



Advanced Bible Correspondence Course

Lesson 1 The Only Comfort

LORD'S DAY 1

Q. 1. WHAT IS THY ONLY COMFORT IN LIFE AND DEATH?

ANSWER: THAT I WITH BODY AND SOUL, BOTH IN LIFE AND DEATH (A) AM NOT MY OWN (B), BUT BELONG UNTO MY FAITHFUL SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST (C); WHO, WITH HIS PRECIOUS BLOOD, HAS FULLY SATISFIED FOR ALL MY SINS (D), AND DELIVERED ME FROM ALL THE POWER OF THE DEVIL (E) AND SO PRESERVES ME (F) THAT WITHOUT THE WILL OF MY HEAVENLY FATHER, NOT A HAIR CAN FALL FROM MY HEAD (G); YEA, THAT ALL THINGS MUST BE SUBSERVIENT TO MY SALVATION (H), AND THEREFORE, BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT, HE ALSO ASSURES ME OF ETERNAL LIFE (I), AND MAKES ME SINCERELY WILLING AND READY, HENCEFORTH, TO LIVE UNTO HIM (K)

**(A) ROMANS 14:8 (B) I CORINTHIANS 6:19 (C) I CORINTHIANS 3:23, TITUS 2:14
(D) I PETER 1:18&19, I JOHN 1:7 AND 2:2&12 (E) HEBREWS 2:14, I JOHN 3:8,
JOHN 8:34-36 (F) JOHN 6:39 AND 10:28, II THESSALONIANS 3:3, I PETER 1:5
(G) MATTHEW 10:30, LUKE 21:18 (H) ROMANS 8:28 (I) II CORINTHIANS 1:22 AND 5:5,
EPHESIANS 1:14, ROMANS 8:16 (K) ROMANS 8:14, I JOHN 3:3**

Comfort is Necessary

In Psalm 90:10 we read that the most perfect times of our years are but labour and sorrow. This means that even in the best times of our life there is labour and sorrow. This is due to the fall into sin (Genesis 3). Before the fall, everything was good. If man had not sinned, everything would have remained good. In labour and sorrow we need comfort. Comfort means to put something good over against sorrow. Comfort even exceeds sorrow. The word “comfort” has a broader meaning than consolation: it also means “vitality” and “courage to live”. We need this comfort throughout our life. We also need comfort when we die.

The only Comfort

The instructor inquires after this only comfort in this first question.

The Christian responds: “I am not my own anymore but I belong to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. As a descendant of sinful Adam I belonged to Satan, who is after my ruin. Sin lived in me. I was subject to sin. Righteous punishment had to

follow. But Christ purchased my freedom from imprisonment. For this reason, He gave everything He had: His life. Especially on Calvary. There He shed His blood. Not only did He redeem me, like a slave could be bought to be redeemed, but set me at liberty indeed. I was bound with a thousand fetters to Satan and sin, so that I could not deliver myself. But He set me free. I can never utterly slide back into the power of the devil again. I am now a child of God, because Christ has delivered me. I have a Father in heaven. He cares for me as long as I live. All things happening to me must work together for my good. And even death is a gate to heaven for me. The Holy Spirit always gives assurance of all this in my heart.

The Holy Spirit makes me thankful for all this. It is my desire to show this thankfulness in a sincere willingness to live unto God and to serve Him. This is what I call heavenly bliss!”

The question is here very personal: “Your comfort” not somebody else’s. Being saved is so personal. And it is not transferable either.

There is only one comfort. All other things on which we rest, such as health, a happy life, money, friends, and relatives, all will fall away one day. Do we know that comfort? We may know the answer by means of the following questions.

Q.2. HOW MANY THINGS ARE NECESSARY FOR THEE TO KNOW, THAT THOU, ENJOYING THIS COMFORT, MAYEST LIVE AND DIE HAPPILY?

ANSWER: THREE; (A) THE FIRST, HOW GREAT MY SINS AND MISERIES ARE (B); THE SECOND, HOW THAT I MAY BE DELIVERED FROM ALL MY SINS AND MISERIES (C); THE THIRD, HOW I SHALL EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE TO GOD FOR SUCH DELIVERANCE (D).

(A) MATTHEW 11:28-30, EPHESIANS 5:8 (B) JOHN 9:41, MATTHEW 9:12, ROMANS 3:10,

I JOHN 1:9&10 (C) JOHN 17:3, ACTS 4:12 AND 10:43 (D) EPHESIANS 5:10, PSALM 50:14, MATTHEW 5:16, I PETER 2:12, ROMANS 6:13, II TIMOTHY 2:15

The Three Things

In Psalm 50:15, we read that the Lord says, “*And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.*” In this verse we read of misery, deliverance and gratitude.

In the answer to question 1 we have read how well off a Christian really is. Now this question, which is important for each of us, comes to us, “How can I share in this comfort? How can I acquire that blissful, immortal happy life? A life at peace with God, to His honour? And how can I die happily, with the thought that at my awakening a glorious future is awaiting me? How can I learn to say, that is my comfort? What things must I know? What important things do I need to know then?” To know in the biblical sense of the word is to know by experience. For it makes a great deal of difference whether we have experienced these things or if we have only heard or read about them. It is the difference between life and death.

This answer is a brief summary of the epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans. In this answer our attention is drawn to three things: misery, deliverance and thankfulness.

The first thing: the doctrine of misery

Paul instructs us how grave a sinner's condition is, because he is so sinful. The result of sin is misery. The word "misery" implies living in exile, separated from God. If a man dies in this way, he will go to hell for ever. He is not able to save himself from this misery.

What does this misery consist of? Three things.

- a. Sin: sin is the cause that man lives apart from God.
- b. Impotence under sin: man in himself, the way he is born, is incapable of keeping himself from sin. Sin is his master as long as he has no new heart.
- c. Judgment: God punishes sin. This punishment is our just reward.

The second thing: the doctrine of deliverance

Only Christ can save us. The sinner who is convinced of his misery learns to know Him as his Redeemer.

The third thing: the doctrine of thankfulness

When man experiences that he has been saved from sin and misery by Christ, he is beside himself with joy. This joy makes him thankful towards God, to whom he owes everything.

Having knowledge of these three things

Is the experience of a believer such that he passes these three things, one after another, like a train passes three railway stations? No, it is not. It is true, though, that God first show him his sins and misery and in this way He leads the sinner to the Saviour.

Without experiencing misery, all our boasting in Jesus is vain. Christ says: *They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick* (Matthew 9:12). But also after the believer has learned to know Christ as His Saviour, there will always be, for the rest of his life, a deepening of self-knowledge, knowledge of God, and of Christ. The knowledge of misery, deliverance and thankfulness continuously increases. This is also a continuing work of the Holy Spirit. The life of a true believer is characterized by continuous warfare against sin, Satan and the sinful lusts that live in his heart, and by the struggle to stand in the faith.

The apostle Paul writes about this struggle in Romans 7:24&25: *"O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Questions:

1. Where in the Bible do we read about the fall?

2. What exactly happened? Read Genesis 3:6

3. What is meant by comfort?

4. When does someone die happily?

5. What is the only comfort?

6. Where did Christ pay for the sins of His people?

7. How does the Father comfort?

8. Who gives assurance of this comfort?

9. Can a man be sure that he will go to heaven?

10. What is being saved?

11. What will man do in heaven for ever? (Ps. 89:1; Rev. 4:10&11 and 7:10&12)

12. What is misery?

13. How does thankfulness arise?

14. When does man on earth know enough of these three things?