

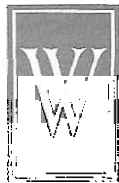


Grief/Loss

DEALING WITH LOSS AND GRIEF

H. NORMAN WRIGHT

(Isaiah 53: 3, 4)



EXPERIENCING LOSS

Whether it's loss of a job, friends, home, status, a loved one, or a pet, all people experience loss in one way or another, to one degree or another. Loss can make us bitter or better. Unfortunately, no one likes to talk about it very much. People seem to have an unspoken agreement with others not to talk about their losses. At times, they are not even aware of some of their losses, for the effect of the loss is very minor. Other losses, however, are felt very deeply and affect them for a lifetime. How people respond to their losses and how they allow those losses to affect them can make a difference for the rest of their lives.

Whenever loss occurs, it is important to see it in the correct perspective so they can understand the full impact of what has happened. They must identify how the current loss impacts their present lives, as well as its effect on their thoughts about the future. Loss is not the enemy, but avoiding or ignoring a loss is. Trying to avoid a loss by hiding the feelings will only cause problems in other areas—emotionally, spiritually, or physically. Dealing with loss in a healthy manner can be a major avenue to growth and life-transforming change. With each loss comes the potential for growth, insight, and understanding. Since these results are not immediate, people often fail to see these future blessings. But they must move forward. And the way to move on is to grieve.

EXPERIENCING GRIEF

Grief is defined as "intense emotional suffering caused by loss, disaster, misfortune, etc.; deep sadness." The word is derived from a Latin verb meaning "to burden." *Mourn* is defined as "to feel and express sorrow." Mourning is the expression of grief.

Grieving is like entering the valley of shadows. Grief is not fun. It is painful. It

is work. It is a lingering process, often taking one to three years for significant losses. It is necessary, however, in order to deal with all kinds of loss in a healthy manner. A multitude of emotions are involved in the grief process. Many of these emotions seem to conflict with one another. With loss can come bitterness, emptiness, numbness, apathy, love, guilt, sadness, fear, disorientation, self-pity, and helplessness. When people grieve, they experience their loss psychologically through feelings, thoughts, and attitudes, socially as they interact with others, and physically as it affects their health.

Grief encompasses a number of changes. It appears differently at various times, and it comes and goes in people's lives. It is a normal, predictable, expected, and healthy reaction to a loss. Grief is each individual's personal experience and manner of dealing with any kind of loss—no matter how minor or severe it may appear to others.

Grief is not just an event; it is a process. Grief has several stages, although they are not necessarily experienced in exact order, nor does one stage have to be completed before a person moves on to the next stage. The first stage is *denial* or shock.

Inter
her
tions
may
they
form
ever
beco
what
for a
tling
beat
blan
vent
and
Oft
as th
in lig
cept
lives
with
impo
key
learn
truly
In
frien
port
these
to ex
emo
frien
who
and
BIBL
The B
and g
well
can g
griev
P
who
ow o
mour
To Lea
person

Intellectually, the bereaved may comprehend what has happened, but their emotions may not experience the pain yet; they may feel numb. The second stage is when they can *release* their emotions, often in the form of anger toward others. They may even get angry with God. Grieving people become preoccupied with memories of what has been lost and they may withdraw for a time. The third stage involves wrestling with feelings of *guilt and anger*. They beat themselves up emotionally as they blame themselves for not somehow preventing the loss. They feel disorganized and don't know how to move on with life. Often some level of depression may set in as they become more apathetic toward life in light of the loss. The fourth stage is *acceptance* of the loss. Reorganizing their lives, filling new roles, and reconnecting with those around them are all healthy and important facets of the healing process. A key part of this process is the ability to learn how to feel and express the pain more truly without denial and avoidance.

It helps for grieving people to have true friends who will stay with them and support them emotionally. It is important for these friends to allow the grieving person to experience all of the different intense emotions of the grieving process. Such friendships will ultimately help the person who has experienced the loss to reorganize and reconnect with the world.

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

The Bible has much to say about both loss and grief. People who experience loss, as well as those who come alongside them, can gain wisdom to help them through the grieving process.

