

GLAD TIDINGS

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

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“...NOT EXTINCT at this DAY ”

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Jlavus Josephus was a Jewish historian who lived in the first century, and witnessed first hand the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. In his *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus wrote a brief account of Jesus Christ and his works. In speaking of Christ's followers, the report states, “and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day” (XVIII, iii, 3).

Modern scholars have discredited this paragraph in Josephus' *Antiquities* as being “wholly a Christian interpolation” or, being “worked over by Christian hands”. It reports as fact the resurrection of Jesus on the third day, and that he is “the Christ”. It is such a glorious account of Jesus, that some cannot accept the report coming from one who was a Jew of the priestly Hasmonean descent. Instead, they believe that some Christian wrote it entirely, or at least worked over the account so readers should not consider it as genuine.

Whether Josephus or a Christian interpolator wrote this paragraph in the *Antiquities*, the statement of not being extinct pro-

vokes thought. It implies that Christianity could become extinct. Is this true? What would have to occur for Christianity to go by the way of the dinosaur?

Christianity could become extinct if the gospel of Christ would fade away. But God assures us that such will never happen. The word or gospel of Christ is the incorruptible seed by which we have been begotten as Christians (I Peter 2:23). Peter adds, “All flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: But the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you.” (I Peter 1:24-25). Time, nor skeptics have been able to completely erode or destroy the word of the Lord.

Christianity could become extinct, if people ceased to follow Christ by submitting to His word. Jesus said, “Why call ye me Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say?” (Lk. 6:46). Paul wrote to people who were “removing from Him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel” (Galatians 1:6). He also exhorted Christians to “let your man-

ner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ...” (Philippians 1:27). The gospel, with no additions or subtractions, is designed to be the sole standard for the life of the Christian. True Christianity could become extinct, even when people who call themselves Christians are abundant in number.

Christianity could become extinct if Christians of one generation do not teach a younger generation. Theoretically, a generation could convert every member of their generation to Christ, and then see Christianity die with them if a younger generation is not also converted to the Lord. True Christians will be diligent in bringing up their children in “the chastening and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Like Lois and Eunice, Christians will be instructing their young children the Scriptures, so they can develop their faith in Christ (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15-17).

Christianity will not become extinct on earth as long as we follow the pure gospel of Christ, and teach our children and neighbors the saving gospel.