

# Addictions Are Not Your Real Problem

part 3c

## Rule of the Lambs

*To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen*  
Rev 1:5b-6

### Operation Gideon: The Healing of the Land

Winston Churchill called Uganda “the pearl of Africa.” “It was called a pearl because of its stunning green valleys, vast lakes, and tall mountains. Its high altitude gives it a cooler climate than other places on the equator. . . .” “Everywhere you look is green.” (Answers.yahoo, under “why was uganda called the pearl of Africa.”)

But this pearl has undergone what Jan Egeland, U.N. undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs, described in 2004 as “the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.” “Since 1986, LRA [Lord’s Resistance Army] rebels, led by Sudan-financed Joseph Kony, have tortured and killed tens of thousands of people and kidnapped more than 25,000 children and made them [sex] slaves or child-soldiers.” (http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/uganda-needs-talks-not-more-fighting-says-gulu-archbishop)

Furthermore, that began in the wake of the worst dictatorship in Africa, Idi Amin’s reign of terror, from 1971 to 1979, which followed the harsh dictatorship of Milton Obote, who continued again after Amin until 1985.

But what Satan meant for evil, “God meant if for good.” For the intense persecution and wholesale slaughter of Ugandan believers drove those who remained to seek God day and night until His presence and victory brought great deliverance through Yoweri Museveni, who became Uganda’s first Christian president in 1986. (Gen 50:20)

While the rest of the world celebrated New Year’s Eve with revelry and partying, Museveni and his godly wife led the nation from its Kampala stadium in a prayer renouncing Uganda’s witchcraft and idolatry and dedicated it to “the purposes of God.”

And non too soon, for despite international pressure and the superior Ugandan army, the LRA seem to escape every trap with uncanny, supernatural ability, and held the northern areas of Uganda in terror, causing people there to flee to refugee camps in the south.

“Throughout the 1990s, Uganda’s military grew increasingly frustrated by its inability to subdue the LRA. Given their superior fire power and training, it did not make sense how they could not overcome the rebels.

“Mysterious things would happen. Many times, Kony and his forces would be surrounded, but would mysteriously escape. The [demon] spirits would routinely inform Kony of government raids. Many times, it seemed that Kony already knew when the government forces would be coming and even how many government troops there were. He could even tell the exact route that the UPDF would be using to attack them.”

But again, as during Amin’s reign, the church went back to intense prayer with fasting. And its leaders began to hear from God. He showed them the source of their demonic guidance—three centers of witchcraft in the north.

In 2003 the Ugandan military, commissioned by President Museveni, launched Operation Gideon. escorting the spiritual leaders in military vehicles and a helicopter to these areas. The army officers were afraid to approach these ritual sites until they saw the fearless boldness of the men of God as they took dominion. By the time the most dangerous of the sites was cleansed, the soldiers had turned to Christ and were baptized in the same water that had held deadly demonic power.

With the “strong man” bound (Mt 12:29), the source of the LRA’s mysterious power was gone. Kony “finally told his commanders the spirits had left him. This was the beginning of the turning point in the war with the LRA.” (http://www.sentinelgroup.org/fire-quest/africa/uganda/lessons-from-an-unconventional-war/)

Since then the nation has gradually returned to normal and the LRA is down to a few hundred hiding somewhere in the Central African Republic. (www.wikipedia.org under “Lord’s Resistance Army”)

### Kingdom dominion

I believe God has used Uganda as another model of how this age will play out. While the majority (?) of believers in the comfortable American church happily await “the rapture,” many others consider the seriousness of Jesus warning: “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Lu 21:36).

Paul also warned his readers to *watch*, “so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. . . . For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Th 5:6,9). The escape from God’s wrath occurs within the same context as Jesus’ warning: “watch and pray” to “be counted worthy.”

For tribulation and our escape from it are intimately tied to our purpose: to take dominion over the planet, even as the Ugandan believers “overcame” the powers of darkness and brought deliverance to their country.

In the King James and New King James Bibles, the word *rule* appears three times in Revelation: The first is “he who overcomes” will be given authority over the nations to “rule them with a rod of iron (2:26-27); the second tells of “a woman clothed with the sun” who gives birth to “a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron” (12:5).