Psalms 23 tells of God comforting those who walk through the "valley of the shadow of death." During the darkest hours of mourning, God never abandons His peo-

ple. Isaiah 53 describes the suffering of our Savior. He experienced loss and grief so that He could understand our humanity and die in our place. He was despised and rejected, "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Is. 53:3, 5).

Although loss and grief are common, no amount of technology or experience can make the grieving process any easier. The hard news is that the only road to true healing is through the grief process. The good news is that God travels that road with us.

FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about the issue of grief/loss include:

- > Ruth 1:5-22
- > **Ecclesiastes 3:4**
- > Isaiah 61:1-3
- > Jeremiah 31:12, 13
- > John 14:1; 16:16-22
- > 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
- > 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on grief/loss at John 11:35-44 on page 1391. See also the personality profile of Job's wife on page 640.

THE SIN-BEARING SERVANT

Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently;
 He shall be exalted and extolled and be
 very high.
 Just as many were astonished at you,
 So His visage was marred more than any
 man,
 And His form more than the sons of men;
 15 So shall He sprinkle^a many nations.
 Kings shall shut their mouths at Him;
 For what had not been told them they
 shall see,
 And what they had not heard they shall
 consider.

53 Who has believed our report?
 And to whom has the arm of the
 LORD been revealed?
 For He shall grow up before Him as a
 tender plant,
 And as a root out of dry ground.
 He has no form or comeliness;
 And when we see Him,
 There is no beauty that we should desire
 Him.
 He is despised and rejected by men,
 A Man of sorrows and acquainted with
 grief.
 And we hid, as it were, our faces from
 Him;
 He was despised, and we did not esteem
 Him.

Surely He has borne our griefs
 And carried our sorrows;
 Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
 Smitten by God, and afflicted.
 5 But He *was* wounded for our
 transgressions,
 He *was* bruised for our iniquities;
 The chastisement for our peace *was*
 upon Him,

And by His stripes we are healed.
 6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
 We have turned, every one, to his own
 way;
 And the LORD has laid on Him the
 iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and He was
 afflicted,
 Yet He opened not His mouth;
 He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,
 And as a sheep before its shearers is
 silent,
 So He opened not His mouth.
 He was taken from prison and from
 judgment,
 And who will declare His generation?
 For He was cut off from the land of the
 living;
 For the transgressions of My people He
 was stricken.
 And they^a made His grave with the
 wicked—
 But with the rich at His death,
 Because He had done no violence,
 Nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;
 He has put *Him* to grief.
 When You make His soul an offering for
 sin,
 He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong
 His days,
 And the pleasure of the LORD shall
 prosper in His hand.
 11 He shall see the labor of His soul,^a and
 be satisfied.

52:15 ^aOr *startle* 53:9 ^aLiterally *he* or *He*
 53:11 ^aFollowing Masoretic Text, Targum, and
 Vulgate; Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint read *From*
the labor of His soul He shall see light.

SOUL NOTE



Borne Our Griefs (53:3, 4) Isaiah's words communicate the suffering of the One who loved us and died for us. Jesus received God's punishment for our sin so that we could have peace with God (Rom. 5:1). We are healed because Jesus was wounded. He carried our sorrows so that we could find hope. No one will ever love us like Christ loves us, because no one has ever done for us what He has done. In our deepest moments of grief and loss, we need only look to Him on the Cross and realize that He understands. He alone can heal the wounded heart. **Topic: Grief/Loss**

know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

²⁶And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

²⁷She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

JESUS AND DEATH, THE LAST ENEMY

²⁸And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." ²⁹As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came to Him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was^a in the place where Martha met Him. ³¹Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."^a

³²Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

³³Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. ³⁴And He said, "Where have you laid him?"

They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

³⁵Jesus wept. ³⁶Then the Jews said, "See how

He loved him!"

³⁷And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

³⁸Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days."

^{11:30} ^aNU-Text adds *still*. ^{11:31} ^aNU-Text reads *supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there*.

