

WHY MEN SUFFER

In the school of life, suffering is very much a part of it. Because we were born in sin and born of sinful parents, suffering will follow us until death, in one way or another. When sin entered the Garden of Eden, then the curse entered with it. Therefore, suffering, generally speaking, is a result of sin. David confessed it this way when he was found guilty of adultery and homicide: Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; my mother was sinful who conceived me (Psalm 51:5-6). The Apostle Paul confirms: therefore, as sin came into the world through one man and death as a result of sin, so death spread to all men, because all men sinned (Rom. 5:12). And we were then by nature children of [God's] wrath and heirs of [His] indignation (Eph. 2:3b). The Prophet Jeremiah puts all in perspective: Why does a living man sigh [and why does] a man complain for the punishment of his sin? Let us test and examine our ways and let us return to the Lord; let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven (Lam. 3: 39-41).

The Word of God through the writings of Paul says, Do not be deceived and deluded and misled; God will not allow Himself to be sneered at. For whatever a man sows that and that only is what he will reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap decay and ruin and destruction, but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life (Gal. 6:7-8). The law of sowing and reaping will come to all of us with good or bad consequences. Blaming God for the fruit of our sinful actions is evil; complaining for its consequences will only lead one to confusion of the mind and to self-misleading. Sufferings, however, are not always the result of sin as we see in the life of YAHSHUA.



He took upon Himself the sufferings of the world through persecution, rejection, mockery; He was beaten to the point of being disfigured and finally He was nailed to a cross - a horrible death by the hands of those who did not know Him – gentiles (Romans) and indirectly by those who knew Him (Jews). Although for those sinners and for the entire world He was suffering: “Just think of Him who endured from sinners such grievous opposition and bitter hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or exhausted, losing heart and relaxing and fainting in your minds. You have not yet struggled and fought agonizingly against sin, nor have you yet resisted and withstood to the point of pouring out your [own] blood” (Heb. 12:3-4). He told His disciples that if they persecuted Him, they will also persecute them (John 15: 20b) for the hatred that governed the hearts of those who hated YAHSHUA was going to be spilled out on those who loved Him by means of persecution and ultimately death. The Apostle Peter considered suffering for the Lord to be a privilege. He said, But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or any sort of criminal, or as a mischief-maker. But if [one is ill-treated and suffers] as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but give glory to God that he is [deemed worthy to suffer] in this name...therefore, those who are ill- treated and suffer in accordance with God’s will must do right and commit their souls to the One Who created [them] and will never fail [them] (1 Peter 4:15-16, 19).

What comfort is there to suffer for our faith? The comfort is found in knowing that death is just an open door to heaven for all believers in YAHSHUA. There is hope beyond earthly suffering according to Paul who said, And if we are [His]

children, then we are [His] heirs also; heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ; only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory. **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth being compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us and for us and conferred on us!** (Rom. 8: 17-18). YAHSHUA, in His sermon of the mount echoed these words of comfort to those who were persecuted for righteousness: Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things against you falsely on My account. **Be glad and supremely joyful, for your reward in heaven is great,** for in this same way people persecuted the prophets who were before you (Matt. 5: 10b-12). Who would see it a blessing to be persecuted when there is no apparent joy in losing family, earthly possessions; there is no apparent joy in watching family being beheaded; when there is no joy in wandering the earth looking for a place to lay one's head and there is no joy in being hungry and thirsty in the human mind? Only in the words of hope from YAHSHUA, "be glad and supremely joyful, for your reward is heaven is great" outweigh all discomfort and doubts that suffering brings to life. Paul emphasized this hope in his letter to the Romans: earthly sufferings are not to be compared with the glory that will be revealed, if we are suffering as part of sharing His suffering. The primary reason for the Christian suffering is the fulfillment of God's will in each of our lives- sanctification. Peter said, and after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, Who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ YAHSHUA, will Himself complete and make you what you ought to be, establish and ground you securely and strengthen and settle you (I Peter 4:10). YAHSHUA through His Holy Spirit is preparing His bride to present her to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such things (Ephesians 5:27). As gold or silver must go through the process of refining to bring its shine, we too, must go through refining to rid of all the imperfection and uncleanness so to be molded in the image of Christ, God's Son. For those whom He foreknew, He also destined from the beginning to be molded into the image of His Son, that He might become the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29). Suffering then is sometimes for the believer, the road to sanctification. This word embraces a total spectrum of its circumference in his life. Because our sinful nature is prone to sin, many times we walk in disobedience to our heavenly Father. As such we must go through God's correction and discipline. He disciplines us that we may **become sharers in His own holiness;** for the time being no discipline brings joy, but seems grievous and painful; but afterwards it yields a peaceable fruit of righteousness to

those who have been trained by it [in conformity to God's will in purpose, thought an action, resulting in right living and right standing with God] (Heb. 12:6-12). The perfect will of God for all believers in suffering is his sanctification.

Those who suffered and are suffering martyrdom for the sake of Christ, left and are leaving footprints behind while walking the valley to their death. They do not turn around, but persevere and endure with hope and faith, as our Savior did, "Who for the joy [of obtaining the prize] that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising and ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:3b). Yesterday's and today's faithful servants of God received and will receive the promised hope when heaven's door will be opened to receive them with a great welcome. They, like all the heroes and heroines of the faith mentioned in the letter to the Hebrews chapter 11, were and are sustained by faith and were and will be rewarded in eternity. These were men and women "of whom the world was not worthy."

There are many Christians suffering today for their faith. Many have been beheaded and burned alive and many have been crucified; many have lost earthly good and have been destitute, forsaken with no place to make it a home. Many continue on this road of persecution, where justice seemed to have turned its back toward them and nothing has been done to alleviate their sufferings. But the words of comfort from YAHSHUA continue reaching out to them: I will never leave nor forsake you. As a matter of fact, that's the time when YAHSHUA seems to be nearer to all who are suffering for Him with His promise still standing: Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you; for I am going away to prepare a place for you; peace I leave with you; My peace I now give and bequeath to you. Not as the world give do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid (John 14: 1-2,27).

YAHSHUA, who was without sin, became sin for us. He suffered unjustly so that His righteousness will be inputted on us. His bodily and emotional sufferings took away the suffering that condemned us to eternal death. His shed blood sealed and ratified the everlasting agreement or the new covenant. Now we are under no more condemnation! Rejoice and exult in hope; be steadfast and patient in suffering and tribulation; be constant in prayer (Rom. 12:12). So press on, my friend, toward the goal to win the [supreme and heavenly] prize to which God in

Christ is calling us upward; for He who promised is reliable and faithful to His word! (Phil. 3:14; Heb. 10:23b).



THINK ABOUT IT!