand alive on this earth at His coming, the latter rapidly approaches with verbalized certainty.

Spiritual comfort can be ours in that although our country's trials can suddenly be thrust upon us personally, endangering the freedoms we still hold dear, our souls are steadied by the confident assertion that

We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,  
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,  
Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.