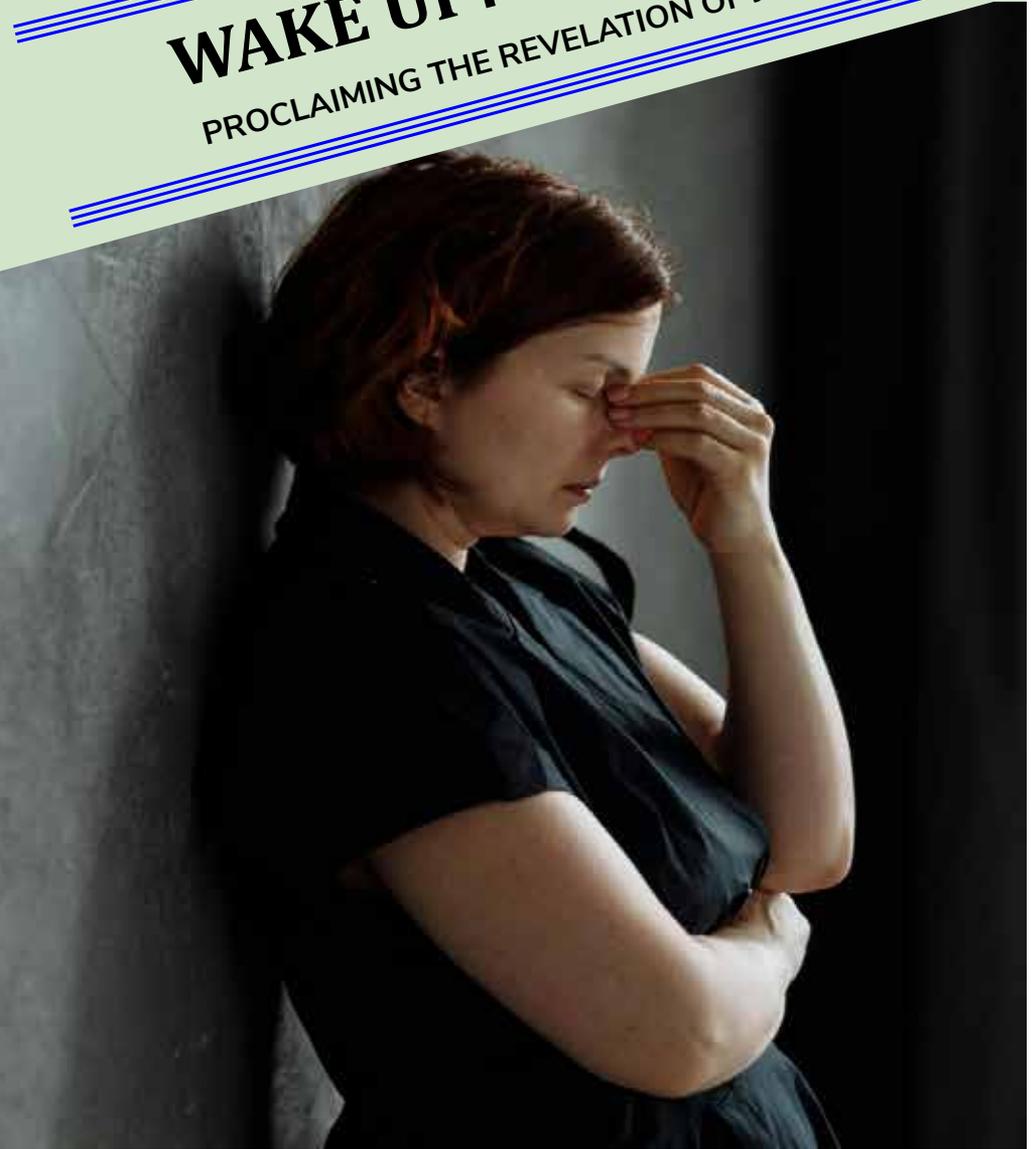


May 2025

WAKE UP! MONTHLY

PROCLAIMING THE REVELATION OF JESUS



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Grief, Pain, Suffering, Suicide

Dear Wake Up Family:

Several days ago, someone reached out to me and asked if I could help. She knew that Larry must have written an article on the subject of suicide and desperately needed to share it with a friend whose dad had taken his own life. Her dear friend was struggling with understanding the reason, the loss, the eternal effect.

The internet shows that the eleventh leading cause of death in the US is suicide: the number last year was 49,476. That's 1 death every 11 minutes. Even more are expected this year. And those astounding statistics are based on official records. Now, why would a person choose to take his own life? It's terrifying to think that our country is in such a mess that living has become unbearable for so many people.

