

Stephen the Martyr

WITNESSES

Acts of the Apostles



"Sociologists and anthropologists have analyzed and compared the various ways that cultures train its members for grief, pain, and loss. And when this comparison is done, it is often noted that our own contemporary secular, Western culture is one of the weakest and worst in history at doing so" -Tim Keller

As Christians,
how do we deal
with the
inevitable
suffering that
life brings?

Only in Christianity do people follow a God who subjects himself to the painful injustices of this world, and uses suffering as the vehicle for our redemption and salvation.

Acts 6:8-13

"Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke. Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God," so they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law."

"In this world you will
have trouble, but
take heart, I have
overcome the world."
-Jesus (John 16:33)

Acts 7:54-60, 8:1

"When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep." "And Saul approved of their killing him. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria."

Stephen's Refutation

The law was never fully obeyed

The temple can never contain God

Hard-hearted people miss and persecute God's messengers

Jesus is the Righteous One who fulfills God's mission through Israel

Although he will not live to see it, Stephen's faithfulness will have a great impact on one of the most influential people in world history and will also be the catalyst of forever changing the trajectory of the Jesus movement.



WHAT ABOUT OUR PAIN, HURTS, AND SUFFERINGS?

- 💛 PULL FROM THE RIGHT WELL
- 💛 NO MAGIC FORMULA
- 💛 THERE IS SPACE FOR YOUR PAIN
- 💛 TRUST GOD'S HEART AND REDEMPTION
- 💛 YOU ARE NOT ALONE



Notes:

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes, set against a light green watercolor background.