And of the third, Jesus returns with the army of His saints, and “out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron.” (19:15a)

Since the *overcomers* rule in union with Christ, His rule is *their* rule: He rules with and through them, setting them “over the works of [His] hands.” But the Greek word for rule in all three cases is not the rule of the world, with its *emphasis* on authority and dominion, but the word *poimaino*, to tend or feed as a shepherd his sheep. (2 Sam 7:8; Ps 78:70-72)

Peter uses the same word when he tells church leaders to “shepherd the flock of God,” willingly, eagerly, and to set a good example as a role model. What then does shepherding the nations have to do with “a rod of iron,” where “they shall be dashed to pieces like the potters vessels”? That doesn’t sound like the gentleness of a *shepherd*. (1 Pet. 5:2)

I’ll answer with a question: Why do some people “hate the police” or anyone who corrects them harshly? They don’t realize God, our *Chief Shepherd*, uses the hardest *rods of iron* to break down our rebellious hearts, not because He wants to *dominate* us, but because He wants to love, nourish, and care for us. When “the *Lord* is my *Shepherd*, I shall not want,” but Satan “rules” to “kill and destroy.” (Jer 25, 27; Jud 2-4, etc; Ps. 23:1; Pr 17:11;

Jn 10:10; Php. 4:19; Heb 12).

Solomon said, “He who refuses correction goes astray” (like a lost sheep), and “he who hates correction is stupid.” It’s *stupid* because we tend to “bite the hand that feeds us,” like a wild, wounded animal being rescued from its trap to be nursed back to health and set free. (Pr. 10:17b; 12:1b)

The book of Revelation contains three increasingly destructive levels of tribulation with three purposes: (1) to drive people to an intimate relationship with God through the Lamb, Jesus Christ, so He can *love* and *shepherd* them; (2) to prepare *them* to rule as shepherds or priest-kings; (3) to deal with the wicked, those for whom no amount of suffering and tribulation will soften their hearts, and who *blaspheme* God as they gnaw their tongues in pain, but refuse to repent! (Rev. ch. 6-9; ch. 16)

Out of the various views on how much of the Great Tribulation *believers* will go through, if any, what guides my view is whatever it takes to accomplish points 1 and 2 above. (Zech 13:9; Mal 3:1-4; Jn. 13:12-17; Heb 3-4, 12; Ps 78:7-11)

For example, God tells us to love, pray for, and even *reward* our enemies with acts of kindness. Our heart should be so full of love that when we see them being “punished” for their wickedness, we shouldn’t think, *I knew it was coming*, but instead experience genuine sorrow, looking for ways to minister to them in love, asking God to have mercy on them, as Moses did. (Ex 32:31-32; Pr 24:17-18; Rom 12:17-21; 1 Cor 13:4-7)

This is what Jesus came to do, and it’s what He told His disciples to do through their *revelation* of Him as Messiah. Christ is N.T. Greek for *anointed One*, as Messiah is in O.T. Hebrew. He was *anointed* “to preach the Gospel to the poor . . . heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Lu 4:18, Is 61:1).

Then He gave His disciples (us) the *authority to bind* and *loose* things in the spirit realm that would affect the natural realm—through the *same anointing to do the same things Jesus did!* (Mt 10:1; Lu 10:9, 19; Mk 16:16-19; 1 Cor 12)

It begins with *prayer*. But prayer begins with *character*. “You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.” The next verse says that to be a *friend of the world* is to be an *enemy of God*. That’s pretty serious! Read it—Jam 4:1-4. (1 Jn 2:15-17)

### Are believers ready for the rapture?

Of the seven churches in Revelation 2-3, only the church of Philadelphia (“brotherly love”) was ready for what lay ahead because they’d *already persevered through suffering*. Jesus said, “I will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.” And opinions are divided over whether being “kept” means “raptured” or miraculously protected *during* the Tribulation. (Rev. 3:10)

The church at Smyrna was *almost* ready, because they too *had allowed tribulation and hardship to purify them*, and had only a little more (“ten days”) to endure. (Rev. 2:8-10)

The church at Ephesus, known for its endurance, warning against false teachers, and faithful labor for God, had “left [its] first love” (“dead works”), and Jesus was about to “remove [their] lampstand [His Spirit and Presence] from its place” (Rev 2:1-5). (Song 1:6; Eph 2:8-10; Heb 6:1)

