

# Glad Tidings

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

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## Mourning For Sinners

(Jerry Fite)

**T**he apostle John defines sin as “lawlessness” (I John 3:4). When one sins, he or she transgresses God’s law. It is as if the transgressor says, “God, I will not have your law control my life.” Upon reflection, such is a sad time that should cause us to mourn with godly sorrow and repent (2 Corinthians 7:10). Those who view us in our sin should mourn. The Psalmist is in agreement: “Streams of water run down my eyes, because they observe not thy law” (Psalms 119:136).

Sometimes we react with anger to those who point out our sins to us. When we do, we need to remember that they may be mourning for our sins, not gloating over the fact we have sinned. True love does not rejoice in unrighteousness (I Corinthians 13:6). And the best friend you have is the one who will not shirk from telling you the truth about your actions (Galatians 4:6).

Samuel met Saul and pointed out Saul’s sin of not smiting the Amalekites, and not utterly destroying all that they had (I Samuel 15:3). Saul at first

greeted Samuel with, “*Blessed be thou of Jehovah: I have performed the commandment of Jehovah*” (I Samuel 15:13). Samuel logically controverted Saul’s assessment with, “*What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear*” (I Samuel 15:14). Samuel further exposed Saul’s sin as being as serious as “witchcraft,” and stubbornness toward God as committing “idolatry and teraphim” (I Samuel 15:23).

What was Samuel doing behind the scenes of the difficult job of convicting Saul of his sins? When God told him that Saul was being rejected from being king, Samuel “*was wroth; and he cried unto Jehovah all night*” (I Samuel 15:10). He did not rejoice in Saul being dethroned. After pointing out Saul’s sin to him, Samuel “*came no more to see Saul until the day of his death; for Samuel mourned for Saul*” (I Samuel 15:35).

Jeremiah pointed out the sins of his own people, pleading with them to see the consequences of their own ways. He chagrins, “*...the prophets prophesy falsely,*

*and the priests bear rule by their own means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?*” (Jeremiah 5:31). Looking at sin’s consequences, Jeremiah says, “*the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved*” (Jeremiah 8:20). With sadness he adds, “*Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people*” (Jeremiah 9:1).

Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, pointing out many sins from which they needed to turn. What was his attitude in doing this necessary work? Paul feared that “*...when I come my God should humble me before you, and I should mourn for many of them that have sinned heretofore, and repented not of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they committed*” (2 Corinthians 12:21).

Godly people, like Samuel, Jeremiah and Paul mourned for the sinners, even when they had to expose sin to those who transgressed God’s law. May sin always cause us to mourn for the sinner!