



FREE AT LAST

### Quest Lesson A-13

The Problem: Even when the believing Christian is enjoying a consistent relationship with Christ and victory over sin, there is a daily struggle against evil. His own fallen self is a constant source of temptation. He is not giving in to the urges that come from within, but they must be regularly subdued lest they should project him into a life of sin. Bodily hungers and appetites, as well as tendencies of mind, can become overt sin if allowed to have the mastery. The Holy Spirit will reign as long as we are choosing to allow Him, but He will sorrowfully withdraw from us if we choose to surrender to our natural human fallenness.

Satan and his demons are always at hand to confront the Christian with those objects and thoughts that appeal to his fallen self. Even though these demons are daily repelled because the Christian turns to the Lord and invites Christ to have the mastery of his life, the devil sees to it that the temptations keep coming. Moreover, other human beings repeatedly provide stimuli and provocation to sin. They may heap scorn on the Christian because of his self-denying life, they may ridicule and embarrass, they may discriminate unjustly, and they may instigate very real mental or physical suffering, because they have no respect for Christ or for those who are serving Him. The devil works through them to destroy, if possible, the Christian's commitment to the Lord,

Then there are such trials as illness, poverty, professional ruin with which the Christian must contend. Even though he knows that non-Christians face these things too, there is the powerful temptation to blame God, let go his faith, and give in to the ways of the world, "Why doesn't God bless me?" he asks, little realizing that, in the light of eternity, the trial will probably be seen as one of his greatest blessings. Yet, he clings to his faith in Christ and, like Joseph, refuses to be driven to despair.

Because of all these obstacles and annoyances, the Christian life is a constant struggle. How should we relate ourselves to these things that would hinder our walk with God? When will we be free from them all? It is wonderful to have power to overcome sin now! That we accept with unmeasured gratitude. But we look up and long for the day when the internal and external struggles for spiritual survival and growth will cease, and we will be free at last.

How does Christ plan to set us free? When will it happen? What kind of people will we be then? These are the questions that this lesson will answer.

#### Objectives

First, we will note what the Bible says about the endless struggle of the victorious Christian in this life.

Second, it will become apparent that the blessings outweigh the disadvantages of the struggle.

Third, the Bible reveals that we will be given final deliverance from human corruption and Satanic harassment at the second advent of Jesus.

Fourth, mortal beings will become immortal.

Fifth, physical degeneracy will be replaced by perfect health.

Sixth, we will enjoy an eternity of perfect union with Christ.

#### I. The Endless Struggle of the Victorious Christian in This Life

## The Word

1. How does the Apostle Paul describe the sufferings of the Christian in a world of sin? Romans 8:16-20, 22-25; (compare Acts 14:22).
2. How did Jesus describe the inevitable struggles and sufferings of the Christian? John 16:33; Matthew 10:16-39.
3. How is Satan's evil work a constant source of concern for the Christian? Revelation.12:12, 17; 1 Peter 5:8; Matthew 13:19; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 6:12.

Explanation: As long as life continues the believer in Christ must struggle against Satan and fallen self. Satan and his demons inspire their human subjects to oppose and persecute believers. There will always be trials of one sort or another for the Christian. But praise the Lord, Jesus said, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Relevance: When you are passing through some heartache or trial you must never blame God. What God allows He does not necessarily cause. He never tempts' anyone to sin (James 1: 13) and He never causes evil. What He allows is always for a special reason; it is always for your best good, or that of some other person.

## II. The Blessings of the Christian's Struggle Outweigh the Disadvantages

One of the most encouraging and comforting passages in Scripture is Romans 8:28. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." Now the text does not mean that only good things happen to you after you accept Christ. It means that by a divine miracle the Lord takes the evil that Satan and wicked people do to you, and providentially turns it into a blessing for your life and for other people.