That has to be one of the scariest scenarios in the Bible, considering we put this kind of church at the top of the list. And equally sobering is that the church at Sardis had a reputation for being “alive,” but in fact, were dead or almost dead, spiritually. I wonder what Jesus would say about many of our “seeker friendly” churches today? (Rev 3:1-2; Rom 3:20, 27-28)

Jesus gave the churches at Pergamos and Thyatira strong

warnings because they failed to deal with idolatry and sexual immorality among their members. The church at Laodicea was “lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot.” He told them, “I will vomit you out of my mouth” (Rev 2:12-24; 3:14-20).

How many *lukewarm* believers are confidently waiting to be “translated” (raptured) like Enoch? What about those caught up in materialism (idolatry)? And “believing” unmarried couples living together with no conviction of sin and no warning from their spiritual leaders. (Rev 21:8; 22:15; Heb 11:5-6; 13:4; Gen 5:24; 2 Ki 2; Gal 5:19-21; Col 3:1-5; Eph 5:3-6 ) Ez

These seven churches describe typical churches today. When I was a kid in the 1940s and 50s, I remember often hearing sermons warning us, “Watch and pray; be ready!” regarding the coming of the Lord and the Great Tribulation. No more; now it’s “Don’t worry, we won’t be here.”

Look up these scriptures and see where you stand: Zeph 2:3; Mal 3:2; Mt 24:42; 25:13; 26 :41, Mk 13:33,37; Lu 12:37-40; 21:36; 1 Cor 16:13; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:27; 6:13-14; 1 Thes 5:2-9; 2 Tim 4:5; 1 Pet 4:7; 5:8; 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 7:9-14; 14:4-5; 19:7.

### The key to authority

In Revelation God gives us a view of His throne and some insight into how it operates. It’s important to us, because it’s where the *overcomers* will be seated. Plus it reveals how God rules—*shepherds*—the earth. (Lu 22:30; Rev 3:21; 20:4)

A priest had to “have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness.” In God’s kingdom, only *shepherd-priests* rule because His throne is one of mercy, not merely judgment. “There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others.” “But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when He judges you” (Heb 5:2; Jam 2:13, NLT; 1 Pet. 2:9a).

Of the ten times the New Testament speaks of the saints *reigning* with Christ, judging the world, or sitting on His throne or on thrones, five are connected with suffering (persecution) or martyrdom, two are linked with priestly ministry, and three simply state the fact . (Mt. 19:28 with Lu. 22:28-30; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:21; 20:4-6; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 1 Cor 6:2-3; Eph 1:22; Rev 22:5)

In case it’s not clear yet, suffering (trusting *God* in “weaknesses . . . insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles”) humbles and mellows us, breaks arrogance and need for revenge, weakens human zeal (like the churches at Ephesus and Sardis), deals with disobedience and sin (Pergamos and Thyatira), rekindles hunger to know God (Laodicea), and enables us to *understand* others and feel their pain (Smyrna and Philadelphia). (Rev 2-3; Pr 24:17; Rom 12:19-21; Ps 40:1-4; Pr 3:5-7; Is 50:10-11; 2 Cor 12:10 NLT)

Why did God allow Hitler—His *rod of correction* (Is 10:5; Jer 50:23; 51:20)—to remain so long in power, with *forty-two* failed assassination attempts aimed at him? (Wiki.answers.com and many other websites) (Lam 3:37-39; Dan 2:21; 4:17, 25, 32)

“Forty two is a number connected with Antichrist. An important part of his career is to last for 42 months (Rev 11:2; 13:5). . . . *Forty-two* stages of Israel’s wanderings mark their conflict with the will of God [Num 33:1-49]. *Forty-two* young men mocked the ascension of Elijah at Elisha, 2 Kings 2:23,24.” (Bullinger, E.W., *Number in Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1975. 268

Print.)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer organized a plan to assassinate him, thinking to rid the world of this destroyer. Books and movies glorify this dedicated, selfless man whom Hitler hanged. You may disagree, but I expect to see millions of Jews in heaven, as well as “a great multitude” of others, humbled to deep and profound repentance during their horrific ordeal under Hitler and Stalin. It’s unfortunate that it takes such terror to get our attention and hold it, but that’s how far we’ve “fallen.”

