

The
King's Song
for the
Weary Warrior

New Energy
From
The Song of Solomon

by Grace Tuls

The King's Song for the Weary Warrior

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Thank you, Lord, for everything.

Foreword

Time is winding down quickly to the end of the age. There is an excitement in the body of Christ about His imminent return like we have never felt before. We rejoice in hearing about the reports of revival, which are happening around the world. Many have joined the army of God to become warriors in the Spirit. For many years they have served in various capacities – especially in intercessory prayer – and have become battle weary in the process. We also know that the battle will intensify before His return.

There are many reasons for spiritual fatigue. Some are discouraged because they have seen little results from their prayers. Others have been overworked and some are discouraged because they have been wounded by rejection.

The message in the Song of Solomon is relevant for our time. It will help warriors receive new energy. It will give many a needed infusion of God's love. They will know that He appreciates their gifts of love for Him; that they can trust Him to lead them on to deeper rejoicing in Him. I am aware that there is a great need for repentance and fear of the Lord in the body of Christ, but I also know that it is His love that leads one to repentance. Therefore this love story fills a valid need today.

There is a much deeper message in the Song of Solomon than that which meets the eye. It is the story of God's love for His bride. This love is not dependent on the bride's performance, but is freely given because of His great mercy.

When I was on the mission field in Asia, the Lord gave me special revelation from the Song of Solomon. My husband and I felt called to start a new Bible school, in which the entire Bible would be taught in a practical, life-related way. I was going to teach the Song of Solomon, and revelation came because of my desperate desire to know more of Him and the need to communicate the truths from this book.

The King's Song for the Weary Warrior is the revelation I received during this time and afterward. I have found the Song of Solomon to be full of wonderful surprises.

My prayer is that through this book, you will receive new strength from the revelation of His love as the Groom poetically sings a love song over you, the bride of Christ. Because of this new energy and security, you will venture into new areas of faith, and do your part to bring the lost into the kingdom of God before His return.

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Chapter One

That Fish Out of Water Feeling

It was hot, humid, and the bugs were a constant interruption in our bamboo hut, which we called the “Bamboo Hilton,” in an unsuccessful attempt to mask the discomforts. We were located next to a little stream deep in the jungles of an Asian country. The water came out of a rock, so it was reasonably clean, but bathing and washing clothes in it was a new and challenging experience. The food was good and the Bible school students who came from over the mountains and streams were all smiles, but no English was spoken, except by one national couple that worked with us.

We found special advantages in each of the seasons. During the dry season a refreshing mist hung over our valley in the early morning. The cool stream offered a wonderful time of relaxation in the afternoon. We would see great many butterflies of beautiful colors, many iridescent. There was a small lizard with a beautiful blue head. During the night, we would hear the sound of the barking deer. At this sound one of the male students would dash out of bed and with bare feet and gun in hand, try to find the deer. He was never successful while we were there. However, all of our students and workers were very alert to noises and they especially enjoyed the dry season because they could travel about more easily.

At the beginning of the monsoon season the rains came down the valley like the sound of a locomotive. It was an awesome sound. You knew you would have the first good rain in months. It was the beginning of the cooler weather. We experienced the joy of hearing rain on our roof and the amazement of seeing how well our roof of leaves was strung together. Few leaks occurred. When the rain came, the jungle sprang to life. There was such an astonishing variety of vegetation in various hues of green and dark red.

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During the monsoon season, you could plant roses, gardenias and almost anything else and it would grow from a clipping. Orchids gathered wild in the forest could be taped around the tree and they would soon bloom.

Besides the sound of the locomotive, which indicated the onset of the monsoon, there were also some other unusual noises. Early in the morning, you could hear the whistling of monkeys in the distance. Frogs in the nearby stream gave a welcome chorus beginning just after dusk. There was also the loud buzz of huge black beetles, which sounded almost like a helicopter.

One of my favorite sounds was the trumpeting of the elephants as they enjoyed their early morning bath in the river. This sound was different from their irritated trumpeting when they were driven too fast or thought they were working too hard.

Our First Visit

Our first visit did not seem as beautiful as what I have just described, but the people were beautiful, and our hearts were changed forever. In 1984, we went initially to this area to teach the English language and the Bible. We were so impacted that God called us into His ministry full-time.

I had always felt that sometime in the future the Lord would call me into full-time ministry, but I never expected that when I was on the field, I would feel so much like a fish out of water. Living in a jungle hut; surrounded by people of a different culture; different standards of cleanliness and dressing; and my inability to communicate, all kept me from feeling at home. I knew the Lord had asked me to go, and I felt a love and compassion for the people. I wanted to be with my husband, but I had never expected to feel so uncomfortable. It wasn't until months later that I personally received a word from the Lord and I knew I was where He wanted me to be.

The Lord gave us favor with national officials, and land was given to us to establish a Bible School. We were also

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given a boat. Students came from over the mountains. My husband, together with a national gentleman, and the students cleared the land and erected buildings out of bamboo and leaves before the other wife and I arrived. Each year, as we stayed for six months, our succession of huts with their roofs of leaves became more sturdy as we rebuilt them of more lasting materials.

