

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

WHAT IS THY BELOVED MORE THAN ANOTHER?

What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us? Song of Solomon 5:9

There are three main characters, in this most lovely of poems, found in all of the word of GOD. There is the BRIDEGROOM who is most often referred to as My BELOVED, by the Bride. There is of course the BRIDE who is most often referred to as my love, my sister or my spouse by the BRIDEGROOM. Then there are the daughters of Jerusalem who are referred to by that title and I believe also that they are one and the same with *"the watchmen who goeth about the city."*

As a young man and infant believer in CHRIST, this book held far more mysteries to me than it held things easily understood. The LORD has led me in ways which I knew not, when I began my journey and has been pleased to grant me some understanding of it over the course of time. In doing so, HE has given me a measure of greater appreciation for the depths and beauty of it. While I would confess that it still holds many mysteries, yet the LIGHT which shineth in a dark place has brought greater illumination and rich blessing in the contemplation of its message. There is a sharp contrast in the interactions of these characters displayed therein.

I believe that it is impossible that any man could gain an understanding of the imagery and lesson of this book apart from a clear understanding of the everlasting nature of the love which the BRIDEGROOM has for HIS Bride. One must be shown the union with CHRIST and the subsequent unconditional election of that people which the LORD has loved from before the foundation of the world, in order to scale its heights and plumb its depths. If a man entertains the notion that he can gain the favor of GOD by any action of HIS own free will, then he will never have any clarity in its verses of love and tender mercy. He will remain puzzled with the hiding of the BRIDEGROOM and the pining of the Bride, along with the questions of the daughters.

The LORD has designed HIS church with the benefit of HIS children in mind. HE is the HEAD and CHIEF CORNERSTONE of it, and its function and growth in grace are completely dependent upon HIS revelation of HIS sovereign GLORY and eternal purpose of redemption. To this end HE has given gifts to HIS people with each part of the body supplying that which the other lacks. In this supply HE has given teachers to the body, not to be as lords over GOD's heritage but as helpers of those who are needing instruction and support in the work of the ministry one to another by each part of the body.

Thus we see the daughters of Jerusalem as typical of the believer who has a desire after CHRIST, but entertains more questions about HIM than he does, answers. The LORD gives to everyone of HIS children the measure of faith which pleases HIM. (see Rom.12:3) To some HE gives clearer sight of HIS ways and workings than HE does to others. The flesh would often suppose that this gift is an honor which should raise their esteem in the eyes of others, but in reality it is a testament to the LORD's purpose to demonstrate servitude (for what do any have that has not been given to them), as they might seek to impart understanding to those whom they love as brethren. *"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of*

God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” (Eph 4:13-16)

The daughters of Jerusalem make inquiry to the Bride as she extols the beauty and virtue of her BELOVED. They know that HE is loved by her but they desire to be told the full extent of those things that make HIM appear so lovely in her sight. This demonstrates a hunger for the word of GOD and the declaration of the gospel. The preaching of the gospel is for those who are given ears to hear it. We see this demonstrated on the day of Pentecost as many desired of Peter such things as they sought and also in the Ethiopian Eunuch as well as the Philippian jailer.

In essence they all asked the exact question which the daughters of Jerusalem posed, and which every man who is awakened by the power of the SPIRIT of GOD, desires, “Tell me of this ONE” who is more beloved than any other. Do any who are thus awakened not desire to hear of HIM who loves HIS people with an everlasting love? Do they not desire to hear of HIS work of redemption? HIS power to save sinners? HIS resurrection and triumph over death and hell?

Oh “*what is thy BELOVED more than any other beloved.*” Tell us of HIS perfections. Describe to us HIS beauty. Tell us again of HIS hands that drip with sweet mercy as the myrrh of the mountains and the hill of frankincense. Remind us once more of the aloes and cinnamon with which HE has perfumed our bed, upon which we might recline in HIS loving embrace.

Oh sing the song of Moses and the LAMB. A sweeter song than any written by men. A lovely hymn which stirs our soul and causes a longing in our heart to look upon our BELOVED. “*Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.*” (Rev 15:3-4)

HE is a most faithful SAVIOR. HE has not made some open ended attempt to gather in an unknown number or to simply gain whoever might let HIM rule over them. No! HE has come into the world in order to “*save HIS people from their sins.*” HE has accomplished HIS purpose having “*obtained eternal redemption*” for them. In HIS own time HE is pleased to call them to HIMSELF from the highways and hedges of life. HE knows HIS own sheep by name and thus HE calls them and they are compelled to come unto HIM. HE will forsake none for which HE has shed HIS blood and conquered death.

HE is a most powerful SAVIOR. HE came to save sinners. “*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*” (Rom 5:8) There are but two types of people in the earth, those who are righteous and those who are sinners. The righteous shall indeed perish, for they believe they have something to commend themselves to GOD or they are satisfied in their own way. Religious men and those who despise the way of GOD are both alike. But HE will save sinners by HIS own power, for indeed they have no power of their own. They stand before HIM as those whose only hope is HIS mercy. “*Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.*” (Isa 63:1)

HE is a most glorious SAVIOR. The natural man can see everything in CHRIST that those who are born again can see, except for one thing: he cannot see HIS glory. He has no longing nor desire to know HIM nor does he revere HIS law and embrace HIS teaching. The natural man can even have a measure of enjoyment in his religious service and may set aside some time for HIM, but he is not consumed with knowing HIM or being conformed to HIS image. His soul does not leap for joy at the mention of HIS NAME nor does HE long for HIS presence, as the Bride who seeks HIM early and often saying, “*Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.*” (Song 8:14)

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