I believe the example of Corrie Ten Boom and her family is the biblical pattern of response to Hitler’s genocide. Knowing God was in control of world events, they directed their energies not at Hitler but at hiding Jews, fulfilling God’s mandate that we be our “brother’s keeper.” Many paid the price of suffering and death, but through Corrie’s book and movie, *The Hiding Place*, the world saw the real meaning of Christianity—the Sacrifice of Christ displayed in the flesh and blood of His people. (Col 1:24; 1 Tim 1:16; 2 Tim 2:22)

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, in his classic (book), *The Gulag Archipelago*, wrote of the extensive prison system in the Soviet Union under Communism and Stalin. Why would God allow this dictator to drag his country through 29 years of hell (1924-53), during which wave after wave of all levels of people, and thousands of his own party members from the bottom to the very top, were arrested, interrogated under torture, and imprisoned under any false pretext, mostly to fill a quota for the expanding prisons and labor camps?

He imprisoned his own soldiers, who fought valiantly for him, if they fought on foreign soil—even if they’d been prisoners of war in that country—as soon as they returned. For they might have reason to feel the Soviet system was inferior to the country where they’d fought. For that reason, their children, wives, and relatives also might also be arrested and imprisoned. As well as anyone who might have visited another country or have any reason to hint at disrespect toward Stalin and his government, as in conversation or a letter. Which is how Solzhenitsyn himself ended up imprisoned eight years there.

My only explanation is that through this ordeal, the worst and the best came out in the sufferers—all hearts were laid bare, for cleansing or judgment. It’s the biblical view of tribulation, which “produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us” (Rom 5:3-5; see Dt 8:2; Pr 20:30; 2 Cor 4:17; Heb 12:10-11).

I show a video clip at jail of Chinese believers in the “underground church” (to hide from persecution). I see inmates watching with tears the intensity and sincerity of these saints, willing to lose their lives for the truth of the Gospel. Many large groups have no Bibles and will stand twelve hours at a time worshiping and listening to someone who knows the Word. If their leaders are caught, they are imprisoned to hard labor and maybe tortured. (Wilson, Darren. *Finger of God*. Wanderlust Productions. 2006)

A pastor told me believers in China sent word that American Christians should pray, *not that persecution will stop, but that God will make them stronger to endure it.*

Viktor Frankl, a Jewish psychiatrist and prisoner in one of Hitler’s concentration camps, observed that inmates who had no sense of meaning about life lost hope, had no concern for the suffering around them, and died before their time. But those who had a sense of purpose not only felt concern and love for the others, but stayed alive much longer. Frankl not only survived the ordeal but developed a psychotherapy based on his observations. His book describing it is *Logotherapy, Man’s Search for Meaning*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006)

### Measuring the Temple

Throughout the judgments in Revelation a dozen times mention is made of various powers of darkness “given” or “granted” *limited* power to destroy. In 11:1-2 John is told to “measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it *has been given* to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.” (Rev 6:2, 4, 8; 7:2; 9:1, 3, 5; 13:5, 7, 14, 15; 16:8)

When God measured, marked, or sealed certain groups or people, he did it for their protection. In this case, it’s the true *worshippers* in the Temple. The “court which is outside the temple” refers to those “given” over to tribulation forty-two months (1260 days), the period of the time the Antichrist is “given authority” to reign. (Ez. 9:4-6, Zech. 2:1-5, Rev. 7:3; 11:2; 12:6; 13:5; 14:1)

Views differ about whom this courtyard area represents, from unbelieving Jews or Gentiles to “lukewarm” believers who are “neither cold nor hot.” They may be among those who “come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” And opinion is divided over whether “out of” means they went *through* the tribulation or were delivered *from* it. (Rev. 3:14-18; 7:14).

My view of *eschatology* (study of the last days) relates to my understanding of God’s purpose. If our goal is simply to worship God and enjoy the glories of heaven for eternity, then maybe “the trying of your faith” is not that critical. But if our destiny is also to *rule* and *reign* with Christ, to *judge the world* and even *angels*, and to demonstrate to the whole angelic realm God’s wisdom, then obviously it’s safer to take *preparation* seriously. Because too many scriptures *warn* of carelessness, distractions, and even good works that don’t come from *knowing God*, as with Ephesus. (Mt 7:15-23; Lu 21:36; Heb 2:1; 4:11; 11:5-6; 12:25-29; 1 Pet 1:7; Jam 1:2-4, 12)

But also because of the biblical *purpose of authority*. For as John wept, one of the elders there in heaven’s throne room told him, “Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals” (Rev. 5:1-6; 3:7-8; Gen 44:18-34; 1 Chr 5:2).

