

Do Christians Suffer More Than Other People?

The sinful world in which we live is full of pain and suffering. Wars and natural disasters account for much of it. Nevertheless the accumulation of what we do collectively to each other physically as well as verbally each and every day is probably one of the biggest cause of it all. However, what about the redeemed Christian? Does he or she fare better or worse, or the same as the rest of humanity? Spiritually, of course, unlike the rest of humanity, the saved soul will spend a most blessed eternity absent any pain or suffering. However, while here, as pilgrims, far from their eternal home, it is very likely that their suffering will exceed that of the rest of mankind. Even a casual, if accurate, review of history will show that this has been true from the very beginning. Their one great advantage is God's given strength to overcome and prevail over the earthly adversities. Scripture gives no promises of any special relief or avoidance of suffering due to faith, only the ability to deal with it through the spiritual strength with which the redeemed ones have been endowed.

As a matter of fact, Scripture tells the redeemed to expect even greater suffering than the rest of the world. The principal reason is that as the world hates Jesus, it hates Christians as well. All the persecuted and martyred of today, and throughout history attest to the truth of those words. This country, in the past had been blessed to be an exception to the rule. That exception has all but ended. We see this evidence of impending persecution already being expressed through new laws against biblical truths, and media campaigns depicting Christians as intolerant hate mongering fundamentalists, akin to "Islamic fundamentalist terrorists". At the same time, both Christianity and Scripture continue to be marginalized and discredited by "new finds" such as the "Judas Gospel" the "Assurrey of Jesus" and "The D'Vinci Code." The same campaign is preparing a case that will soon demonstrate that real Christians are dangerous to the survival of the world, and must be eliminated. This was prophesized to reach its zenith just before the Rapture and again against the redeemed during the Tribulation.

All of this is but evidence of the very closeness of the prophesized end times. Along with, and in addition to this, Scripture gives at least ten quite specific and unique reasons why born-again Christians suffer more than, rather than the same as the rest of humanity. Let us examine each of them as best we can from where they are identified in Scripture.

First however, let's note that a truly redeemed Christian is by definition a person who, by God's grace through faith in Jesus, and belief in the truth of His work on the cross, has been forgiven of all of his sins and has therefore received eternal security. However, at that moment of faith that triggers forgiveness, there begins a lifetime of what's called sanctification. This is the process whereby he or she receives the strength, through the working of the Holy Spirit, to overcome the power of sin. The forgiven sinner is yet a sinner and will continue to sin, for it is still his nature.

Sanctification, as noted, is the application of the Spirit power to overcome that nature. This requires work and cooperation with the indwelling Holy Spirit. Why must the saved soul go through this process? Isn't once saved always saved a done deal, a free gift, something for which one can do absolutely nothing to earn? Absolutely! Doesn't Scripture tell us that Jesus saves the very lowliest of sinners and takes them just as they are? Right again, absolutely! However, while He takes each as they are, God will not leave them as they are. That is what sanctification is all about. It's Gods cleanup process as He prepares them to put on their "Sunday best" before they go to their eternal church in heaven.

Now let us look at the situation as it really is in terms that we can relate too and understand. The moment a person is justified, that is forgiven and freed from the guilt of sin, he or she also becomes a son or daughter of God. God becomes their heavenly Father. That's why, as Jesus explained to Nicodemus in John 3:3. "*....Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" Then in verse 6 He says, "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*" The person who has been justified, that is saved, is the one about whom Jesus spoke as having been born-again (also translated as "born from above). Everyone is born of the flesh; that is the first

birth. Those who become sons and daughters of God, those who have the right to call Him Father, are the ones who experience this second birth from above, they have been “born of the spirit.”

Suddenly through Jesus’ vicarious payment of the penalty for their sins, triggered by their belief and faith in the truth of the work He did on the cross, they became not only freed of that penalty, but they each also became a new creation, a direct creation of God! There have been only three forms of direct living creations of God. The angels were His first creation. All living things that were created during the third, fifth and sixth days of creation were God’s second creation. This included Adam and Eve as direct creations of God. All subsequent generations of life were not direct creations of God. All of mankind after Adam are the sons and daughters of Adam, not of God. The third direct creation of God is the born-again Christian. Just as the angels and Adam were the created sons of God, so too are all born-again persons, the directly created sons and daughters of God, in the spirit. Having all been sons and daughters of Adam, their redemption transforms them into a new creation, this a direct creation of God.

