

COMFORT IN SORROW

The word of God acknowledges that it is normal for Christians to mourn the loss of a loved one, but it also teaches that our sorrow is not as great as those who have no hope (see 1 Thess. 4:13). The sense of loss is much greater if it involves the loss of a small child or young adult. Nevertheless, a correct understanding of the word of God can be of help. Notice the experience of King David when he lost his small child. As long as the sick child was alive, David refused to eat or get up (2 Samuel 12:16-17). However, notice what David said after his young child died: “But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.” (2 Samuel 12:23). “I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.” He experienced a mixture of joy and sorrow. He sorrowed over the fact that he would never see his son again in this world. However, he anticipated the day when he would be with him forever in that world to come.

I refer you to three scriptures which clearly illustrate this truth. First of all, the Psalmist wrote, “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off and we fly away.” (Psalm 90:10). After stating the average lifespan and the difficulties which accompany old age, the psalmist Moses says life “is soon cut off and we fly away”. In other words, at the moment of death, we leave the body and go somewhere else. The apostle Paul identified the place God’s children go when he wrote, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8). Obviously, when a child of God dies, their soul is immediately in the presence of the Lord. They are in a conscious state of contentment, peace, and rest as they await the resurrection of their body.

Notice also the happy reunion to be experienced by the Lord’s people when He returns: “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” (1 Thess. 4:14). This scripture teaches that when Jesus returns, He will bring with him the souls of His children who have already passed away from this world. Paul then writes, “...the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (1 Thess. 4:16-18).

Buddy Abernathy