When John looked, he saw “a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.” Seven horns and eyes symbolize the power and wisdom Christ will use to administer the judgments in just the right portions, avoiding the mistakes humans make when we attempt to solve social and political problems in our limited understanding of God’s ways. (Rev 4:5; 5:6; 1 Sam 2:10; 2 Chr 16:9; Is 11:1-3; Mic 4:13; Zech 4:2, 10; Num 8:2; Ps 103:7)

Yet if the saints will *rule* the earth *with* Him, we’ve got to *learn from Him*. And the heart of that learning is a humble attitude. “Take My yoke [burden] upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Pride is stressful; humility is *restful*. “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” “The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way” (Mt. 11:28-30; Pr. 25:9).

### God figs, bad figs

God gave Jeremiah a vision describing two kinds of people after King Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and carried off ten thousand captives to Babylon in 598 BC, including King Jehoiachin. God compared them to “good figs” because, torn from their false security in Jerusalem, they would eventually seek God spiritually “with all [their] heart” (Jer 29:10-14).

In the thirty seventh year the king of Babylon released King Jehoiachin from prison, “spoke kindly to him, and gave

him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who were with him in Babylon,” including eating with the king “all the days of his life.” Not a bad reward for getting right with God! (2 Ki 24-25)

On the other hand, those who remained in Jerusalem, God compared to “bad figs which cannot be eaten, they are so bad.” Led by King Zedekiah, they refused to listen to Jeremiah’s warning to submit to Nebuchadnezzar as God’s servant (the “police”) for correction. So God “will deliver them to trouble . . . for their harm” and consume them with “the sword, the famine, and the pestilence [disease]” (Jer 24-25, 29; 2 Chr 36).

Zedekiah didn’t enjoy the blessing his nephew Jehoiachin experienced in Babylon, for Nebuchadnezzar gouged out his eyes after killing his sons and nobles—all “bad figs”! (2 Ki 25:2-7; 2 Chr 36:11-21)

Daniel had been taken captive to Babylon seven years earlier (605 BC) under Nebuchadnezzar’s first invasion. He and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, show us clearly what God meant by “good figs”: God used them to display His glory right in Babylon, through Daniel interpreting Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams, through protecting Daniel’s friends in the fiery furnace, through their wisdom in high government positions under the king; and under the Persian king, Darius, Daniel’s deliverance in the lions’ den. (Dan 1-6)

If ol’ Nebby is in heaven, it’s only because of Daniel’s understanding that God is *sovereign* in *every* situation, and *our responsibility* is to *find out what He wants us to do about it in the spirit realm* (take dominion) instead of complaining and worrying! (Dan 4; Amos 3:7; Heb 11)

But there’s more to good-fig-Daniel. Instead of judging and criticizing his “lukewarm” fellow-Jews, who’d no doubt bowed down to the gold image unlike Daniel’s three friends who refused, Daniel prayed “with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes” repenting on their behalf for all the sins that led to the captivity and the destruction of the Holy City. (Dan 9:2-23; 1 Jn 5:16)

No wonder he was “greatly beloved” by the Lord, who opened to him the whole future down to our time, like the book of Revelation. Not only that, but his prayer set in motion the spiritual battle between the highest ranking angels on both sides—Satan and God, and prepared the way for the return of the Jews to Jerusalem under the Persian king, Cyrus.

God, through Jeremiah, had said it would happen after “seventy years,” and through Isaiah, 150 years earlier, that it would happen through Cyrus. But Daniel “made it happen” through his humble prayer. (2 Chr 36:21-23; Is 44:28; 45:1, 11; Jer 25:11-12; 27:7; 29:10; Dan 9:2; Am 3:7-8; Mt 16:19)

For dominion and spiritual warfare have nothing to do with “carnal” weapons in the “flesh and blood” realm, but with *removing the legal rights* Satan and his demons have to interfere with and destroy our lives. Especially since Jesus once and for all defeated Satan at the cross. (1 Cor 2:8)

Notice *how* He won this eternity-altering battle: “He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, He disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by His victory over them on the cross” (Col 2:14-15 NLT).