KEY PASSAGE

HE UNDERSTANDS

(11:35-44)



Grief/Loss

Because of sin, death comes to all (Rom. 5:12-14). Many try to ignore death, not wanting to think or talk about it. But feared or embraced, expected or not, death still occurs. The death of a loved one evokes many emotions: fear, sorrow, grief, anger, and a great sense of loss. Jesus experienced those emotions at the death of His good friend Lazarus. The fact that Jesus raised Lazarus back to life does not erase the reality of His compassion and sorrow. Jesus understands grief. He knows the pain of loss and uncontrollable sorrow. He knows the incredible power of death. In fact, He took on that power and defeated it through His death and resurrection.

It is natural to feel sad and mourn the death of a loved one. We deeply miss the close relationship we had with that person. But in our times of sorrow, we can let Jesus hold us in His compassionate arms, knowing that He understands.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about grief/loss on pages 940, 941. See also the personality profile of Job's wife on page 640.

JOB DEPLORES HIS BIRTH

3 After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his *birth*. ²And Job spoke, and said:

- ³ "May the day perish on which I was born,
And the night *in which* it was said,
'A male child is conceived.'
⁴ May that day be darkness;
May God above not seek it,
Nor the light shine upon it.
⁵ May darkness and the shadow of death
claim it;
May a cloud settle on it;
May the blackness of the day terrify it.
⁶ As for that night, may darkness seize it;
May it not rejoice^a among the days of
the year,
May it not come into the number of the
months.
⁷ Oh, may that night be barren!
May no joyful shout come into it!
⁸ May those curse it who curse the day,
Those who are ready to arouse
Leviathan.

- ⁹ May the stars of its morning be dark;
May it look for light, but *have* none,
And not see the dawning of the day;
¹⁰ Because it did not shut up the doors of
my *mother's* womb,
Nor hide sorrow from my eyes.
¹¹ "Why did I not die at birth?
Why did I not perish when I came from
the womb?
¹² Why did the knees receive me?
Or why the breasts, that I should nurse?
¹³ For now I would have lain still and been
quiet,
I would have been asleep;
Then I would have been at rest
¹⁴ With kings and counselors of the earth,
Who built ruins for themselves,
¹⁵ Or with princes who had gold,
Who filled their houses *with* silver;
¹⁶ Or *why* was I not hidden like a stillborn
child,

3:6 ^aSeptuagint, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate read *be joined*.

PERSONALITY PROFILE



Grief/Loss

JOB'S WIFE: LEARNING OF GOD AND GRIEF

(JOB 2)

Shattered by the loss of her children and her wealth, Job's wife was overwhelmed with grief and anger. As her husband agonized with the additional pain of boils all over his body, she lashed out at Job and his God. In essence, she said, "Still hanging on to that God of yours? Lots of good that is doing! Ending your life would be better than living in this misery." The Bible records her words, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9).

Such is the common reaction to suffering of those with no faith or awareness of God's higher purposes. While intense suffering can blind even the strongest believer to God's love and faithfulness, that blindness should only be temporary. Anger directed at God over the long term displays an unwillingness to trust His higher purposes. Anger denies both the sovereignty and the mercy of God.

Satan, the author of suffering, pain, grief, and loss, hopes to use these weapons to turn people away from God. With Job, Satan's plan didn't work. With Job's wife, however, it did. With people who understand that their lives are in God's hands, the suffering is no less intense, but the outcome is different. Instead of saying, "Curse God," they can say, "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). In the midst of brokenness, God is there, joins in our pain and sorrow, and shows that His heart is for each one of us.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about grief/loss on pages 940, 941. See also the key passage note at John 11:35-44 on page 1391.

¹⁷But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father."

JUDAH INTERCEDES FOR BENJAMIN

¹⁸Then Judah came near to him and said: "O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you *are* even like Pharaoh." ¹⁹My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' ²⁰And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of *his* old age, *who is* young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' ²¹Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' ²²And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for *if* he should leave his father, *his father* would die.' ²³But you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.'

²⁴"So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. ²⁵And our father said, 'Go back *and* buy us a little food.' ²⁶But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother *is* with us.' ²⁷Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; ²⁸and the one went out from me, and I said, 'Surely he is torn to pieces'; and I have not seen him since. ²⁹But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.'

