

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*

A COTTAGE IN A VINEYARD

And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. *Isaiah 1:8*

Those who make a pointed study of the numbers (i.e.; numerologists) used in the scriptures tell us that three is the number of perfection. This is no doubt true, at least, when one is making a consideration of the GOD who reveals HIMSELF as the FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT. I am not sure how far we are meant to go in the application of some of the theories espoused by these numerologists but I do find it interesting that we often find the use of three in many of the illustrations given to us in the scripture.

Solomon speaks of the superiority of three over two, saying *“And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”*(Ecc 4:12) John speaks pointedly to three groups of disciples, *“fathers”, “young men,”* and *“children”*. (See I John 3:13,14) John also says there are THREE that bear witness in heaven and there are three that bear witness in the earth. (see I John 5:7,8) The LORD JESUS was three days and three nights in the earth even as the prophet Jonah was three days in the belly of the fish. Paul tells us there are three abiding graces which the HOLY SPIRIT is pleased to manifest in the sons of GOD. *“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”* (1Cor 13:13) So we can conclude that there is some significance in the use of this particular number in these instances.

We can see the same thing here in the book of Isaiah as the LORD used a threefold illustration in HIS description of the *“daughter of Zion”* (which I believe is the church of GOD, HIS elect bride, or that remnant which is left, according to verse nine). She is likened to a *“cottage in a vineyard”, “a lodge in a garden of cucumbers”,* and a *“besieged city”*.

We have made a few comments in the past on the *“lodge in the cucumber patch”* trying to set forth with clarity that there is nothing in the kingdom of GOD which is to be desired by the natural man. He might behold the bride of CHRIST but he has no desire to be found numbered with her nor can he see her beauty, even though it is clearly evident to HIM who has expressed HIS love and desire for her, and also revealed to those who by HIS grace have been given eyes to look upon her with longing and a desire to be clothed in the same garments with which she is adorned. This is indeed the hope of the saints. *“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”* (Isa 61:10-11) She has a beauty which cannot be hid but yet at the same time, cannot be seen by any but those to whom the LORD will give eyes to see.

We have also considered that this glorious remnant is likened to a *“besieged city”*. Not only do the enemies of GOD see no desirable beauty in the bride of CHRIST, they are secretly jealous of her favor with GOD and would persecute her night and day. That which is her single hope, the cross of CHRIST, is that which is despised by all of those outside the city walls. The offence of the cross shall never cease among men until such time as death and hell are swallowed up in the pit of destruction along with all those who are not written in the LAMB’s book of life. (see Rev.20:14,15) The religious world may pay lip service to the work of CHRIST on the cross, but to a man they will rise up in anger when its particular and definite nature is proclaimed.

So the little remnant which the LORD has chosen and preserved is despised and rejected and even though hidden behind impenetrable walls in complete safety *“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. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”* (John 10:27-29)), yet they are not yet delivered from the assaults of their enemies. They cannot be destroyed but they are often wounded. *“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me.”* (John 15:20-21)

The third illustration of the state of the *“daughter of Zion”* is that of a *“cottage in a vineyard”*. There are certain seasons of the year when a cottage, which is built in the midst of the rolling hills of a vineyard, is completely hidden by the foliage which hangs in verdant beauty from the branches and tendrils of the vines. Yet there are other times when the winter winds have stripped away that foliage and then this little cottage stands out in stark contrast to that which once kept it hid.

There is no likeness between the vineyard and the cottage. The man who is simply looking for wine is unconcerned with the cottage but is only interested in the fruit of the vine which he believes will cheer his heart and fill his soul. This vineyard is like the religion of this world which grows abundantly and satisfies the needs of those whose desire after it is to fill their own lusts and wishes. I am amazed at the proliferation of what I would call, “designer churches”, They are on every corner, we have Cowboy churches, Indian churches, motorcycle churches, etc. The idea is to try and make “religion” convenient and appealing to those who would like to combine the world and the kingdom of GOD.

Yet the kingdom of GOD stands in total contrast to the ways of the world. *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? “* (2Cor 6:14) *“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”* (Mat 7:6)

That little cottage is where the VINEKEEPER dwells and is a place of refuge for those workers in the vineyard which the LORD has called. HE has made HIS people desire to serve in HIS vineyard not for the fruits which can be found in abundance but because they desire to be found where HE is worshipped in SPIRIT and TRUTH. HE alone is their refuge. This little cottage is built by the LORD of the manor who has planted both those vines that bring forth wild grapes and also those branches that are grafted into the TRUE VINE. Both shall grow until the time of the end when HE shall separate the precious from the vile. *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”* (John 15:5)

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