



**“Good
Tidings
of
Great Joy”**

**Berean Series
Bible Studies**

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE

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“Good Tidings of Great Joy”

“Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord”— Luke 2:10,11.

Good tidings of great joy being heard and understood by all people can be appreciated from the standpoint of everyone being offered lasting life through belief in the sacrifice of Him who was born as the Babe of Bethlehem, in the city of David as the Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

If every member of the human family is going to appreciate to the full “good tidings of great joy”, it will be when they grasp the fact that the Saviour is able to provide **lasting life** for them, when they believe fully in Him. We say lasting life, because no one wants to die. People want to live, and when all people learn that Christ is the Life Giver, the Giver of lasting life—not like the life we’ve got today—to all who believe in Him, they’ll say—“that’s the best news we’ve ever heard, and it is indeed good tidings of great joy.”

In John 10: 10,11, it is recorded of Jesus —“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” We also have Jesus’ words—“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead (though he die), yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth (then) and believeth in me shall never die”—John 11: 25,26. When we grasp the fact, that people will never die, they will go on living forever, to God’s praise, we can see that man was never intended to die in the Garden of Eden. Had mankind remained obedient to God, the Garden of Eden would have been extended throughout the wide world as the human family increased, and people would have lived forever, just as God intended. And **mankind will live forever!**

When Jesus was born as the young child, one of the saddest events recorded throughout the Bible is that of the slaying of all the young children in Bethlehem, by Herod, as stated in Matt. 2: 16-18. In these verses in Matthew we have merely the record of that sad event, but the prophet Jeremiah

was used of God, many years earlier, to give us one of the most beautiful of records of resurrected life for all those young children, because the Babe of Bethlehem, even Jesus, whom Herod hoped to destroy as a child, died for them 33½ years later on the cross. And in dying for all those children whom Herod slew, Jesus also died for every human being who has ever lived, or who shall yet live throughout the world, in accord with the assurance that “Christ tasted death for every man”—every man, woman and child throughout this planet earth.

Quoting from the prophet Jeremiah respecting the hope of life for the slain children of Bethlehem, we read—“Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border”—Jer. 31: 15-17.

“Thy children shall come again to their own border.” What a lovely thought. “Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears.” Yes, this is the prophecy recorded so long ago to be fulfilled in due time, because Jesus was protected by God, being sent away to Egypt, and when grown to manhood sacrificed His life for all those children, and for all mankind in every country under the sun.

Turning to the prophecy of Isaiah 9: 6,7, our Lord is first of all depicted as a child, and then the great Saviour and Deliverer of all mankind. We read—“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” All those titles beautifully depict the great work to be done by our Lord in His glorious kingdom from on high. “The everlasting Father”—to give life to all humanity down here on the earth. Our Lord is not the father of His own associates, His own Bride, the Heavenly Father being the father of the Church, but Christ will be the everlasting Father of all the world of mankind, as revealed in Psa. 2: 8—“Ask of

me (Jehovah), and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” “Ask of me”—there is a certain time when mankind will be given to Christ. Verse 7 of Isa. 9 continues—“Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end”—it is going to last forever. “Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” The zeal, the authority, the mighty power of Jehovah has given assurance that this will be carried out—“of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.”

When thinking of the time when all mankind are being resurrected back to life “from the land of enemy”, death, we instinctively think of Isaiah 35, the lovely chapter describing “the restitution of all things”, not only of the restoration of mankind from death, but also the restoration of this planet earth to the paradise conditions pictured in the Garden of Eden. Verses 1 and 2 read—“The wilderness and the solitary place

shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing.” Then verse 10 is particularly applicable to our subject— “And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” Doesn’t that thrill our hearts when we read prophecies of this kind? How many of mankind are included in the term, the “ransomed of the Lord”? Paul tells us “that Christ gave himself a ransom for all”—a corresponding price for all. “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” So the ransomed of the Lord coming forth from death means every human being that has ever lived, and will yet live before the kingdom is established. That means there is no forgotten person in God’s great salvation. See Rom. 5: 19. It will be seen that the “many” are the same in each instance. The many were made sinners through the disobedience of one (Adam), and the same many shall be made righteous by the one man’s (Christ’s) obedience, when they believe in

Him. It will be noted also in verse 10 that the ransomed of the Lord shall return with “songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.” Doesn’t that sound like the fulfilment of the angel’s message at the birth of Jesus—“Good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people”? It surely does! “And they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away”, never more to plague humanity. “When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness”, and being obedient to the laws of the Lord’s kingdom, they will go on to live forever, to God’s praise.