³⁰"Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad *is* not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, ³¹it

will happen, when he sees that the lad *is* not with us, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. ³²For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him *back* to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.' ³³Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. ³⁴For how shall I go up to my father if the lad *is* not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"

JOSEPH REVEALED TO HIS BROTHERS

45 Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ²And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.

³Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I *am* Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. ⁴And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I *am* Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶For these two years the famine *has been* in the land, and *there are* still five years in which *there will be* neither plowing nor harvesting. ⁷And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. ⁸So now *it was* not you *who* sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

⁹"Hurry and go up to my father, and say to

SOUL NOTE



God Will Take Care of Them (44:30) Judah interceded for Benjamin, sobbing to Joseph that his father would die if Benjamin were not returned safely, because Jacob's life was "bound up in the lad's life." While parents must love and protect their children, to be "bound up" in a child's life will lead a parent to be overprotective. A parent who has lost a child may be especially protective of other children, trying to control their lives so as to avoid any more pain. But parents need to release their children, entrusting them to God's protection. **Topic: Grief/Loss**

THE REPORT OF SAUL'S DEATH

1 Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had stayed two days in Ziklag, ²on the third day, behold, it happened that a man came from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and dust on his head. So it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the ground and prostrated himself.

³And David said to him, "Where have you come from?"

So he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel."

⁴Then David said to him, "How did the matter go? Please tell me."

And he answered, "The people have fled from the battle, many of the people are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also."

⁵So David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead?"

⁶Then the young man who told him said, "As I happened by chance to be on Mount Gilboa, there was Saul, leaning on his spear; and indeed the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. ⁷Now when he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I am.' ⁸And he said to me, 'Who are you?' So I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.' ⁹He said to me again, 'Please stand over me and kill me, for anguish has come upon me, but my life still remains in me.' ¹⁰So I stood over him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown that was on his head and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them here to my lord."

¹¹Therefore David took hold of his own clothes and tore them, and so did all the men who were with him. ¹²And they mourned and

and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son, for the people of the LORD and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

¹³Then David said to the young man who told him, "Where are you from?"

And he answered, "I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite."

¹⁴So David said to him, "How was it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?" ¹⁵Then David called one of the young men and said, "Go near, and execute him!" And he struck him so that he died. ¹⁶So David said to him, "Your blood is on your own head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD's anointed.'"

THE SONG OF THE BOW

¹⁷Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son, ¹⁸and he told them to teach the children of Judah the Song of the Bow; indeed it is written in the Book of Jasher:

¹⁹ "The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places!

How the mighty have fallen!

²⁰ Tell it not in Gath,

Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon—

Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,

Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

²¹ "O mountains of Gilboa,
Let there be no dew nor rain upon you,
Nor fields of offerings.

For the shield of the mighty is cast away there!

The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.

SOUL NOTE



Express It (1:17) David expressed genuine grief over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. It seems natural that David would grieve Jonathan's death, for they had been best friends (1 Sam. 18:1). King Saul, however, had been hunting David, desiring to kill him (1 Sam. 19:1, 2). Yet David lamented the loss of Israel's king and prince. Expressing sorrow is a healthy response to grief. David poured out his sorrow in words that honored the anointed king and his son. Putting grief into words is a healthy way to handle the pain and honor those who have died. **Topic: Grief/Loss**

THE REPORT OF SAUL'S DEATH

1 Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had stayed two days in Ziklag, ²on the third day, behold, it happened that a man came from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and dust on his head. So it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the ground and prostrated himself.

³And David said to him, "Where have you come from?"

So he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel."

⁴Then David said to him, "How did the matter go? Please tell me."

And he answered, "The people have fled from the battle, many of the people are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also."

⁵So David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead?"

⁶Then the young man who told him said, "As I happened by chance to be on Mount Gilboa, there was Saul, leaning on his spear; and indeed the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. ⁷Now when he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I am.' ⁸And he said to me, 'Who are you?' So I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.' ⁹He said to me again, 'Please stand over me and kill me, for anguish has come upon me, but my life still remains in me.' ¹⁰So I stood over him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown that was on his head and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them here to my lord."

