

He Fell Asleep

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[0 : 00] The 24th of September, he fell asleep. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Lord, do not hold this sin against them.

And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Acts 7, 59-60, English Standard Version. The Christian view of death and dying has been formed by the Lord Jesus himself.

Without the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, death would remain an enemy to be feared, because death is present because of our sin, which is everywhere.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3, 23. But through the grace of God in sending his Son, Jesus Christ, to take on himself sin and its judgment, death, the sting of death is taken away.

When that is the case, death loses its terrors, and the believer in Jesus can concentrate on the glorious freedom and purity of our heavenly home.

[1 : 06] That is why, when Stephen was brutally stoned to death, as we read in Acts chapter 7, the Bible could say that he fell asleep. Could anything be more contradictory than that?

With his head bashed in by stones, he fell asleep. Was the Bible being unrealistic? By no means. Make no bones about it.

Poor Stephen's death was painful in the extreme, but God was with him, giving him the grace and courage he needed at that moment. And then God took him home, to his eternal rest.

He fell asleep in the arms of Christ. The death experiences of Christians vary, as is true for non-Christians as well. But for the Christian, there is the sure hope that death has a door that opens into heaven, no matter the circumstance of our going.

And a prayer. Dear Lord Jesus, thank you that by your death and resurrection, I may not fear death, and I may trust you to the end. Amen.

[2 : 16] Amen.