Hebrews 2:14 gives us another angle: “Because God’s children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could He die, and only by dying could He break the power of the devil, who had the power of death” (NLT).

If Michael the archangel, in command of God’s army, has two thirds of the angels and God on his side, why does he not cast the dragon, the devil, down to earth until the end of this age in Revelation 12:7-9, though this battle may describe the final

result of a war that has raged since before the Fall of man?

The reason is given in verse 10-11, where Satan is seen as “the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night.” Where does he get his right to accuse us? *From us!* He uses our own accusations against one another as “state-evidence” in court for his “prosecution.” (Rev 12:10; Pr 24:17-18; 1 Cor 13:7; Eph 4:3; Col 3:13; 1 Pet 4:8)

Jesus intercedes for us as our “defense attorney” based also on *our spoken words*. Think of the power we have in prayer for one another, knowing Jesus personally takes our prayer before His Father’s throne as we pray according to His will—even asking God to give life (favor, mercy) for a brother who sins “not unto death,” not willfully, as in Numbers 15:30-36 and Hebrews 10:26, but through his weakness. (1 Jn 5:15-16; Eph 4:2, 32; Col 3:13; 1 Pet 4:8)

“Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death” (Rev. 12:10-11).

That’s how God defeated the Cali Cartel. He used Jorge Salcedo and government armies, probably backed by angels, as his means, but only as His church legally cleared out the *spiritual* hindrance—hundreds of Christian ministers who proclaimed the same message of redemption, but who *refused to apply it to one another*. And the minister who led the healing of Christ’s Body, the church, Julio Ruibal, ended up giving his life “unto death” through an assassin.

That’s why “the fellowship of His suffering” is the key to “the power of His resurrection.” It’s *participating with Christ in His suffering* as though *in* Him, “in Christ.” The very thing we might complain about should be the very thing that brings us into deepest intimacy with Him. No wonder Daniel’s friends end up in fellowship with “the Son of God” in the middle of the fire! (Php 3:10; Dan 3:25)

It’s the New Testament standard—*rejoicing* in tribulation, counting it all *joy!* It’s part of our calling as *royal priests*—compassionate, but with spiritual authority—the *shepherd kind*—to turn the curse into a blessing for the needy! (2 Cor 4:7-18; 12:9-10; 1 Pet 1:6-8: 4:13)

Solzhenitsyn found in the Soviet prisons those who let everything go—possessions, family, freedom, and said, “From today on, my body is useless [for comfort] and alien to me. Only my spirit and my conscience remain precious and important to me.” Confronted by such a prisoner, the [interrogator] will tremble. Only the man who has renounced everything can win that victory.” (p. 130; Mk 10:29-30; Lu 22:28-29; Jn 12:24-26)

On the way home from the Orlando prison one day, I felt guilty, knowing I could never stand the torture of being burned alive, as so many martyrs endured, reading about them in the book *Jesus Freaks*. As I pondered this, feeling like a failure, suddenly the glory of God came over me in a unique way. In that moment I *knew* I—yet not I, but Christ-in-me through the Spirit—could endure with the same victory they enjoyed. (Act 7:55; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 3:16; 1 Pet 4:14)

Isaiah said, “The whole earth is *full* of His glory.” Now! Yes, I believe in a literal heaven, but its *authority* and *glory* are available now to anyone who will receive it with childlike faith and learn to follow the Lamb from the Cross to the Throne. It’s the dominion through which God will reclaim this planet for Himself—and us.

It’s His idea, His grace, His ability in us, for His glory.

All we have to do is follow Him. For *we who truly believe are the only Bible most of the world will ever read.* (Is 6:3; Ps 72:19; Lu 22:27-30; Jn 12:24-26; 2 Cor 3:2; 4:6-18; Eph 1:17-23; Php 2:5-8; Heb 1:3; Rev 14:4)

*Scriptures from the New King James Bible  
unless otherwise noted  
2014 Victor Dodswite  
[www.heartsup.org](http://www.heartsup.org)*