

Glad Tidings

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

Vol. XXXI

August 22, 2021

No. 35

Joy in Heaven...knowing loved ones are in Hell?

By (Jerry Fite)

Joy in heaven is anticipated by Christians. We rejoice now in our suffering for the cause of Christ, knowing that we have a “great reward” awaiting us “in heaven” (*Matthew 5:11-12*). The thought of entering heaven while hearing, “*Well done, good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of the Lord*” is ultimate joy. The eternal God, my Creator and Savior, is pleased with my life and welcoming me into His eternal abode of Heaven (*Matthew 25:21,23*). Heaven is the place of eternal joy!

Knowing feelings and memories are strong even after we die (*Luke 16: 23-24, 25, 28*), how can we rejoice in heaven when our loved ones are not in Heaven but must be in Hell? How can we have eternal joy in Heaven when those dear to us in life are eternally lost in Hell?

When the tabernacle of God is with men, the first things will have passed away. God, in this new abode for the Saved, will be with them, dwell with them, and be their God. John then encourages us with these words: “...and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away” (*Revelation 21:1-4*).

The Holy Spirit guides John to instruct God’s people in matters pertaining to eternity when life on earth has ended. One thing that ends is that “*death is no more.*” This is physical death when the body and spirit are separated (*cf. James 2:26*) We know before entering Heaven, our spirits and our changed glorified bodies must be united (*2 Corinthians 5:3-4, 1 Corinthians 15:50-53*). This is when death is swallowed up in victory (*1 Corinthians 15:54*). In heaven we cannot die (*Luke 20:36*). In other words, death is no more.

So, does this mean that “spiritual death” is no more? Separation from God is going to be forever with no positive end for those in Hell (*cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:11, Mark 9:48-50*). Eternal separation from God in Hell, yet united with a body could still be a reason that kills our joy in Heaven if a loved one is eternally decaying in the fires of Hell (*Matthew 10:28*).

But John informs us that God shall “*wipe away every tear*” from our eyes. “Pain,” “mourning,” and “crying” which cause the tears will not occur “any more.” While physical pain will be no more, mourning and crying will also be no more. Do we mourn and cry only when we go to a funeral, or have chronic leg and back pains? Did not Paul shed tears in love, when

affected by the spiritual condition of Corinthian Christians (*2 Corinthians 2:4*)? Every tear shed by crying in mourning and pain will be no more. Would this not include the issue at hand: our loved ones lost in Hell?

We know the physical relationship of marriage is only for this world. Jesus said, “...*they that are accounted worthy to attain unto that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage*” (*Luke 20:35*). In our glorified state the physical desires are no longer needing to be satisfied. While not needing marriage, how many still think you will know your spouse as your husband or wife in intimate terms you shared together on earth? The physical first things have passed away when we enter heaven. Could the eternal glorified state be so bright and joyous that our joy in Heaven is not affected by physical relationships we had on earth? Nothing is allowed to keep us rejoicing, right (*Philippians 4:4*)? Does this not include being estranged from members of our family? (*Matthew 10:34-37*).

God has promised us joy in heaven. How He fulfills that promise when our loved ones are in Hell is with Him. I trust Him to fulfill His promise perfectly. Do you, when asking this question? There will be no tears in Heaven!