This new creature that has been born spiritually from above is initially, but an infant. He or she must grow and mature in order to serve God and be a dutiful son or daughter. As with the law given to the children of Israel, and now sadly totally abandoned, it was the Father’s responsibility to see to the education and spiritual growth of his children. And so it is in the spiritual realm of the Christian family. It is the Father God who attends to and orchestrates that growth during His sons and daughters sojourn here on earth in preparation for their eternal careers. How does He do this? Much like any dedicated father, except in His case, perfectly. He tells us quite precisely how in His great User Manual. (the Holy Bible)

Let us examine a list of ten reasons why His sons and daughters experience special suffering:

1. For spiritual advancement, that is growth is essential. When a child first says dada, it is precious and a sign of intelligence. However, 20 years later, if he yet can only say dada it is viewed as tragic. Growth in the faith, in obedience and in

knowledge of God's Word is essential and need to continue increasing to the end. A loving father teaches, guides, praises, and most surely reprimands and punishes appropriately. Romans 5:3-5 speaks of ways spiritual growth increase through tribulation, (suffering) which causes patience, and in turn provides experience that evolves into hope. (strengthened faith) These things demonstrate the love of the Father that he spreads out to others as it passes through the hearts of His own. The difficulties and spiritual challenges that are encountered are what strengthen and mature the Christian. In serious physical development, we all recognize the truth of "no pain no gain." That is also true and perhaps even more so, in the spiritual realm. That this is true seems well evidenced by the many causes for which God allows Christian suffering.

2. The ways through which we suffer also teach us obedience and discipline. These growth attributes are described by Paul in his letter to the Philippians chapter 4 verses 11 through 13 where he says "*11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*" *13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*" Here, Paul expresses beautifully what spiritual maturity really is. The Father, as we can see not only sent His only begotten Son Jesus as our Savior, but also as the perfect examples of all the attributes God wants for the redeemed who become His sons and daughters. These are all found in Jesus, and only through the strength of Jesus that flows into the hearts of all believers. He is our great "Brotherly" example, our strength, our Lord, our Savior, our Master and our Intermediator set between us and the Father in heaven. We see here in Paul's message that spiritual maturity can bring them to where they can be equally content in faithful obedience whether in want or in plenty, or whether in comfort or in suffering. The mature faith that our Father seeks to have us grow into is one that never falters or forgets, regardless of the circumstances, which can be most painful.
3. In this growing process, the sons and daughters of God will at times backslide as the old nature raises its ugly head. Too much worldliness can enter our lives,

temptations, weakness, pride, almost anything can happen for which some amount and form of punishment is warranted. Isn't it a good father's duty to discipline his child so as to redirect him or her back into the right way? It should be, but today, in this excessively permissive world, it seems that such discipline is seldom, if ever, applied. Our heavenly Father however, does and will discipline His own as it needs to be when we backslide. Hebrews 12: 5-11 speaks of this: *"5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."*

Isn't this a piece of perfect logic and expression that only a loving Father God could convey? If only the world could have lived in such a way in the raising of each generation, what good, instead of awful things, could have resulted where the present level of pain and suffering of mankind is concerned. While the eternal punishment of the sins of the redeemed have been washed away, their earthly consequences remain, and do, one way or another, continue to haunt us to the very end of our lives. I don't believe we "get away" with anything. James 4:17 tells us that *"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."* While this does not speak of punishment or suffering, it closes any possible loophole regarding what deserves punishment. If we know to do good and don't, it is as sinful and punishable as the counterpart of knowing what's

wrong, and doing it anyway. This is just one more bit of solid information our Father has given regarding the conduct He expects from us when we are His.

4. Christian suffering is allowed to both build and to prove faith. 1Peter 1:6-9 provides us with this insight “*6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, through now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8 whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. 10 Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: 11 searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*” We are told to rejoice if we become plagued with many temptations because these are trials of our faith, and as we prevail against them they are indeed most precious in that they prove the true substance of our faith. The stronger is ones faith, the more useful one can be to God.

I believe that one of the greatest tragedies in Christianity is the lack of trials that test and thus verify the true nature of one’s professed faith. Short of some serious testing, I am convinced that one cannot be certain of the validity of one’s faith. Be humble and grateful, confess all you will, pray, study Scripture, claim belief, express repentance, struggle to be obedient and show every visible evidence of conversion. However, unless that faith has undergone serious testing, I believe that some disturbing bit of concern should remain as to whether or not one is truly saved. This probably sounds unreasonable to many. However, there are instances that I believe we can recall personally or of which we have heard of that can provide credibility to this premise. Many have put on what seemed to be the cloak of salvation, and worn it for many years until some serious event occurred that tested their faith. They failed the test, which removed the cloak revealing

their true unsaved condition. Charles Templeton is a classic example of such a person. (See my commentary called *“How to Lose Your Salvation”*)

