

## The Need For Suffering II

By Greg Rangel

There are many things that take place in this life of ours that we don't fully understand. Life does become very difficult some times that we feel like there is nothing or no one that we can turn to. Why things take place only God knows.

Jesus said in John 16:33 *"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."* Jesus knew that difficult times for those who believed in Him was a sure thing. And that is because the world hated Him, and no doubt they would hate us as well. It is for that very reason that the majority of the Apostles with the exception of John the beloved died at the hands of their enemies. For example, James the brother of John was killed with a sword in A.D. 36. Thomas was killed in India. Simon was crucified. Bartholomew was beaten and crucified and beheaded in Albinopolis, Armenia. Andrew was also crucified in A.D. 80. Matthew was killed by a spear. And as Peter was running for his life, tradition says that the Lord Jesus met him. Upon asking the Lord, "Lord, where are You going?" the Lord replied, "I am come again to be crucified." Peter returned to the city where he was crucified head down at his own request because he said that he was not worthy to be crucified the same way Jesus was.

There are many false Word of Faith teachers that will tell you that God wants you to live a very successful life without having any poverty, sickness, or any type of suffering. But that is far from the truth. These folks unfortunately teach another Gospel and are leading many astray (see Jude). The truth of the matter is that, we live in a world that is corrupted and hates the name of Jesus. Those that live totally for Jesus will be hated and killed (see Hebrews 11). This world is not our home and we should not fall in love with it. John wrote, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever"* (1 John 2:15-17).

When Paul was around he taught this truth to the churches because he knew that suffering in this life was a must. It is for that reason that Acts 14:21-22 says, *"And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that **we must** through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."* Did you catch that? Did Paul teach a Gospel of being successful and rich and without sickness while he was around? No he didn't. Once again he stated that *"we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God."*

The Greek word for tribulation is "*Thlipsis*." The meaning of this word is being under pressure as the olives are when they are squeezing them for oil.

That is how life feels at times when you are trying to live a godly life in the middle of this dark and wicked world. You get attacked every which way. You feel like if everyone is against you. And unfortunately they will be if you are faithful to the Lord in everything.

Even though we don't like the suffering part of life, the tribulations do work for good (Romans 8:28). The tribulations do produce patience in us. Paul wrote in Romans 5:3-4, "*And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope:*"

Tribulations do produce patience in our life. That is, it produces the ability to resist during great opposition and great obstacles. Through tribulations our faith is made strong. Let us not forget that the world hates the name of Jesus, and will also hate those that live totally for Jesus.