

Glad Tidings

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

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Truth and Family

(Jerry Fite)

Jesus knew the truth He was revealing would divide family members. He said, “*For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law: and a man’s foes shall be they of his own household*” (Matthew 10:35-36). The truth of the gospel of Christ is not from man, so it would contradict man’s thoughts (John 1:17, I Corinthians 2:9-13).

The Truth revealed through Christ would therefore test the heart of the follower of Jesus. Would he follow the truth putting Christ first, or would he allow close family relationships to come between him and the knowledge of the truth? Jesus said, “*He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me* (Matthew 10:37).

Jesus knew the division between family members would be a burden to bear for his sincere followers. But Jesus added, “*and he that doth not take his cross and*

follow after me, is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:38). Living as a disciple of Jesus demands putting the Lord and His truth first in or thinking and conduct.

When presented the truth of the Gospel on what to do be saved, some refuse to take the steps commanded by the Lord. They balk because they feel they would be contradicting what family members have believed and practiced for generations. For example, they learn one must “repent” and “be baptized” for the remission of their sins in order to be saved (Acts 2:38). They learn there is only one church of which Jesus is Head, and Saviour (Matthew 16:18, Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:4, 5:23). The fond memories of loving parents begin to tug at their hearts when one realizes their family members did not obey the same conditions, and were not members of the church revealed in the truth of the New Testament. Some will turn away from the clear truth of the gospel. One has allowed natural family devotion to come between him and the Lord. Some even think that if they

obeyed the Truth, they would be condemning their parents to Hell, who did not take the same clearly stipulated steps. God’s Word will be the standard by which God judges us, not our “wishes” or “think-so’s” (John 12:48).

Jesus revealed the destiny of a rich man following his death in Luke 16:19-31. This man was “in torments”, “anguish”, with no way of escape. His thoughts were with his brethren who were still alive, and still had opportunity to avoid such torment. Jesus’ words teaches us that our dead loved ones, who are lost because they never obeyed the truth of the gospel earnestly wants you to hear the truth of the gospel and not experience the permanent anguish they are now suffering.

Such acuteness to our family’s eternal destiny should drive us to follow the disciplinary demands of Truth while we still live among profligate family members (Eph. 5:11, I Cor. 5:1-13, 2 Thess. 3:6-15). Truth always comes first before family, and sometimes separates us as we stand with Jesus.