

## Occasional Update #4

Monday 4 July 2022

### THE JOY OF THE LORD      Nehemiah 8:9-12

9 Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people, said to all the people, "**This day is holy** to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the Law.

10 Then Nehemiah said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink sweet wine, and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for **this day is holy** to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for **The joy of the LORD is your strength!**

11 So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, "Be quiet, for **this day is holy**; do not be grieved."

12 And all the people went their way to eat, and drink, and send portions, and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

Background: The Israelites had disobeyed the Lord and when Ezra read the Law (commandments) to them, they realised their guilt, and being convicted of their wrongdoing, they grieved over their sins. The above verses describe what Nehemiah said, and the people did.

### JESUS, PIONEER AND PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH      Hebrews 12:1-2

Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, *looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith*, who for the sake of **The joy that was set before Him**, endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

'For the joy that was set before Him', Jesus *endured* the cross, *disregarded* its shame, and subsequently took His seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Jesus endured because He saw –

- Hundreds of millions of people receiving forgiveness through His shed blood, and being washed clean from their sins.
- People born again by the Holy Spirit, and their lives dramatically changed for good.
- His followers – following Him – the only Way, Truth, and Life.
- Their eternal life, with Him in glory – forever!
- People of faith, hope and love – serving Him, and the people around them.
- The joy of our salvation – bought for the price of His death for us, but resurrected too!

The word JOY occurs 58 times in the New Testament. REJOICE occurs 44 times.

JOY is a noun – something God *gives* us ("**the joy** of the Lord") – a gift from God.

REJOICE is a verb – something we *do* because of the joy God has given to us, in spite of circumstances and difficulties.

In the book of Psalms, the words "joy" or "rejoice" occur 77 times – for example:  
"**This is the day that the Lord has made; let us *rejoice*, and be *glad* in it**" (Psalm 118:24)

Peter, in his first letter, wrote, "*Rejoice*, insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also *be glad* and *shout for joy* when His glory is revealed. (1 Peter 4:13)

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## FOR PRAYER AND MEDITATION

- **Have you ever woken up in the morning and feel you can't face the day?** Let the joy of the Lord be your strength! Rejoice means to have joy again. Let us rejoice and be glad in it – in spite of ... [*whatever*]
- Pray for, and receive, the joy He gives in both easy, as well as difficult, circumstances.
- Ephesians 5:2 "... live in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Think about this – and rejoice in who He is, and what He has done for us.
- What has Jesus done for us, that we can rejoice in – Today? Yesterday? Last week? The past year? Let us Rejoice and give Thanks.

### GOD'S WORD – FOOD FOR SPIRITUAL MEDITATION, JOY, and REJOICING

**Psalm 66:1-2** Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth; sing the glory of His name; give to Him glorious praise.

66:3-4 Say to God, "How awesome are Your deeds! Because of Your great power, Your enemies cringe before You. All the earth worships You; they sing praises to You, sing praises to Your name."

66:5 Come and see what God has done: He is awesome in His deeds among people.

66:6-7 He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot. There we rejoiced in Him, who rules by His might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the nations – let the rebellious not exalt themselves.

66:8-9 Bless our God, O peoples, let the sound of His praise be heard, He who has kept us among the living, and has not let our feet slip.

**Psalm 5:11-12** Let all who take refuge in You rejoice; let them ever sing for joy. Spread Your protection over them, so that those who love Your name may exult in You. For You bless the righteous, O LORD; You cover them with favour as with a shield.

**Psalm 32:11** Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.

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