

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

ALTOGETHER LOVELY

His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

Song of Solomon 5:16

The book, Song of Solomon is one of the more poetic and graphic books in the bible for expressing the love of CHRIST for HIS bride and that love which she reciprocates to HIM as a result of HIS power at work in her and upon her. HE draws her with cords of love and she longs for HIS sweet embrace. HE speaks of her in loving terms and describes her beauty while she is clearly captivated by HIS charm and swept off of her feet with longing for HIS company. HE removes HIMSELF from her for a time that she might recognize that true love which HE has caused to well up in her bosom. So much so that she says she is sick with love for HIM. This is that same longing which caused the apostle John to say at the end of the book of Revelation, *"Even so, come LORD JESUS."* (Rev.22:20)

The love of CHRIST for HIS bride is neither a mere myth nor an entertaining vignette in history, but rather HIS love for HIS bride is that which forms the very basis of the redemptive work that HE has undertaken in her behalf. There is no era known unto men when the LORD did not love HIS elect bride, HE has loved her from the beginning with an immeasurable love. She was chosen and beloved in HIM before she ever drew breath or did any good or evil, or the foundations of the world were laid. *"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:"*(2Thes 2:13)

HE has chosen to demonstrate that love in the sight of all creation, by the offering up of HIMSELF as her sin bearer that HE might satisfy the claims of the very law (in her behalf) which HE designed. *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Rom 5:8) *"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."* (1John 4:10)

Over and over in the scriptures from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation the LORD has manifested HIS love to HIS elect bride and HIS intention to bring her, (who is not only HIS beloved bride but now because of HIS redemptive work, HIS purchased possession) unto HIMSELF. This very fact is ultimately demonstrated in HIS promise to return to this earth at the last trump to deliver her bodily from the grave in the day of the resurrection. *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."* (1Thes 4:16-17)

Paul said, *"Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;"* (Gal 4:1) It has not only pleased HIM to make those who make up HIS bride, heirs and joint heirs of the riches of GOD, but HE has seen fit to make their privilege known unto them. A man is not made an heir of grace because he has heard the gospel, but rather he is made to hear the sweet sound of the gospel and believe it because he has been a chosen heir from the beginning. *"And because ye are sons, God*

hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Gal 4:6) This is the same thing that the LORD JESUS meant when HE said, “But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” (John 10:26-28)

There are many who make believing the gospel (as they define it) to be a part of man’s redemption and are intent on using every device at their disposal to try to convince people to believe it in order that they might be “saved”. Men are not “saved” by any act of their own nor can the salvation of the elect be prevented by any means or lack thereof. CHRIST has purchased eternal redemption for those who are the objects of HIS love and HE is presently sending messengers into the earth to inform them of HIS work in their behalf. HE causes them to “hear” and gives them “faith” to believe that what HE has done is sufficient..

Many go about to establish specific dogmas and systems of doctrine which they say a man must adhere to or agree with in order to be a child of GOD. I know of one group that has a web page with a confession of faith that they have written and they plainly say that if you don’t agree with every jot and tittle of it you can’t possibly be a child of GOD.

I believe there is great diversity among the sheep of GOD who are scattered across the four corners of the earth. Yet I believe there is ONE truth with which they all agree and it is stated in the text we have selected, “HE is altogether lovely.”.

HE is altogether lovely and is the center and substance of the desire of HIS people when they have been awakened to flee from the wrath to come. HE is their hope. HE is their righteousness. HE is their sanctification. They must each one confess with Peter, “*Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.*” (John 6:68-69) They are like Ruth when she entreated Naomi, “*And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:”* (Ruth 1:16)

HE is **ALTOGETHER** lovely. That is a way of saying HE is completely lovely. HE has perfections which meet every need of HIS sheep. HE is the SHADOW of a great rock when the sun beats upon them in the valley of Baca. HE is that STREAM in the desert when they are famished and thirsty. HE is their SHELTER in the time of storm. HE is that EAGLE which gathereth her chicks under her wing. HE is that ROCK on which all of their hopes are built. The true sons of GOD can listen to no other shepherd nor can they find any sufficiency in the devices of men however appealing to the flesh they may seem. HE is the only TEACHER that they can trust and they must constantly apply to HIM, evermore give us this bread. They can be satisfied with nothing else but to be closely bound to HIM even as Paul said, “*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.*” (Phi 3:8-10) HE is lacking nothing.

HE is altogether **LOVELY**. What beauty could be added to HIM who is the epitome of perfection in all things. Would we know what forgiveness is? Look at HIM who prayed for HIS enemies. Would we know what strength is? Look at HIM who when HE was reviled , reviled not again. Would we know what mercy is? Look at HIM who had no words of condemnation. Would we know what greatness is? Look at HIM who girded HIMSELF and served HIS disciples. “*For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*” (2Pe 1:16-17)