¹¹Therefore David took hold of his own clothes and tore them, and so did all the men who were with him. ¹²And they mourned and

wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son, for the people of the LORD and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

¹³Then David said to the young man who told him, "Where are you from?"

And he answered, "I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite."

¹⁴So David said to him, "How was it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?" ¹⁵Then David called one of the young men and said, "Go near, and execute him!" And he struck him so that he died. ¹⁶So David said to him, "Your blood is on your own head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD's anointed.'"

THE SONG OF THE BOW

¹⁷Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son, ¹⁸and he told them to teach the children of Judah the Song of the Bow; indeed it is written in the Book of Jasher:

¹⁹ "The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places!

How the mighty have fallen!

²⁰ Tell it not in Gath,

Proclaim it not in the streets of

Ashkelon—

Lest the daughters of the Philistines

rejoice,

Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised

triumph.

²¹ "O mountains of Gilboa,

Let there be no dew nor rain upon you,

Nor fields of offerings.

For the shield of the mighty is cast away there!

The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.

SOUL NOTE



Express It (1:17) David expressed genuine grief over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. It seems natural that David would grieve Jonathan's death, for they had been best friends (1 Sam. 18:1). King Saul, however, had been hunting David, desiring to kill him (1 Sam. 19:1, 2). Yet David lamented the loss of Israel's king and prince. Expressing sorrow is a healthy response to grief. David poured out his sorrow in words that honored the anointed king and his son. Putting grief into words is a healthy way to handle the pain and honor those who have died. **Topic: Grief/Loss**

house of God, to erect it in its place: ⁶⁹According to their ability, they gave to the treasury for the work sixty-one thousand gold drachmas, five thousand minas of silver, and one hundred priestly garments.

⁷⁰So the priests and the Levites, *some* of the people, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim, dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

WORSHIP RESTORED AT JERUSALEM

3 And when the seventh month had come, and the children of Israel *were* in the cities, the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem. ²Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak^a and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren, arose and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as *it is* written in the Law of Moses the man of God. ³Though fear *had come* upon them because of the people of those countries, they set the altar on its bases; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, *both* the morning and evening burnt offerings. ⁴They also kept the Feast of Tabernacles, as *it is* written, and *offered* the daily burnt offerings in the number required by ordinance for each day. ⁵Afterwards *they offered* the regular burnt offering, and *those* for New Moons and for all the appointed feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and *those* of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to the LORD. ⁶From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, although the foundation of the temple of the LORD had not been laid. ⁷They also gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre to bring cedar logs from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the permission which they had from Cyrus king of Persia.

RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE BEGINS

⁸Now in the second month of the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Jeshua the son of Jozadak,^a and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all those who had come out of the captivity to Jerusalem, began *work* and appointed the Levites from twenty years old and above to oversee the work of the house of the LORD. ⁹Then Jeshua *with* his sons and brothers, Kadmiel *with* his sons, and the sons of Judah,^a arose as one to oversee those working on the house of God: the sons of Henadad *with* their sons and their brethren the Levites.

¹⁰When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood^a in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel. ¹¹And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD:

“For *He is* good,
For His mercy *endures* forever toward
Israel.”^a

Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

¹²But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid

3:2 ^aSpelled *Jehozadak* in 1 Chronicles 6:14

3:8 ^aSpelled *Jehozadak* in 1 Chronicles 6:14

3:9 ^aOr *Hodaviah* (compare 2:40) **3:10** ^aFollowing Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *they stationed the priests*. **3:11** ^aCompare Psalm 136:1

SOUL NOTE



When Change Comes (3:12, 13) In grieving, it is sometimes difficult to see what good can come out of loss. When the foundation of the temple was laid by the returning exiles, the people both wept and rejoiced. They wept because the previous glorious temple built by King Solomon had been destroyed, and the new temple would not be as huge or as beautiful. Yet others rejoiced that the process of rebuilding their temple had begun. Sorrow and joy can be appropriate as God's people grieve for the past but face the future with hope. **Topic: Grief/Loss**

before their joy, ¹³so that the noise of the weeping of the people was heard with a loud afar off.