I confess I didn't know there were so many suicides in the US. Although as I began writing I remembered that a distant relative, a fighter pilot during the Korean War, took his own life after he returned home. I was too young however to understand what it really meant, much less why.

A stigma enshrouds someone who takes his own life. But make no mistake, it's not the ignorant, uneducated, ne'er-do-wells who make up the awful statistic. Doctors, pilots, executives, and business owners—professionals who, it would seem, had everything to live for—greatly factor into that staggering number. Again I ask, why would someone take his own life when self-preservation is built into each one of us? How does one come to the conclusion that there is nothing left to live for or that the world is better off without them in it?

One reason is the loss of love or, the loss of a love. In Genesis 2:18, after God had created man, He said, **"It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him."** Eve was created to be a companion to Adam. But one day Eve made a bad decision and was condemned to die. When Adam realized what had happened, he was overwhelmed with anxiety

and then grief.

I'm sure he thought, "Here is my beautiful wife, my love, my very heart; my whole life revolves around her; she is irreplaceable; what's the point of existing without her near me? I'll just eat the fruit and die with her." Such is the depth of passion, the desire, the desperation, a smitten man has for his one and only.

Adam had to know God could have created another companion for him and graciously eased his grief. God is able to soothe an aching, pain-filled heart. And if Adam had remained faithful, I believe God would have done just that. But Adam chose to suffer Eve's fate because his love for her was greater than his trust in Jesus.

Another Bible story, one of someone taking his own life, is King Saul, who, after turning away from the Lord, came to a place where he felt hopeless. Saul was humble at the beginning of his reign. At first, he was willing to do what God asked of him. But later in life reached the point where his wants mattered more than the Lord's instruction. He came to a place where he didn't want to do what God said, and instead, did as he pleased. Well, God finally refused to talk with him. Afterward, evidently, Saul came to the place where he decided there was nothing he could do to resolve his troubles. So he decided to escape them by dying in battle.

This is how the Bible portrays King Saul's end: **"Now the Philistines attacked Israel, and the men of Israel fled before them. Many were slaughtered on the slopes of Mount Gilboa. The Philistines closed in on Saul and his sons, and they killed three of his sons—Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malkishua. The fighting grew very fierce around Saul, and the Philistine archers caught up with him and wounded him severely. Saul groaned to his armor bearer, 'Take your sword and kill me before these pagan Philistines come to run me through and taunt and torture me.' But his armor bearer was afraid and would not do it. So Saul took his own sword and fell on it."** (1 Samuel 31:1–4)

Here is another biblical story of emotional anguish causing suicide. As you read the story remember that he was a Christian.

Judas had been baptized. Judas had cast out devils and healed the sick. Judas had every external mark of being a believer. But when Judas betrayed Jesus, he soon realized that the treasure wasn't worth the treachery. In his despair, he chose to take his own life. He had spent three years with Jesus, yet didn't know Him as his Savior. Now I'm not picking on Judas. I wasn't there. I only know the story. I'm simply trying to understand why he felt that all hope was gone.

The Bible says **“When Judas, who had betrayed him, realized that Jesus had been condemned to die, he was filled with remorse. So he took the thirty pieces of silver back to the leading priests and the elders. ‘I have sinned,’ he declared, ‘for I have betrayed an innocent man.**

‘What do we care?’ they retorted. ‘That’s your problem.’

Then Judas threw the silver coins down in the Temple and went out and hanged himself.” (Matthew 27:3–5)

How desperate he must have felt. How desperate all who suicide must feel. And the ripple of grief each family must contend with trying to understand: why, what went wrong, what about their soul, can they be saved? As an answer, I can only conclude from reading the Bible that if a man has come to the place where his thinking isn't rational and he isn't clear-minded, God doesn't hold him accountable. God only holds us accountable for what we know.

What do you make of these texts: **“Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.”** (James 4:17) And also, **“I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate.”** (Romans 7:15) There should be some comfort in knowing that many who take their own life don't realize what they're doing. They just don't seem to see even a sliver of hope in life. Only despair.

I managed to find the article and an email Larry wrote about death and suicide. His email to someone named Chris is below.

Hello Chris:

Your question is a tough one so forgive me for the length of this response. I hope your friend is not considering

suicide, if so, call the suicide prevention hotline for help. Don't mess around, you may save a life!

