

THE COMFORT OF GOD

(Bro. Bakht Singh, Balance of Truth, 1967, December)

God has made wonderful provision for every part of the body, for example the tear glands, which manufacture tears, help us to shed tears. Now tears can do much more than man can do. Immediately a baby is born it starts crying, and that means it is a healthy child. If the child does not cry at birth, the doctor gets worried about it, and makes every effort to make it to cry. From that day onwards, man continues to shed tears at different times. Some shed tears secretly and some openly, some more and some less. Tears are often a means of relief. When we are sad and discouraged, in shedding a few tears we find much relief. When we do not know where or to whom to go for comfort, or when we are sorrowful, tears are a relief. There are some people who because of shock or sorrow are not able to shed tears, but others will try to make them cry so as to bring relief from sorrow. When some are away from home and become home-sick and lonely they may shed a few tears. There are some tears however which should not be shed!

In Jeremiah 31 you find the Lord is trying to comfort His people who are in great sorrow, and who are discouraged. In verse 16 He says, "Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears, for thy works shall be rewarded". These people had been carried away as captives to a far off strange land, and naturally they shed tears. They had lost their home, their property and everything. They were far away from their homeland and country. Even though the Lord had promised through Jeremiah that they would come back again to Jerusalem after 70 years captivity, they still could not be comforted. They were crying night and day, and were wondering whether they would ever get back that which they had lost, or be brought again into divine favour. They cannot be blamed for shedding tears at that time!

If you are a child of God, you will have to go through all kinds of trial and difficulties in this world, especially in these end days. You may have to go through unexpected difficulties, hardships, and problems. You may think sometimes that your troubles and trials are over, when, after waiting patiently and with much effort you happen to solve a certain problem. Perhaps you think you will be free from troubles for some years, but at last you soon find that your troubles are only just beginning. As one trouble ends the second begins, then the third follows, and also the fourth and so on. Some times we have to face problems which are very very hard to bear.

Certain burdens may be far too heavy to bear, and we feel like weeping and crying, because of these trials and burdens.

If you happen to be going through such a time, you will find comfort in this chapter of Jeremiah 31. Even though you cannot understand fully what the Lord is saying in this chapter, please read it again and again till you can understand it, for there is a message for you in it, which can be applied to your personal, family, or church need, if the enemy is trying to oppress you or distress you and bring tears to your eyes.

There are moments when we cannot be comforted through others. Friends and loved ones with all affection may come to comfort us in our sorrow, but still we are upset and troubled in the inward spirit. Sometimes we know the reason and some times we do not, and we find that the enemy has the power to bring us into this condition of discouragement. If so, there is a message in this chapter for all of us. Through such periods of discouragement and oppression, sometimes the Lord seeks to correct us, instruct us, or chastise us. Sometimes before troubles come, we feel depression, and there is an English proverb which says, "There is calm before a storm." Though your troubles may begin after some weeks or months, the Spirit of God knows the troubles beforehand, and warns you so that you are ready for the storm of troubles. The Lord brings us to His word, whatever the conflict and trouble may be, and we find there is an answer to all such problems in Jer. 31. At such times read this chapter and find relief. Put your name in Chap. 31: 6, and that verse will bring you com fort. Whatever the cause of unhappiness, this verse will bring comfort.

Chapter 31: 1. God is here assuring those that have failed God miserably, and because of their failures and disappointments, stubbornness, and transgression, they had been punished and sent away as captives. Yet God was in effect saying: "Even though I have punished you, I am not refusing to be your God." When you are being punished for any mistakes, or transgression, or failure do not let the enemy bring doubt in your mind that the Lord has forsaken you. Many people say at such times that they have been cast away by God and will not be used any more, but see in verse 2. When the children of Israel were on their way to Babylon they had to go through the wilderness, and the Lord said, "The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness, even Israel, when I went to cause him rest." Even though they were punished severely, the Lord was saying to them on their way: "My grace will not go away from you." Though He used severe means to chastise them

yet His grace was available to them. You, too, may have failed God in some matter and your transgression and failures may be of a very serious nature, yet do not think that these things are going to deprive you of God's grace. In spite of your failure God's grace is available for you in abundance. Do not allow the enemy to bring doubt in your mind. The enemy may say you have lost every opportunity; but remember, you can still claim God's grace. After you have made a full confession to God He will give you His grace in abundance.

Verse 3, the Lord says, "I have loved with an everlasting love." When we confess and repent of our sins, we are loved by God with an everlasting love and we have to claim that everlasting love by faith again and again. "Oh, God I have failed Thee, but Thy love cannot fail". That is how faith has to work. With all your shortcomings and failures, claim His everlasting love.

Verse 4, "Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built." They had built houses and their houses had been burnt down, and they may have thought that they had lost every hope of being restored. But God was saying: "A day is coming when I will build them up again; a day is coming when you will come back to dear old Jerusalem, and there you will be able to rejoice in the presence of God." There is no body who has gone through afflictions as those people went through, but the Lord is giving you also this hope. When you fail God by disobedience persisted in, the time comes when He is not able to use us and we then feel very dry and begin to remember the old days when the Lord blessed and used us. You may say it is due to your own foolishness that you have lost this privilege, but God is reminding you in this chapter that He wants to build up. Even though you have lost your rights and privileges, yet you can be restored, and there is hope for every believer who has fallen.

Verse 5, Palestine was a country of vines, which were a wonderful sight to see, but when these captives were going to Babylon they could never have dreamed of seeing the same old vines again. Yet God was saying: "I will make you a blessing, and you will again plant such vines." The Lord is willing to make our lives increasingly fruitful. That is the promise given to us in Isaiah 51: 3.