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## The Word

4. When Joseph met his brothers, who years before had sold him into slavery, how did he explain what had happened? Genesis 45:5; 50:20.
5. What are some of the blessings for the Christian who suffers and is tempted? James 1:2-4; 2 Corinthians 4: 16-18; Romans 5:3; 1 Peter 2:20-21; Matthew 5:11-125 19:27-29; 2 Timothy 2:12; Acts 5:41.
6. Whose sufferings should always be a great encouragement to us? 1 Peter 3:18; Hebrews 2:10; Isaiah 53:5.
7. Does anything need to separate the believer from Christ, and frustrate His will for his life? How does Paul describe the invincibility of the faithful Christian? Romans 8:31-39.

Explanation: Temptation, trial, persecution, victimization are Satan's work to destroy us. God allows these things because He knows that depending on Him we can come forth stronger. He always provides a way of escape so that nothing need overthrow our faith (1 Corinthians 10:13). And He always overrules to bring blessing out of the evil with which Satan intended to destroy us. There is strength for each day, whatever the trial. There are manifold blessings for the faithful in this life, and the inestimable joy of a place in the hereafter.

Relevance: As long as you are surrendered to Jesus, nothing can frustrate His will for your life. Nothing need ever separate you from Him.

## III. Deliverance from Corruption and Harassment at the Second Advent

The corruptible, fallen nature of mankind, earned for us by our first parents, who chose to disobey God, is the source of the inner urge to sin. We all inherited this fallen self at birth (Psalm 51:5; 58:3), and have added to its potency by the sins which we have chosen to commit (Ephesians 2:3). This is the fallenness (or "body") against which the Apostle Paul

struggled, and which he conquered through the grace of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:27). He refers to it as "the flesh" which "lusteth against the Spirit" (Galatians 5:17). Before he found Christ it ruled supreme in his life (Ephesians 4:22). When he became a born-again Christian his mind was transformed (Romans 12:2), and he began to live by the Spirit a life of victory (Romans 8:9-14; Galatians 5:16). The fallen self still existed, but now subjected and controlled by the Holy Spirit.

As long as we live with Christ reigning in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we are not living in sin because the fallen, corruptible self is mastered and controlled. Nevertheless, our natural fallen condition necessitates a continuing struggle. The inner weakness, inflamed by Satan, can be a source of spiritual failure. Only the power of Christ is sufficient to give us the victory.

When will we be finally delivered from the clamors of our fallen human nature? We will let the Bible answer.

#### The Word

8. When is our fallen humanity finally replaced by perfect humanity? Romans 8:19-23; Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:42.
9. When will Satan's ability to tempt God's people be finally removed? Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-3.
10. When will God's faithful ones be finally delivered from all persecution and tribulation? Daniel 12:1; Revelation 7:13-17.

Explanation: Weak, fallen human beings who trust in Christ will be made perfect in mind, body and spirit at the second coming of our Lord. No longer will we have biases or propensities to sin. No longer will Satan be able to tempt us. No longer will we suffer tribulation caused by the opposition of unbelievers or the effects of natural forces. Heaven and homeland is worth the daily struggle. In our present fallen state we can have victory over all sin; at the advent we will have glorified minds and bodies totally free from all results of sin. Only the love of Christ will rule supreme in our hearts, only the Holy Spirit will pervade our personalities, only God's righteous attributes will motivate our thoughts and actions. We will be free at last!

Relevance: Your present struggles will end for eternity at Jesus' second coming. Keep on surrendering to the Lord every day. Jesus said, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13).

#### IV. Mortal Beings Will Become Immortal

In our present state we are subject to death. No-one likes to think about it, but every day brings us one day nearer to the grave. "For the living know that they shall die" (Ecclesiastes 9:5). There is a day coming soon when death will be no more.

#### The Word

11. When are God's people made immortal? 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; (compare 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
12. What did Jesus say about immortality for the saved? Luke 20:36; John 5:28-29.
13. What forecast does John the Revelator give regarding the future state of the redeemed? Revelation 21:4.

Explanation: Immortality is deathlessness, or the inability to die. Comparing the Deity with mankind as he now is, the Bible says that only God has immortality (1 Timothy 6:16). At the second coming of Jesus, the saved will be given immortality, and the lost will be put to death. (See 1 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Relevance: Anticipation of death, and the trauma of seeing loved ones pass away will be removed from the redeemed for eternity when Jesus comes. For those many people who are mourning the death of loved ones, or are watching helplessly as dear ones sink ever closer to the grave, the Bible promises are truly wonderful!