It’s the process of testing that proves the quality of a person and who he really is. Do we know how much weight we can lift, or how far we can run, or how high we can jump until we are tested? No, we can only guess. Where our eternal destiny depends on the strength and reality of our faith, is our best guess sufficient? If we are His, He will surely test us in order to prove it to ourselves. That is all part of the process of sanctification. However it is not the pain and suffering inherent in simply living in this corrupt world that inflicts it indiscriminately to all of mankind. This kind may be modulated through prayer, offered by His own, if the prayer is consistent with His will. However Christian suffering is suffering over and above what others suffer, for reasons here under discussion.

I know, with these statements that I am in great variance with the vast majority of those believing themselves to be born-again. But look again at Paul’s words. He counts his trials much more precious than anything because they evidence the truth of his salvation. I suspect that enduring great temptation, which tests the faith, may in many cases, provide the only absolute assurance of salvation! Paul saw this truth, and in experiencing it, was led by the Holy Spirit to bless us with this fact. He says in effect that these temptations or sufferings, whatever they may be, after they are over, and we see that we have remained faithful to Jesus, and can praise and honor and glorify Him whom we haven’t ever seen, then we will have that unspeakable joy of an assuring evidence of salvation.

The martyrs for Christ experienced this and knew the fullness of their faith. This is the extreme test most of us, I pray, will never need to suffer so as to prove our faith. But there are also other less painful tests that God uses to prove our faith, tests tailored by our Father to relate to each of our abilities, strengths and our weaknesses. There are even little tests given us each day, tests to demonstrate

where we stand in the sanctification process, moment-by-moment. Simply being aware of them as they pass by us is a test in itself; it's a test of our awareness, or lack thereof, of Him working in our lives.

Do we recognize opportunities He gives us to serve others? Do we offer praise to Him for the little every day blessings, as well as the big blessings with which He showers us? Do we boldly proclaim our faith to the world, or do we hide it so as to escape the worlds many ways of ridiculing or condemning our belief? Do we seek out ways to serve Him, or do we simply wait for the easy non-threatening lukewarm opportunities that don't strain us too much? Could it be that sometimes adversities or sufferings occur because of some accumulation of failures in this faith building process? Could it be that these are our Father's way of "taking us out to the woodshed" for a real learning experience?

5. Sometimes our Father reprimands, that is causes some amount of suffering to keep us from falling into sin, a sort of preemptive strike, for He knows us well and can see ahead as to where we are headed. We find this alluded to in 1Peter 4:12 where Peter says "*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.*" By His sovereign will, God intervenes in our lives for His greater purpose and glory. All who are saved, that is those of His eternal family, have specific purposes assigned to them, purposes He has determined that we need to fulfill. This is well described by the image of the Body of Christ of which Jesus is the Head. We are each members of that body and have a specific spiritual gift of service given to us in order that we can fruitfully fulfill that position. Once He has shown us the place He has chosen for us within the Body, and we have accepted it, one way or another He will see to it that we will keep to it to the end even though we may sometimes deviate from it through the fragility of our commitments and the flare up of our evil nature. I believe that if He sees that deviation as becoming serious, He preempts it with a bit of suffering that He knows will bring us back on our knees.

6. A sixth cause of Christian suffering is to keep us from pride. We know how much God hates pride. It is what brought down Lucifer, the cherub who was the most beautiful, most powerful, most talented of all created beings. Look at what it turned him into, Satan, the complete personification of evil. Our heavenly Father will not tolerate a speck of pride in His sons and daughters. Humility is an essential quality for a Christian as are repentance and obedience, for without humility, nothing about these other attributes can be genuine. If you are one of His, just try to credit yourself with any achievement and you will be in Regretsville before you know what happened. All credit, all praise for anything He may achieve through us belongs to Him, and nothing of value is ever achieved except through Him. There is no room for pride in a real Christian, only gratitude and humility for having been blessed to have participated in His achievement.

2Corinthians 12:7-10 tells us how God allowed Paul to retain some severe form of affliction that remained with him all his life as a reminder that helped keep him always humble and pride free. We need to always retain in close memory where we were destined to go, to that outer darkness of eternal suffering that was to be our deserved fate. Then, in most humble gratitude, we need to keep in mind how Christ Jesus revealed Himself, and how by His own suffering He purchased us out of that fate and unto eternal life. Knowing this, how can pride hold any place in the heart that is full of deserving gratitude? If somehow that residual evil nature raises its ugly head and muscles its way in with but even a hint of pride, we probably have less than the count to ten to get on our knees and beg forgiveness before some form of suffering has been assigned, even if it's nothing more than a much pained conscience. God uses those most effectively who are empty vessels, empty of self so that they can be filled with Him.

