

# DOCTRINE OF COMFORT

- I.** Definition and preliminary considerations.
- A.** To comfort is to soothe in distress or sorrow; console. It assumes unpleasant pressure in life. It is designed to give aid and support facilitating ease and quiet enjoyment.
  - B.** Neither the Hebrew or Greek vocabularies for comfort are technical and context determines meanings with such terms having a range of nuances from comfort to exhortation with encouragement somewhere in the middle.
  - C.** This doctrine will center on those verses where the translation of comfort is preferred allowing the nuance of encouragement in affect.
  - D.** The importance of the doctrine includes:
    - 1. In general, “*All scripture...is profitable*”, etc. 2Tim.3:16-17
    - 2. That God is the source of all comfort for the believer is to encourage us to expect comfort in our circumstances. 2Cor.1:3
    - 3. When oriented to this spiritual reality it produces *esprit de corps* and morale during times of affliction. 2Cor.1:4
    - 4. It is to sensitize us as believers to this aspect of grace in our lives and to encourage us to be an instrument of comfort to others. Ex.2Cor.1:5-11
- II.** Vocabulary.
- A.** Hebrew:
- 1. נָחַם – nacham; root meaning “to be sorry, console oneself”; comfort(s), comforted, comforter(s), console, consolers, consoling, give rest, regret, relent, repent, sorry, etc.
  - 2. נִחְמָה – nechamah ; n.,used 2x; consolation/comfort. Job 6:10; Psa.119:50 “*This is my comfort in my affliction, That Your word (Bible doctrine/BD) has revived me*”.
- B.** Greek:
- 1. The cognates: παρακλήσις – paraklesis. Noun used 29x; παρακαλέω – parakaleo. Verb used 108x; συμπαρακαλέομαι – sumparakaleomai. Compound verb used 1x (Rom.1:12); παρακλήτος – parakletos. Adjective used 5x. This family of words is used most often to set fort this doctrine in the N.T.
    - a. The basic etymology means “to call” (kaleo) “alongside” (para).
    - b. The nuance of comfort is often not far removed from contexts where the translation “exhort” is most often appropriate. Cp.Rom.12:8; Heb.3:13
    - c. Sometimes parakaleo takes on a sense of urgency and should be translated “beseech”. Cp.Mat.8:5,31; Rom.12:1; 2Cor.12:8
  - 2. The cognates: παραμυθία – paramuthia. Noun used 1x (1Cor.14:3); παραμύθιον – paramuthion. Noun used 1x (Phi.2:1); παραμυθέομαι – paramutheomai. Verb used 4x (Joh.11:19,31; 1The.2:11; 5:14).
    - a. The etymology means “to speak” (from muthos) and “beside” (para).
    - b. The idea expressed is to speak to someone in a friendly or tender way.
    - c. This word group connotes comfort with a greater degree of tenderness.

3. παρηγορία – paregoria. Noun, hapax (Col.4:11) means comfort. It denotes a soothing. A verbal form of the word signifies medicines that allay irritation (English: paregoric – opium based painkiller).
- III.** God is both the author and source of the believer’s comfort.
- A. Comfort comes from “the mercy pool” or Ph<sub>2</sub> grace for believers. 2Cor.1:3 “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies (grace benefits) and God of all comfort*”. Cp.2Cor.7:6; Rom.15:5
  - B. “Comforter” is a title for the H.S. Joh.14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7 cp.Act.9:31
  - C. It is a title for Israel’s Messiah. Luk.2:25
  - D. God’s comfort extends into eternity. 2The.2:16
  - E. Application. God pursues the adjusting believer with comfort. 2Cor.1:4; 2The.2:17
- IV.** The law of the kingdom that governs the administration of comfort is found in 2Cor.1:5, “*For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ*”.
- A. To the extent and degree you suffer, God will provide comfort (blessing) in your niche. Cp.2Cor.1:7
    - 1. Paul, who suffered much, was comforted much.
    - 2. No test is too great for God’s ability to comfort.
  - B. 2Cor.1:5 is one of the promises we have inherited. Cf.2Pet.1:4
  - C. Application: Look for comfort on a daily basis to help you pass the common human problems (CHP’s). 2Cor.7:6-7
- V.** Comfort and BD.
- A. The teaching of BD ministers comfort. Rom.15:4; Col.2:2; 1The.3:2; Heb.6:18
  - B. The application of BD under testing (maintaining your spiritual integrity) brings comfort. Job 6:10; Psa.119:52
  - C. Hearing of the +V of others is a source of comfort stimulating encouragement. Act.15:31; 1The.3:7; 2Cor.7:4,7,13; Philm.7
- VI.** Ingredients constituting a state for comfort with its attendant encouragement.
- A. Testing and affliction (CHP’s) in one’s experience. 2Cor.7:4
  - B. Exercising patience (Faith-rest) under the testing. 2Cor.1:6
  - C. BD – to know what to think, say and do. Psa.119:76
  - D. To be under control of the “Comforter”. Act.9:31; Joh.14:26
- VII.** Comfort and the reversionist.
- A. There is no comfort from God for a believer in reversionism. Isa.51:17-20; Mat.2:18
  - B. God even removes human viewpoint comforters under the 5<sup>th</sup> cycle of discipline. Jer.16:7; Lam.1:2,17,21
  - C. However, there is comfort for the believer under reversion recovery:
    - 1. As seen in the case of the incestuous Corinthian. 2Cor.2:7
    - 2. As seen in the case of the author of Psa.119. Cf.Psa.119:75 cp.vs.76

