

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

SOLOMON'S BED

Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel. *Song of Solomon 3:7*

For the person who is given eyes to see and ears to hear, the book of the Song of Solomon is a rich narrative of the relationship of CHRIST and HIS church (i.e.; the people of HIS choice for whom HE shed HIS precious blood). In it is set forth the yearning of believers for fellowship and communion with HIM, as well as the bitter conflict which they have with their own flesh which causes them to devalue this communion and to disregard it from time to time. Thus it covers the gamut of every believer's life and shows both their unfaithfulness as well as that true love from which they cannot escape.

When the LORD is pleased to awaken HIS children from the utter deadness of sin, (see Eph.2:1) in which they are by nature, (then and only then), they are caused to hunger and thirst after HIM. This is the result of the gift of faith and the operation of HIS SPIRIT in them which works in them "*both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*" (Philip 2:13) Yet they are "*As it were the company of two armies.*" (Song 6:13)

Though they are made "new creatures" by this heavenly operation, yet they are still very much plagued with this "flesh" in which they were born (and remains unchanged) and does even now seek to rule over them. It is this deathly conflict which Paul describes in Romans, "*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.----- For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*" (Rom 7:18-23) He, once again sums this up for the Galatians. "*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*" (Gal 5:17)

Apart from, (at least), a partial understanding of this conflict (between the flesh and the SPIRIT) which is sometimes described as the "inward man" versus the "outward man", (see II Cor.4:16) it is impossible to comprehend the yearnings and the evident complacency of the "Shulamite" (i.e. the peaceful queen) which continually occurs, often simultaneously. One moment she is pining for a glimpse of her "BELOVED" and the next she is so preoccupied with her own comfort that she cannot even arise and open the door for HIM. (see Song 5:2-6; Rev.3:20)

The only consistent love which is demonstrated throughout the book is that of HIM who brings HIS "spouse" into HIS "banqueting table" and unfurls HIS "banner of love" over her. HIS pursuit of her is relentless. Though HE sometimes hides HIMSELF from her, it is only for her benefit to remind her of the preciousness of HIS presence and the purpose of demonstrating HIS tender mercies and rich desire that HE has to behold her "beauty", which is not really her own (but bestowed by the gift of imputation), but that which HE declares as a result of HIS everlasting love for her. Even as Peter said, love covers a multitude of sins, and HE sees her through the eyes of

HIS special and enduring love which is never diminished nor can it be increased, since it is absolute. *"Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee."* (Song 4:7)

Because of this "imputation" of HIS righteousness to her, she can never be brought under any condemnation at all. Rather she stands before the LORD and HIS law as one who has never sinned and possesses an absolute righteousness. The LORD declares this, as Paul exhorts husbands of the fashion in which they should love their wives. *"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself."* (Eph 5:27-28)

The love of CHRIST for HIS people is the moving cause of HIS redemptive work. *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* (John 15:13) *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Rom 5:8) No man can point to a "time" when CHRIST began to love HIS people, nor when they were not viewed as without spot or blemish by HIM who loved them as a "spouse" in whom was HIS delight. In this we find a great mystery and one which strips men of all notion that they can somehow earn the favor of GOD or influence the outcome of the redemptive work of CHRIST.

The grace of GOD is not revealed nor secured by the action of men; rather the whole scheme of redemption from the first to the last is of the LORD. What a wonder of wonders that HE who is of *"purer eyes than to behold evil"* (see Hab. 1:3) should demonstrate this grace to the glory of HIS name in loving a people who by their own admission are "unlovely". Yet even the revelation of this innate wickedness to the sons of GOD does not serve ultimately unto their condemnation. *"For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."* (1John 3:20-21) Rather the unfolding of the gospel to those whom HE gives an ear to hear gives HIS people grounds upon which to have this confidence. *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"* (Heb 9:14)

Solomon, (speaking in the first person) as the Church (or spouse) laments that she sought the presence of her BELOVED while she laid upon her own bed, but could not find HIM. (see 3:1) Quite often the LORD awakens HIS children to seek after HIM but does not appear quickly, lest they should have the notion that they somehow command HIS presence. They often continue in devising their own schemes of worship (in the flesh) and preparation of their own "bed" for HIM to visit them upon, but HE will ultimately show them the folly of their reliance and confidence in their flesh. When they have utterly despaired of their own devices then HE appears as a KING in HIS *"chariot of wood"* and takes them to HIS *"pleasant garden"* and HIS *"house of cedar."*

There is one "bed" upon which this marriage can be consummated, and it is not of the design or in the possession of those whom HE loves but rather of HIS own making and revealed in HIS own time. This is *SOLOMON's bed*, the glory of the revealed Gospel. That place of sweet communion between the BELOVED and HIS spouse, whom HE woos and wins with the riches of HIS grace, both in seeking her out and bringing her to HIS chambers. She is the sole object of HIS desires and HE will not rest until she is safely in HIS loving embrace. (see Mat.18:11-14)

Around this bed are *"threescore (60) valiant men"*. These men (great in number, but not numberless) represent both a guard against imposters and usurpers which would try to come into this chamber (i.e: the wise and prudent and the self righteous) and a shield of defense around those who are privileged to enter therein according to the KING's desire and decree. They are ready with the sword which is the word of GOD both day and night. In this they are somewhat likened unto those who are sent with the gospel. *"According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust."* (1Tim 1:11) *"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."* (Rev 19:7) *"It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."*(Rev 21:6)

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