The greater portion of us as vessels that Jesus occupies, the more effectual we become in our service to Him. One aspect of this displacing of self with Jesus is the weaning away of our desires for the things of the world. The pleasures,

comforts entertainments, amusements and “stuff” of the world that we thought made life worthwhile, and that we believed we could not live without, lose their importance the more filled with Christ we become. Those who can see this change of values in themselves will be amazed as to how this could be. They will also feel a swelling of gratitude as they realize that this is one of the most powerful evidences of a saving faith. Another benefit is the feeling of being released from the prison of wants. Those carnal pleasures, and other formally believed to be necessities, have lost their importance and so no longer stress our lives, as did their continuous pursuit.

7. Paul points out various ways Christians suffer in order to prove the reality of Christ within them. In 2Corinthians 4:7-11 he says, “*7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. 8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; 10 always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*” Paul speaks here of some real serious suffering, the kind not too many in this country have experienced to date. I am convinced however, that conditions that will assure such suffering are coming, and will be widespread here. They are on the immediate horizon for true unabashed Christians, those who refuse to compromise, hide, or renounce their faith. Proving the reality of Christ within us is nevertheless, the most important of the ways God might choose to intervene in our lives. Without Christ in us, nothing else matters. It’s the all of everything. With so much of the world’s ways in today’s churches, with the well-prophesied false teachers everywhere, with the epidemic of shallowness of faith, faith based on carefully selected user friendly non-convicting Bible verse, with so many of the major Christian leaders embracing the Satan-directed ecumenical movement and other heresies, it is painfully evident that the presumed “Christian body” needs testing and purifying as never before in order to produce the precious remnant God so dearly loves and

- wants. Again its God's way of implementing the "no pain no gain" procedure that is always so effective.
8. Suffering is a most effective way to equip us to comfort others. Paul makes that observation in 2Corinthians 1:3, 4. What more convincing witness to an afflicted person can there be than one who suffered similarity and was healed by our Lord? Based on my own experience, I believe our Lord chooses some of His own or in my case some who would later become His own, for that very purpose. The suffering might be physical or spiritual or both. I consider my affliction to have been as a blessing because it gave me what would be useful and effective in serving Him by helping others.

 9. God allows Christian suffering in order to glorify Himself. This may be one that is difficult to reconcile from our limited earthly perspective. An example of this purpose is found in Daniel 3:16-18, 24-25 *"¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. ¹⁷ If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."* *"²⁴ Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. ²⁵ He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."* This famous event defied all reason, making it purely supernatural to an extraordinary degree. God's glory was indeed expressed both through the unshakable faith the three boys had and the way He chose to prove it to the world. Did they suffer? Surely the anticipation and treatment by their captors, along with the heat didn't make that day the most pleasant one of their lives, but spiritually, being participants in the evidencing of

God's glory and power made it the most rewarding and memorable of their lives. We must remember that all things, including man were made in accordance with, and for His good pleasure. To Him belongs all the glory, and when we respond to Him in genuine faith and obedience, He is glorified and the purpose of His creation is validated.

10. Lastly, we find that Christians suffer as testimony to the angels. This seems strange and at first not a very good reason. I doubt however that God inflicts for the sole purpose of instructing angels. The suffering under consideration probably occurs for the reasons listed above, and the by-product is education of the angels. This is most evident in Job 1:8 *"And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?"* Here we see that God has assembled the angels to witness the working out through Job, of an important principal that He wants all of His to learn from as well. That is why He included it in His Book. Paul indicates a similar situation in 1Corinthians 4:9 *"For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."* The word *spectacle* comes from a Greek word meaning "an audience room, a place where one can see closely." In 1Peter 1:12 we read, *"Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."*

From these references it seems evident that at least one of the activities of angels is to observe and learn from man's activities, and to see how God deals with this particular portion of His creation. It appears unlikely that God provided the angels with much knowledge regarding mankind. It was perhaps on a "need to know basis" with further knowledge being provided by these observation and learning experiences as He assigns them earthly tasks such as messengers,

warriors against demons, defending man against Satan's angels, serving as personal "bodyguards", etc. They are highly intelligent as well as powerful and versatile. As the Christians time on earth is, through the sanctifying process, a time of preparation for an eternal assignment, it is also a time for the angels to learn what they need to know about man in preparation for their future eternal assignments. Scripture tells us, that in the heavenly realm, man will be above the angels.

