# Glad Tidings

"And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers…" (Acts 13:32)

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# How much Bible characterizes your life?

(Jerry Fite)

Becoming a Christian demands change. We die to the old man living in sin and put on the new man that is being molded by the Gospel in Christ. Therefore, we determine to not be "fashioned" according to this world, but embrace the "transformation" that comes through the "renewing of the mind *(Roman 12:2)*. This change to the new man is "created in righteousness and holiness of truth" *(Ephesians 4:24)*. Being changed by any other standard is foolish and vain.

In the Gospel , we have before us the authoritative source and the general parameters for patterning our change in this new life as a Christian. The question worth examining is: exactly what does this look like when detailed in real life?

An early second century letter written in Greek gives us an insight into how the Christian was viewed by others shortly after the New Testament was completed, and the original twelve apostles had passed from this life. Here is an excerpt from the *Letter to Diognetus:*

"…The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all [others]; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonoured, and yet in their very dishonour are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honour; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life; they are assailed by the Jews as foreigners, and are persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred."

The author is anonymous and the recipient, "Diognetus" – (God-born), has not been historically identified. The letter however boils up with apologetic fervor in favor of the Christian life. Some may praise the writing for its insight into the variegated features of the Christian life. But what is more impressive is how much distinctive Scripture lies behind the descriptive details.

Reading again the excerpt, one can insert "I Cor. 2:13" after "merely human doctrines." Continuing to digest the particulars, one can pause at "simply as sojourners" and reference "Jn. 17:15-17, I Pet. 2:11" We can pause again when reading of marriage and place "Hebrews 13:4" as applicable. Where would you insert 1 Tim. 6:18, Phil. 3:20, Rom. 13:1-7, 2 Cor. 6:8-10, 1Pet. 2:12, and 1 Pet. 3:16? Describing the Christian's life in terms of distinctive Scripture is refreshing and winsome.