Since our goal was to teach the whole Bible, the second year in that far-off place, I was going to teach the Song of Solomon. I had taken Watchman Nee's book, *Song of Songs* with me, and it was very helpful, but I desperately needed revelation for myself from the Bible. I needed something to teach these young people – not concentrating on love and marriage, or God's love for the church with the traditional meanings. I needed something for them and for myself. I needed new light. Tradition and cultural barriers were strong, and I desperately needed a breakthrough.

Jeremiah wrote, *You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart (29:13)*. During these times, I was seeking Him with my whole heart.

The Lord began revealing more of His love for me. I learned to take some phrases from the Song of Solomon literally, and some figuratively. The Lord gave me some amazing insights as I sought Him. The inspiration I received from this love letter from the Groom makes me want to share my thoughts with you.

The body of Christ has largely overlooked this wonderful book with all its symbolism. There has been great emphasis on being a warrior in the army of God and this fight can be exhausting, especially if little or no apparent change is visible. Now, the Holy Spirit is bringing new revelation to the believers in order to give the warrior a time to rest and relax in His love, and thereby be energized to be aggressive against the kingdom of darkness again.

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The incredible love of the Groom toward the maiden will become apparent as we travel through this centuries-old book together.

My Vision

I was sitting in the bamboo school building with its dirt floor, hot and uncomfortable – dressed like a national but feeling very much like a displaced American. My husband loved it! He was teaching the students through an interpreter and thoroughly enjoying himself. The students did smile shyly at me from time to time, but I had no real communication with them. I was here out of obedience and love – for God, my husband, and the people – but I had no sense of fulfillment.

At that time, the Lord gave me a scripture, which has changed my life forever.

Indeed, I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gates of their enemies and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice (Genesis 22:17).

Having been a homemaker and mother most of my married life, I clearly understood these young students were to be my spiritual seed, and I believed they would possess the gates of their enemies. We were in a war-torn area and I saw them in the future as being a great blessing to their nation. Then He said, “Because you have obeyed My voice.” The promised future of these students was so magnificent I could hardly believe it to be true. I felt His love filling the empty spots, erasing the many discomforts and giving me a vision for the future.

I felt my stay there was beginning to be worthwhile. I began to feel a sense of fulfillment, a reason to serve Him in this new capacity. It was like He said, “After all, My Son gave up His home in glory with Me to spend time in your uncomfortable earth. He suffered so that you could come to be

with Me. Could you not spend a few months being uncomfortable, so others can be with Me? I'm not asking you to die on a cross and spill your blood like My Son did. I'm just asking you to be uncomfortable for a season. I will never leave you or forsake you and I will greatly bless you."

With that vision in mind, I knew that my learning and teaching from the Song of Solomon was very important.

Introduction to the Love Song

Song of Solomon was inspired by the Holy Spirit and penned by King Solomon. It reveals a much deeper meaning than even Solomon understood. It is a love story, a song which Jesus, the Bridegroom, is singing over each believer for these last days of history. Even as the Lord is stirring the prophets to speak His oracles now more than ever before, He is giving His bride a new stirring to examine this song.

Solomon used many meanings, symbols and metaphors and there are different interpretations of his descriptions. However, scholars who have studied this book agree that there is a definite progression of maturity in the life of the Shulamite maiden who falls in love with the King. This progression is exciting because we can identify with many of the stages in her maturing process. She grows in her understanding of the King who gradually reveals more of Himself to her, and then waits for her response.

Traditionally, we have been taught that King Solomon symbolized the Lord or King Jesus, and that the bride was Israel or the bride of Christ. In this book, I began to read it not as the collective church, but as myself being the individual bride of King Jesus.

The most amazing aspect of this relationship is that the King, Jesus, always speaks His love over the maiden regardless of her response or obedience. This unconditional love motivates her to search for Him even more. The maiden feels totally accepted because of this love, which is lavished upon her. The apostle Paul wrote, *In Him we have redemption through His*

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blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us (Ephesians 1:7, 8).

The Groom, Jesus, judges the maiden, us, by the intention of the heart, not by performance. Her intentions, desires, or vision was to be drawn and to run with Him, and He was delighted by this desire.

King David wanted to build a house for the Lord, and God was pleased because of David's intention; but the Lord reserved that right for David's son, Solomon (1 Kings 8:17, 18).

In our worldly system, we judge ourselves, and others judge us, by our performance and by our success. The Lord's system is so different. He looks into the heart, sees our intentions, our motives, and lovingly encourages us to follow Him more closely. In the Song of Solomon, we will see that there must be a death experience in the bride's life to go on with her lover to even more joy. Death to self will be rewarded by His great love.

King David wrote, For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him (Psalm 103:11).

Solomon had a revelation of this supernatural love when he wrote:

*You have made my heart beat faster,
my sister, my bride.*

*You have made my heart beat faster
with a single glance of your eyes (4:9).*

Our response should be, “Lord, let us be captivated by Your love again. Draw us after You and let us run together.”