What does all of this tell us about a genuine Christian life? One thing for certain, it's far different than what most evangelical "recruiters" describe as they seek conversions to the faith. The true Christian's life is no "piece of cake," and should never be "sold" as such to anyone seeking salvation. To do so, in my opinion, is as sinful as murder, because it deceives to the eternal damnation of the one deceived who, by responding only to the initially provided half-truth, will never progress to salvation. Also, we should never lose sight of the fact that God is not our genie or our servant. Our prayers do not obligate Him to fulfill our requests simply because we ask them in Jesus' name. God said in Romans 9:15 "*...I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy...*" This is not the statement of an arbitrary callous and unloving god. It is simply our God expressing His care and concern from the perspective of His omniscience. He knows everything, infinitely beyond what we know, and applies that knowledge in the form of mercy in ways that are appropriate and consistent with His loving and just nature. Thus answered prayers, may or may not be answered in accordance with our petitions.

We've examined ten reasons why genuine Christians are singled out to suffer as part of the process God uses to draw them closer to Him, and to prepare them to serve both here and hereafter. However, simply because they are Christians, the world for that reason alone, takes a lick at them at every opportunity. The world in these latter days is growing ever more hostile toward them. When one becomes a serious Christian, at the very least he or she can expect is to lose friends, suffer fewer opportunities for material "success" and become ostracized from many social

activities. Also, I believe that the time is near at hand when far more serious pain will be inflicted simply for this belief. So why bother, why willfully be subjected to such a life, when it is so easily avoidable? Isn't worldly suffering more than enough? Why not either forget the whole thing, that is seek another means of salvation, or simply hide the fact that one is a Christian?

The answer to why bother is that Jesus is truth; Scripture is truth; believing the Gospel message is believing the truth; and therefore living the Christian life is living the truth. There is no other truth. Therefore to believe or to live by any other "truth" is a lie and is the formula for eternal damnation. To hide one's Christianity is tantamount to denying it. In doing so, it's quite likely that it is a false faith that cannot save. One who is not willing to "take up the cross" and accept the love-imposed suffering allowed by God as well as the additional hate suffering inflicted by the world is not likely to have received salvation. A person who says he believes, no matter how sincere it may appear to be, but is not willing to walk the walk Jesus demands of His own, is not one of His own. It's as simple as that!

P.S.

During a recent conversation with a dear brother in Christ, after a Bible study, we discussed our concerns for our loved ones who are not saved, and seemed so distant from the likelihood that this could happen. We both realize that our only possible contribution to this blessed hope is in our prayers for them, and in the example of the true Christian life that they see in us. This is because only the work of the Holy Spirit can draw them to a saving faith. With this in mind, it came to me that perhaps this is an eleventh reason why Christians suffer more than other people. Scripture has revealed to us that there is but one way to salvation and eternal life with God. Those who do not have Christ Jesus as their Lord and Savior are destined to eternal damnation. Knowing this, how can any of us not grieve, that is suffer, in our concern for those loved one who have died absent of Jesus in their hearts as well as those who are likely to die unsaved.

I believe that the intensity of our concern for the suffering of Christians, and for their loved ones', salvation may be greater than by any other people group or religion. Why do I say this? It is because we, as Christians, know from God's Word that it is a simple either or, heaven or hell, for every soul/spirit. Other beliefs systems seem to have various ways of escaping or denying the irrevocable eternal punishment for sin. Catholics, for instances believe in a purgatory, a temporary hell from which there are ways to escape. Some of the eastern religions believe in continued reincarnation. They believe that the soul/spirit can return to life as a person or even as some other species.

It is understood that one's behavior determines the state of ones next life and that this will keep repeating until they "get it right" and ascend to some high spiritual eternal level. There are several Christianesque cults that have other ways in which to achieve immortality through works, such as the Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons. There are of course, also those who believe in neither heaven nor hell but only in total annihilation as is the case of all non-human species. Perhaps there are other belief systems that find no recourse in physical death for those who fail to "measure up" to their prescribed way in this life. If so, their grieving may be comparable to those of a Christian.

However, in terms of the masses of humanity, it is my opinion that Christian concern and suffering regarding the fate of their non-believing loved ones is far greater. This is not to say that the grief of non-Christians over the death of their loved ones is not as great as ours. In fact, it is probably far greater than ours when we are certain that our loved ones have the true saving faith. When our saved loved ones die, we only grieve for our own loss of their presence in our lives, and we have reason to rejoice for them because we know where they have gone and that we will one day join them in the heavenly realm.