- D. The reversionist's comfort must be based on +V. Psa.119:50,52
- VIII.** Comfort is part of the royal imperatives.
- A. We are to comfort others. 1The.4:18; 5:11
  - B. We are to receive comfort (2Cor.13:11 "*be comforted*" – pres. pass. imperative of parakaleo) from whatever the source: The P-T, BD, the gift of encouragement, circumstances, category 3 friends, etc.).
  - C. Understand, the cosmos also comforts their own. Cf.Joh.15:19a
- IX.** There is a spiritual gift of exhortation/comfort/encouragement given to the body of Christ. Rom.12:8 (parakaleo and paraklesis) cp.vs.6
- A. The gift is specialized.
  - B. It is to function under and within the royal chain of command (R/COC).
  - C. It is a one-on-one gift where the individual needs to be encouraged, straightened out, advised, encouraged or comforted.
  - D. This gift operates under a P-T and keeps one from violating the monologue function.
  - E. It does not replace the general ministry of encouragement incumbent on all believers.
  - F. Barnabas had this gift. Act.4:36
- X.** Some specific examples of comfort.
- A. The news of the response to BD in others. Act.15:31
  - B. Via prophecy as a subject. 1Cor.14:3,31
  - C. Where a believer hears of another's testing and deliverance. 2Cor.1:6, 8-11; Eph.6:22; Col.4:8
  - D. When a P-T hears of reversion recovery. 2Cor.7:7
  - E. Providential circumstances. Act.20:12
  - F. Fellowship with like-minded +V. Rom.1:12; 2Cor.7:6
  - G. Application of BD in the CWL. 2The.2:17
- XI.** Comfort is a doctrine taught in the O.T. Psa.119:82
- A. God is the source. Isa.49:13
  - B. It is a part of the believer's experience. Psa.23:4
  - C. It is the subject of prayer both in petition (Psa.71:21) and thanksgiving (Psa.86:17).
- XII.** Israel will be comforted eschatologically. Isa.12:1
- A. Application of the doctrine of Israel's future brings comfort. Isa.40:1
  - B. The Lord is the source. Isa.49:14-21; Zec.1:17; Luk.2:25
  - C. Comfort is used figuratively for the restoration of the land itself. Isa.51:3; 52:7-10
  - D. Comfort is an eschatological reality for those that mourn over the absence of righteousness, justice and truth on the earth. Isa.61:2; Mat.5:4
  - E. It involves the total destruction of all enemies and the flourishing of the 3<sup>rd</sup> commonwealth. Isa.66:7-16; Jer.31:7-20

**XIII.** Ph<sub>3</sub> (heaven) is called comfort (Luk.16:25) even though Lazarus was a reversionist (cp.2The.2:16).

**A.** The H.S. is the Comforter.

**B.** Since we have Him forever, we have comfort forever. Cp.Joh.14:16

**C.** Comfort however, is not an experiential reality for a reversionist since he rejects the Spirit of truth. Cp.Joh.15:26

**XIV.** Conclusion.

**A.** As a part of God's policy of grace, He pursues the +V growing believer with comfort. 2Cor.1:3-5

**B.** This comes in a plethora of various ways: BD, deliverance, fellowship, the gift, encouragement in word and application of others, examples set by others, pouring of the details, etc. Ex. Rom.1:12

**C.** Comfort is always there to match the tests. 2Cor.1:5

**D.** Comfort does not necessarily mean the removal of the CHP, though it may and eventually will in accord with God's policy to deliver us from all tests. Psa.34:19

**E.** God turns off Divine comfort for the reversionist, but turns it back on the instant of reversion recovery.

**F.** Each of us has the responsibility to minister comfort to others and will both knowingly and unknowingly.

**G.** Suffering and being comforted qualifies us to comfort others. 2Cor.1:4,6

**H.** Since the P-T and his congregation share the same history and niche, they share the same sufferings and comfort. 2Cor.1:7

**I.** Following Paul's lead, a P-T should brief his congregation on his sufferings and comfort so as to comfort them through his example and so they can pray for him. 2Cor.1:6,8-11

**J.** A sound exegesis of 2Cor.1:3-11 is foundational to this principle.

**K.** The P-T and congregation are mutually comforted as each witnesses the other's spiritual gifts. Rom.1:11-12

**L.** Israel, the target of insults by the nations in the last days (judgment for rejection of the covenants), will be comforted by the Lord via the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent and Israel's exaltation in the Millennium.

**M.** The blessings of Ph<sub>3</sub> constitute eternal comfort.

**N.** Isolation of the STA and adherence to BD Ph<sub>2</sub> is essential or the STA will rob the believers of the +H associated with comfort. Cp.2Cor.7:4,7