I've been a pastor for 46 years. I have conducted more funerals than I can count. I have been with death and dying friends many times. I have observed and understand the curse of sin. I have seen sorrow, heartache, pain, illness, and death up close. I have also been a student of the Bible and I know that many people feel that suicide is an unpardonable sin if not the ultimate sin. For me, this is naive thinking. Many people worship the gift of life as though it is everything and must be protected at all cost! I have a different view. I worship the Creator who gives us life and every blessing. His gifts are ours to manage according to our best judgment and understanding of His will.

Contrary to what many people think, the Bible does not explicitly condemn suicide. When God said, "Thou shalt not kill," He meant, "Thou shalt not commit murder." Murder, suicide, and death caused by self-defense are not the same thing even though death is the outcome in these three instances.

First-degree murder requires malicious intent, a premeditated act, the killing of another person out of hatred or covetousness. However, second-degree murder, manslaughter, death caused by criminal negligence, accidental death, and other judicial charges that are assigned to the death of a victim involve different motives and our legal system recognizes there is a huge difference between death caused by hatred and death caused by accident! I hope you can see that motive is highly important in situations involving death.

A changeless God granted certain conditions in the Old Testament whereby people can legitimately kill felons for the benefit of society. For example, on the day Noah stepped off the ark, God told him to put all murderers to death thereafter. God said, **"If anyone takes a human life,**

that person's life will also be taken by human hands. For God made human beings in his own image." (Genesis 9:6)

About 1,000 years later, God told Moses to put murderers to death and show them no mercy. **"But if someone strikes and kills another person with a piece of iron, it is murder, and the murderer must be executed. Or if someone with a stone in his hand strikes and kills another person, it is murder, and the murderer must be put to death. Or if someone strikes and kills another person with a wooden object, it is murder, and the murderer must be put to death. The victim's nearest relative is responsible for putting the murderer to death. When they meet, the avenger must put the murderer to death. So if someone hates another person and waits in ambush, then pushes him or throws something at him and he dies, it is murder. Or if someone hates another person and hits him with a fist and he dies, it is murder. In such cases, the avenger must put the murderer to death when they meet."** **"Also, you must never accept a ransom payment for the life of someone judged guilty of murder and subject to execution; murderers must always be put to death."** (Numbers 35:16–21, 31)

Furthermore, God permitted a person to kill a thief without incurring guilt if the thief breaks into his house during darkness. God did this because God permits self-defense: **"If a thief is caught in the act of breaking into a house and is struck and killed in the process, the person who killed the thief is not guilty of murder. But if it happens in daylight, the one who killed the thief is guilty of murder. A thief who is caught must pay in full for everything he stole. If he cannot pay, he must be sold as a slave to pay for his theft."** (Exodus 22:2–3)

The laws given to Moses regarding murder and self-defense provide a basic foundation for laws involving death in many countries. They make sense to people who understand the necessity for law and order.

You may be surprised to learn that God enabled Samson to take his own life. After Samson was taken prisoner by his enemies, Samson wanted to take revenge on the Philistines for putting out his eyes. **“Then Samson prayed to the Lord, ‘Sovereign Lord, remember me again. O God, please strengthen me just one more time. With one blow let me pay back the Philistines for the loss of my two eyes.’ Then Samson put his hands on the two center pillars that held up the temple. Pushing against them with both hands, 30 he prayed, ‘Let me die with the Philistines.’ And the temple crashed down on the Philistine rulers and all the people. So he killed more people when he died than he had during his entire lifetime.”** (Judges 16:28–30)

It is my view that God does not equate suicide with murder. If a patient dies while in surgery, did the surgeon commit murder? No. If an airplane crashes due to pilot error, did the pilot commit multiple murders in addition to his own suicide? No, if it was accidental. If a person accidentally drowns, did he commit suicide or murder? No, of course not.

First-degree murder requires motive and malicious intent, and the sixth commandment forbids this. Suicides usually have motive, opportunity, and intent, but the motive or intent is rarely malicious. Many suicides are the result of intractable suffering (mental and/or physical) or the avoidance of anticipated suffering. Suicide is like divorce—never a good thing, but given the circumstances, sometimes it is the best thing when viewed through the sufferer’s eyes.

I do not believe that a person is categorically condemned by God for suicide. God knows the heart of the sufferer, the circumstances, and his motives. And He carefully and tenderly judges accordingly.

I hope this helps!

Best wishes,

Larry Wilson

When the Wake Up office receives calls, letters, and emails requesting help for those grieving, we recommend several books:

C. S. Lewis - *A Grief Observed*; Elisabeth Elliot - *A Path Through Suffering*; Philip Yancey - *Where is God when it hurts?*

Please share these resources with those experiencing grief, loneliness, or pain. And pray for the coming time when God wipes every tear from our eyes and there will be no more sorrow. I can't wait.