Turning to Isaiah 25: 6-9, we have a very wonderful prophecy, revealing again from the prophet of God this wonderful salvation provided through Christ Jesus our Lord. Quoting in part, we read—“And in this mountain (kingdom) shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things...And he will destroy in this kingdom the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations”—the vail of ignorance; the people will have the clear light of the knowledge of truth. “He

will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it.” There is nothing surer than that—swallowing up death in victory; wiping away tears from off all faces. “And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

The 4th chapter of Micah also tells us in varied language the same glorious truth that “good tidings of great joy shall be to all people”, despite world distress and perplexity at the present time. Man of course will learn the great lesson that of himself he can do *absolutely nothing to bring peace and happiness* to this world, but the Lord has the situation well in hand, and man’s extremity will be God’s opportunity to bring order and blessing out of chaos. See Micah 4: 1-4. These words of the prophet, God’s words, will be abundantly fulfilled. “...the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” What a beautiful thought! Zion is the heavenly kingdom, comprising Christ and His Church, the Church selected

from the world of mankind during this Gospel Age—those who walk in the steps of the Master gladly, joyfully, those who consider it a privilege so to do. These with Christ are the Zion of the Lord, from which the law goes forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. “And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off”—He will rebuke those that do not come into line with the laws of the kingdom then being instituted and operative. “And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” What a wonderful prophecy that is! If people could get the spirit of these prophecies into their *hearts now, what a tremendous help that* would be when the trouble in the world increases, to know that just beyond the great distress and perplexity lies this wonderful kingdom of God. “Neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.” God has thus sealed it to be sure, for all time.

In reference to the Word of the Lord going forth from Jerusalem, we have a helpful pro-

phesy in Jeremiah 31, from verse 27, where the Lord, through the prophet, explains the breaking down of Israel, then adds—“so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord.” The Lord thus promised to build again Israel, because the Word of the Lord is to go forth from Jerusalem. Verses 29 and 30 follow—“In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children’s teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die (who does die) for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.” This shows that God will not compel members of the human race to obey and receive lasting life if they do not accept it on God’s terms, but it will not be because of the fathers eating the sour grape that their teeth will be set on edge, as formerly; it will be because the individuals are disobedient that any who “will not hear (obey) that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people”—Acts 3: 23.

Following on in Jer. 31 from verse 31 we read—“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of

Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt... But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.” After what days? After the days when the Lord “regarded them not”—Heb. 8: 9—during this Gospel Age, when Israel was cast off from the high calling opportunity, and the Gentiles were received into God’s favour, to make up the Bride of Christ. Then verse 34 reads—“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Doesn’t that sound like “good tidings of great joy to all people”? It surely does! What a gracious Heavenly Father we have who will provide all these rich blessings in the kingdom for everyone who will be obedient, not only for Israel but for all the families of the earth, as

God promised to Abraham—"In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Then, in the New Testament, we have the same message presented by the Apostle Paul, in Romans 11. Israel was cast off from God's favour during this Gospel Age, when God "regarded them not", but this was temporary, as we read—"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall (completely)? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead"—Rom. 11: 1,2,7,11,15. What shall the receiving of Israel be? If they were cast away for the salvation of the world, meaning, the opportunity for the heavenly calling to go to the world, the Gentile nations, what shall the receiving back of Israel be, but life from the dead. Then verses 25 to 32 of Rom. 11—"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your

own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in"—until the Bride of Christ is complete. "And so all Israel shall be saved"—for the earthly kingdom—"as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins"—the new covenant of Jeremiah 31. "As concerning the gospel"—the heavenly calling—"they are enemies for your sakes"—you Gentile Christians—"but as touching the election"—to be the chief nation of earth—"they are beloved for the fathers'sakes." Thinking of Israel today, "they are beloved for the fathers' sakes" particularly; not for their sakes, as they depend upon their military might. Those fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the faithful prophets are to be resurrected to be "princes in all the earth"—Psa. 45: 16—to lead and guide Israel in the wonderful earthly kingdom that will be established not only for the benefit of Israel, but for the blessing of all the families of the earth. "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so

have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.” God is indeed a wonderful, merciful Heavenly Father, and He requires Christ’s followers to be merciful also, because the Church will extend mercy to Israel, and Israel will be required to extend mercy to all nations of the world, to bring them also into the kingdom blessings, under the Lord’s direction and guidance.

With reference to “life from the dead” for Israel, and ultimately all mankind, the prophet Ezekiel, chapter 37, gives us a beautiful illustration of the resurrection hope of the future. From verse 1, then from verse 11, we read—“The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones. Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold O my people, I will open your graves, and

cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves. And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord." Could there be anything more beautifully expressed regarding the restoration of Israel, raising them up from the dead, not only literally, but the dead condition of their hearts and minds, when the Lord's new covenant is made with them and the spirit of the Lord is at work. God's spirit will then be "poured out upon all flesh", as it is now poured out only upon God's servants and handmaidens.

The words of our Lord, as we would expect, confirm all the wonderful prophecies of the Old Testament. In John 5: 28,29 He declared—"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life (Christ's Bride for the heavenly kingdom); and they that have done evil, unto

the resurrection of judgment”—all mankind for the earthly kingdom. “When the Lord’s judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness”—Isa. 26: 9. “He (God) hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead”—Acts 17: 31.

Do we not rejoice in these wonderful promises in respect of the glorious hope of “good tidings of great joy to all people”—not only to a few, not only to the people living when the kingdom comes, but to everyone who has ever lived, because Christ tasted death for them. Christ tasted death for the children slain at the time of His own birth, and for all such dreadful happenings throughout the world God will recompense the parents, the children, and all who have lost loved ones. They will “come again from the land of the enemy”, death, and they will come with “songs and everlasting joy upon their heads”, to life everlasting, by obedience to the laws of the kingdom, to the praise of God, because Christ Jesus “by the grace of God, tasted death for every man.”

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