

Great Joy

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In Jude 24, the NASB reads: Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with **great joy**. When Christ returns, those who have been faithful will have great joy! The joy has many depths to it.

Firstly, it will be a time of joy for the saints. Unlike here on this earth, there will no longer be death, pain, sorrow. Infirmities will be healed and heartache will no longer be here. The temptation of sin will be no longer pull at the saints to take them away from God. There will be no more need to endure until the end, for the reward has come. Those who have died in the Lord will be brought back and the “family” will be together forever more. They will also have the joy of being with Christ and the Father for eternity. (cf. Revelation 20-22; Matthew 8:11-12; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Thess. 4:17)

Secondly, it will be a time of joy for Christ. His saving work will have been completed. The goal of seeking and saving the lost will be done, and those who have obeyed will be saved. He, as the Head, will also be joined with His body, which is the church. Remember that Christ is the head of all things to the church, His body. The church is the redeemed ones, that is His people or the “fullness” of Christ. Where the head goes, the body must follow. The head is currently in heavenly glory and when this day of joy comes, all His people will be together forever. (Cf. Hebrews 9:28; Colossians 3:1-4; Ephesians 1:22-23)

Thirdly, it will be a time of joy for God the Father. His eternal purpose that was planned before the world began will be culminated in the glory of His people. In the mind of God, the end is as near as the beginning, so He spoke of this final state as a fact. (Romans 8:28-30). He will have the saved as the prize of His work. While His people are gaining their inheritance, He too gains for eternity. His people are with Him forever. He will demonstrate the great love for His people throughout eternal ages, because of the perfecting work of His Son. (Cf. Ephesians 1:18, 2:7)

Fourthly, it will be a time of great joy for the angels. They did not understand God's purpose through past ages although they desired to gain that insight. They have seen what God's intentions were — to redeem and transform those who sin into the image of the Son. They see this in action in the work of the church and those who enter in as God's people. When Christ returns, the angels will accompany Him and will then rejoice in the end result of Christ's Salvation. We see glimpses of their joy when it is described over rejoicing in heaven when one lost one repents. The joy they will experience on the final day will be a joy shared by many others. (Cf. 1 Peter 1:12; Ephesians 3:10; 1 Thess. 1:6-7, 4:16-17)

A story is told that Teddy Roosevelt returned home from an abroad trip. On the ship was an older missionary also headed for the United States. At the dock a large group of people awaited Mr. Roosevelt with flowers, signs, and loud cries of cheer. Not one person awaited the missionary at the dock. Mr. Roosevelt tried to offer a word of encouragement afraid the older man would be discouraged at the scene. The missionary smiled and replied, "Don't feel sorry for me, you see I'm not home yet."

The day of the Lord's return will be a day of great joy for the saints, the Son, the Father, and the angels. When Christ returns, all His people will go home. What a joyous sight that'll be. It will not be joyous for everyone, however. Those who have fallen asleep and not kept watch will be overtaken. Those who have strived against the Spirit instead of against the flesh will not be joyous. Those who have failed to obey the written words will wish for a moment more to obey, but the time will be up. And Satan and his angels will not be joyous either for they too will be cast into eternal destruction.

For their side, it will not be a joyous day at all. It will rather be a nightmare that will never end.

Thought to Consider

We all await for something. Whether it be a package, news from the doctor, or someone to return. We find ourselves constantly on the watch for something. Are we watching for the day that will end all others? Are we looking to a joyous reunion? —**CW**