Rex

Quote of the Month

When you have lost someone you love... Do not make the mistake of living in sadness, or living small to honour their absence. You owe it to them to live even more vividly than before. If they could reach you, they would surely say.. "Take the love you had for me and turn it into gladness, use the love you had for me to drive away the sadness." Love is an energy, so powerful, so all-consuming that when the person you felt all that love for is not here, you are a vessel filled with a boundless source of power that has nowhere to go. Harness it. Use it to burn even more brightly and live even more loudly than before. Share the love you felt for that person with all the other special people in your life, for it is limitless. There is no end to it and there never, ever should be. If they could reach you they would surely say... "Make my time on earth count loudly, so I've not lived in vain. Use the love we shared to make more love and not more pain." If you are struggling to move on, to find the way to carry on. Without them. This is it. Use the love. Carry them with you in all that you do, using their love as the source. It is what they would want. Tell their stories, mention their name, feel their love – and share it. Do not let the pain of their loss overshadow the love that they created whilst alive. Make them count. Remember, grief is the price you pay for a love divine. The stronger the love, the deeper the grief but love, love will always win in the end.

- Donna Ashworth

New This Month!

New Study Package!

This month, we're excited to add another package designed to enhance both individual and group learning experiences.



Book

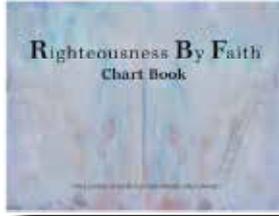
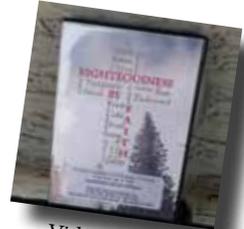


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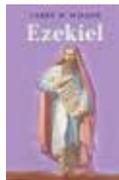
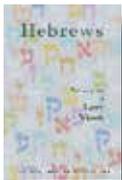
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Other Study Materials



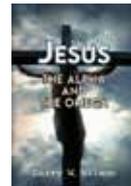
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| #6 – <i>Sunday or Saturday Which is Holy?</i> (25) | #28 – <i>Elijah the Tishbite</i> (30) |
| #7 – <i>Does Life End at Death</i> (30) | #29 – <i>Saul–Good Heart Wrong Head</i> (28) |
| #8 – <i>The Temple of God</i> (22) | #30 – <i>John the Baptizer</i> (35) |
| #9 – <i>Was Jesus Created</i> (60) | #31 – <i>Pilate's Judgment</i> (45) |
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| #11 – <i>Does God Kill People?</i> (30) | #33 – <i>Moses and the Mark</i> (30) |
| #12 – <i>Is the Rapture a Hoax?</i> (25) | #34 – <i>Predestination vs. Free Will</i> (40) |
| #13 – <i>The World Wars and Armageddon</i> (25) | #35 – <i>Once Saved–Always Saved</i> (40) |
| #15 – <i>Four Beasts of Revelation</i> (30) | #36 – <i>The Properties of Faith</i> (35) |
| #17 – <i>The Israel of God Today</i> (25) | #37 – <i>The 144,000 Will Soon Appear</i> (35) |
| #18 – <i>What Changed at the Cross?</i> (30) | #38 – <i>The Cities of Refuge</i> (35) |
| #19 – <i>Interpretation and Inspiration</i> (30) | #39 – <i>Protestant Protests</i> (35) |
| #20 – <i>Angry with God</i> (30) | #40 – <i>When God Breaks His Silence</i> (35) |
| #21 – <i>Seven Trumpets</i> (30) | #41 – <i>What Must I Do to be Saved</i> (25) |
| #22 – <i>Sealing God's People</i> (30) | #42 – <i>Is Sin Forgiven</i> (30) |
| #23 – <i>Which Israel Will be saved?</i> (40) | #43 – <i>The Sealed Book</i> (25) |
| #24 – <i>Daniel – A Test of Loyalty</i> (30) | #44 – <i>The Trinity–One God or Three</i> (20) |
| #25 – <i>A Faith More Precious than Gold</i> (30) | #45 – <i>The 2,300 Days of Daniel 8:14</i> (25)* |
| #26 – <i>Esther–Beautiful Savior</i> (30) | #46 – <i>Four Messages</i> (40) |
| | #47 – <i>Demonic Possession – Through the Ages</i> (30) |

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