#### V. Physical Degeneracy and Suffering Will Be Replaced by Perfect Health and Security

Physical suffering of all kinds will be abolished for eternity when Jesus comes.

## The Word

14. What state for the redeemed did Isaiah foresee? Isaiah 33:24.
15. What further picture of the Kingdom state does Isaiah provide? Isaiah 11:6-19; 65:21-25.
16. What did Jesus say will never be taken from us after we meet Him at the end? John 16:22.

Explanation: It is difficult for us to imagine a heaven and a new earth in which there will be no sickness or suffering of any kind. Yet that is the divine promise! There will be nothing physically, emotionally, or spiritually hurtful in Christ's eternal kingdom.

Relevance: Are you suffering now with physical illness or infirmity. Very soon Jesus will come and you will be restored to perfect health and happiness.

### VI. The Saved Will Enjoy an Eternity of Perfect Union with Christ

The relationship with Christ which you enjoy now will grow deeper and more meaningful throughout this life, and will continue to grow for eternity. Because of His divine presence pervading your life, in the Kingdom you will be able to fulfill all those noble enterprises of which you have dreamed. There will be scope for every noble ambition. You won't be a disembodied spirit strumming a harp for eternity. You will be a real person with a perfect mind and body subject to continual development intellectually and spiritually.

## The Word

17. What did John the Revelator foresee would be the relationship between God and His people in the eternal kingdom? Revelation 21:3; 22:3-5.
18. How did Daniel describe the blessings of the kingdom of God for the saved? Daniel 7:27; 12:3.
19. What special promise will Jesus fulfil for those who respond to His appeal? Revelation 3:20-21.

Explanation: Before Lucifer chose to rebel against God, the universe was a place of perfect harmony and peace. Holy beings worshiped and served their holy Creator with not the slightest suggestion of disunity or discontent. Every created being enjoyed thorough development of his greatest potential, and a relationship of love and acceptance with every other created being.

All that was changed when Satan rebelled. Now suspicion and disunity marred the joy of heaven, and God had no choice but to expel the usurper and his supporters. Into our perfect world of beauty and peace came the demonic invaders. Because man succumbed to their cunning, the history of the race has been marred by infidelity, crime, disease, war, and death.

Jesus Christ, "the fulness of the Godhead" (Colossians 2:9) came to our lost and ailing world as a little babe in Bethlehem. He lived a life of useful ministry for others, and demonstrated how one suffering the limitations of humanity can overcome all temptation by relying upon God for deliverance. Jesus' death was the crowning act in the great plan of redemption. He bore our punishment and sounded the death-knell for Satan's kingdom. New life and love, harmony and holiness could be restored to a world plagued by moral and spiritual degeneracy.

By receiving the gracious invitation of the Savior to come into his life, man can enjoy righteousness and holiness, and grow ever nearer to the divine ideal of total spiritual restoration. Victory over sin is the privilege of every believer, even while in this mortal flesh. Despite the vicissitudes of life, and the apparently interminable struggle against trial and sorrow, the servant of Christ is able to rejoice continually in appreciation for heaven's unspeakable love and generosity.

When at earth's darkest midnight the Savior honors His promise by returning to claim His own, the waiting saints will be invested with all the glorious qualities enjoyed by unfallen man. Then will be realized the hopes of believers in every age.

Then will be experienced that "finishing touch of immortality" that will restore to the redeemed the untarnished image of God.

Relevance: Dear student of God's Word, you may have a life of peace with Jesus. Will you respond to His loving knock at your heart's door-and invite Him in? There is everything good to gain, and everything evil to lose. With anxious concern for your eternal welfare, Jesus awaits your response.

#### Review Questions

1. True or False
  - a. Once you become a Christian there is no more struggle.
  - b. God's people will sin till Jesus comes.
  - c. Our human fallen condition is removed when we are made incorruptible at the second advent.
  - d. Only the righteous are made immortal at end.
2. Discuss: We are not given transformed characters at the second advent, we are given glorified humanity.