RESISTANCE

4 Now when Benjamin returned from the captivity, the LORD God of Israel was with them, and the heads of the fathers' houses arose to them, "LORD God of Israel, your God as we have seen Him since the days of Syria, who has been with us and Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brethren's house; do nothing against us, LORD God; but we will do as you command us, for we are your people of Israel, as you have commanded us." ²And they tried to disperse the people, but they troubled the people, and the LORD was with them against them in the days of their reign of Darius.

REBUILDING

⁶In the first year of his reign, the inhabitants of the land, the Syrians, the Mithredathians, the Ammonites, and the Jews, and the Levites, and the priests, and the scribes, and the scribe wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia.



people and faced opposition, but they overcame it. **Topic: D**

the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

5 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should

write to you. ²For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. ⁴But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a



SOUL NOTE

Reunion (4:13, 14) The Thessalonian believers wondered what was happening to their fellow believers who had died. They had been taught that Christ would come again, but they wondered if those who had died would miss out. Paul comforted the church, answering their question by explaining that believers do not need to "sorrow as others who have no hope." Believers have the ultimate assurance. We believe that Jesus died, rose again, ascended, and is coming again; and we also believe that He will bring with Him those who have died. One day, all believers will be reunited in the grandest reunion ever seen! **Topic: Grief/Loss**



Eternal Life

KEY PASSAGE

FOREVER AND EVER

(4:13-18)

Eternal life with God is an absolute certainty for believers. These words should be taken literally—Christ will return, and "the dead in Christ will rise" from their graves. Believers who are alive at that time will be drawn up with them into heaven and "thus we shall always be with the Lord."

There is much debate about the timing or order of various events surrounding the Second Coming, but several truths are undeniable:

- Eternal life begins the moment a person accepts Christ as Savior. If the believer must experience death before Christ returns, that is merely the way to heaven.
- Believers who have died will experience a bodily resurrection, living believers will be changed, and all will receive new, glorified bodies that will never get sick or die.
- Christ will return to defeat evil and death forever.
- Believers will live forever in heaven with Christ.

As Paul noted to the Thessalonians, we should "comfort one another with these words."

To Learn More: Turn to the article about eternal life on pages 1718, 1719. See also the personality profile of the apostle John on page 1702.

helmet to
appoint
through
Christ, for
that who
or sleep.
together

¹¹There
each
one
also are

VARIOUS

¹²And
those who
in the
teem
sake. Be
yourself

¹⁴Now
brethren
who are
the
hold the
tient with
no one
evil to
ways
good

¹⁶Rejoice

sand years. ⁵But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

SATANIC REBELLION CRUSHED

⁷Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. ⁹They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where^a the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

¹¹Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, small

and great, standing before God,^a and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.^a ¹⁵And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

ALL THINGS MADE NEW

21 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ²Then I, John,^a saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be

20:10 ^aNU-Text and M-Text add *also*. **20:12** ^aNU-Text and M-Text read *the throne*. **20:14** ^aNU-Text and M-Text add *the lake of fire*. **21:2** ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit *John*.

SOUL NOTE



Before the Judge (20:11-15) In this heavenly courtroom, God Himself is the Judge. Everyone—small and great, poor and rich, the notorious and the reputable—will stand without any excuse before their Maker. The only thing that will matter is whether one's name has been written in the Book of Life. That book has no misprints, no omissions, no mistakes. No person can blame anyone else if their name is missing; and they can take no credit if their name is included. Each person can be sure that their name is written in the book by trusting Christ today. **Topic: Accountability**

SOUL NOTE



No More Pain (21:4) No sorrow, no pain, no death! Such a place is hard to imagine, because this world is filled with loss and sorrow. Revelation describes a better time and a better place, however, where grief and loss will not exist: heaven. God promises to "wipe away every tear" and that "there shall be no more pain." No matter what we experience here, God promises a perfect future with Him. Through the hard times of today, we can trust this hope for the future. **Topic: Grief/Loss**