

When We Lose a Loved One

A message of hope from the Bible

Why did the person we loved have to die?

Why do people die? It is sometimes said that it is natural for people to grow old and die, but millions of people die before they grow old.

The Bible teaches that death is the penalty for sin, Adam's disobedience in the Garden of Eden.

Knowing that by heredity we are all members of a dying race helps us to realise that death is not an individual punishment for personal wrongs, either upon the one who has died or upon those who remain.

What has happened to our loved one?

The Bible teaches that death is like sleep. Jesus Himself said this of Lazarus (John 11:11, 14) and of a young girl (Matthew 9:18, 23-26).

Death is likened to sleep because the two states share two main characteristics. The first is that those who are asleep are not conscious, and are unaware of what is happening in the world around them. Those who have died are similarly unaware, as the Bible tells us in Ecclesiastes 9:5, *"For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing."*

The second shared characteristic is that there is the expectation of an awakening and a return to active life again, as John writes, *"... for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his (Jesus') voice and come out ..."* (John 5:28, 29)

Will we ever see our loved one again?

Certainly we will. God has promised that He will restore to life all who have ever lived on the earth. Jesus told us to pray for God's will to be done on earth, as it is in Heaven (Matthew 6:10).

God's promise to the human race is of a world order of peace, security and happiness under the rulership of His King, Jesus Christ. God has promised that He *"will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."* (Revelation 21:4).

It is difficult to imagine a world in which there is no pain or death, but God has promised that it shall be so, and Christians believe His promise and take heart. As you read these promises you also may take heart, because you will see your loved ones again, nevermore to be parted from them because of the power God has given to His Son, Jesus Christ.

We can trust the Bible

Many people have tried and are still trying to discredit the Bible and its claims. Such opposition was foretold by God in the Bible, saying *".. you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires."* (2 Peter 3:3).

Jesus Himself prophesied that *"on the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity ... men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world."*(Luke 21:25,26). A more accurate description of the current world situation would be difficult to find.

The Heavenly Promise

The promise to members of the human race is that they will be restored to life again to continue living forever on this earth.

There is, however, a special promise to Christian believers in this present Gospel Age to be changed from human beings to spirit beings. The promise is only to a *"little flock"* (Luke 12:32). The promise is by invitation to qualify by faith and obedience to be changed from a human existence to a spirit existence, and to assist God's King, Jesus Christ, in the future work of blessing all nations and all families of the earth (Genesis 12:3; 22:18; Hebrews 6:13-18; Galatians 3:8,16; 1 Corinthians 15:49).

Anyone is eligible to qualify by faith and obedience to God through Jesus Christ to become members of this *"little flock"* for as long as this Gospel Age lasts.

What can we do?

We can grieve in our loss. It is natural to do so (Ecclesiastes 3:4). We can comfort one another in sorrow, and be at peace. *"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, or mourning or crying or pain"* (Revelation 21:4).

We can wait in peace for the sure and certain hope of the fulfilment of God's promise that we will one day be reunited with our loved ones in an age of true justice, peace and security, the *"new heavens and a new earth"*, the new world order promised by God (2 Peter 3:13).

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