Desire to be Drawn and to Run Together

*The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s...
draw me after you and
let us run together! (1:1,4a)*

The maiden expresses the deep desire of her heart to be drawn and to run with Him, but she knows that at times she needs His help. She is aware that He will be going many places and she wants to go with Him, see with His eyes, feel with His heart, and always feel His presence.

*The King has brought me
into his chambers (1:4b).*

She recognizes that He is the King and is delighted to be brought to the secret place with Him. How thankful we are that wherever we are on this earth, whenever we are temporarily subjected to adverse conditions, we can find the secret place in our spirits where we can commune with Him and be encouraged.

A Look at Our Sinful Nature

*I am black, but lovely,
O daughters of Jerusalem,
like the tents of Kedar
like the curtains of Solomon
Do not stare at me because I am swarthy,
for the sun has burned me (1:5,6).*

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The bride knows she was born in sin, but since He initiated the relationship, she became glorious, or lovely, in His eyes. The sun has burned her because she has been working in the vineyard. Her brothers (fellow church members) were angry with her and she felt rejected. New believers can often experience rejection and criticism even though they have served in the church, even to the point of being overloaded and not taking care of their own vineyard. Her vineyard was her own quiet time.

Because of the initial taste of His love, the bride felt glorious. She expresses her desire to be with Him always and asks Him a question.

*Tell me, O you whom my soul loves,
where do you pasture your flock,
where do you make it lie down at noon?
For why should I be like one who veils herself
beside the flocks of your companions? (1:7)*

She is earnestly seeking Him and very desirous of finding that place of rest. She doesn't want to wear a veil; she wants to see Him fully, to be with Him and not just fellowship with His companions. He now comes to her with a tender love song because He is delighted with her desire for closeness.

First Love Song of Appreciation

*If you yourself do not know,
most beautiful among women,
go forth on the trail of the flock,
and pasture your young goats by the tents
of the shepherds (1:8).*

The King calls His beloved *beautiful* eleven times in this one short book. The King James Version uses the words, *O thou fairest among women*. The King wishes to raise her self-

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esteem and intimates that He appreciates her work for Him. She has had no time to spend on herself and no ability to make herself beautiful in the world's eyes, because she had been working in the fields. He speaks of the inner beauty He sees in her. He will begin to speak of those seeds of beauty that He sees in her.

True prophetic ministry in these last days will speak of or call forth those seeds in the individual bride, which will grow to maturity.

The Lord Jesus did this when He called Peter a rock in Matthew 16:18. He spoke of how solid and strong Peter would be in the future. At the time Jesus spoke this word over him, Peter was not strong or solid in his faith. He was glib, impetuous, and scared of losing his own life. After denial, resurrection, and Pentecost, Peter became the rock-like person Jesus had spoken of. He led thousands to believe in the resurrected Savior.

When a prophetic word is spoken over an individual, there is a responsibility on the part of the recipient to add faith and action to the word. It will not automatically come to pass. Sometimes just the opposite happens, like Peter, "the rock," that crumbled, because faith had not yet been added to the word that Jesus gave him. Peter had not yet begun to see himself as Jesus saw him.

The King now asks the maiden to pasture her goats, feed those looking to her by the tents of the shepherds. She was to stay in relationship with the church body.

*To me, my darling, you are like My mare
among the chariots of Pharaoh.
Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments,
your neck with strings of beads (1:9,10).*

The King sees her as His own personal possession and strong, for Pharaoh had only the strongest horses. He sees her

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face as lovely, sparkling as though adorned with jewels around her neck.

What woman doesn't like to wear some ornaments? Even in a primitive culture, women dress up for a special occasion. Although their dresses may be very dirty and a pipe might hang from their mouths, they somehow find some bright colored yarn or some beads, and adorn themselves. Some even pierce their ears and string yarn through the openings.

*We will make for you ornaments of gold
with beads of silver (1:11).*

We may be referring to the Trinity making gold and silver ornaments for us – which are better than the beads the maiden found!

The Maiden's Response

*While the king was at his table,
my perfume gave forth its fragrance (1:12).*

Fragrance speaks of the bride's praise, worship and prayer which were like a sweet-smelling savor to her King. The King will feed her at His table.

The maiden then begins to speak of how much she appreciates her Beloved's sweet smell.

*My beloved to me is a pouch of myrrh
which lies all night between my breasts.
My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms
in the vineyards of Engedi (1:13,14).*

Myrrh occurs many times in the Song of Solomon and it is always pointing toward a coming death. Myrrh was one of the spices used for embalming.

It is only by grasping the sweet name of Jesus that we can minister in smelly, dirty and repulsive areas where spiritual darkness prevails. Warfare prayer, love and the knowledge that

the people have never heard of Jesus can bring one joy in any situation.

His Next Appreciation: Dove's Eyes

*How beautiful you are, my darling ...
your eyes are like doves (1:15).*

This was a real compliment to the maiden that He sees her as having dove's eyes. I understand that dove's eyes are peaceful and have no peripheral or side vision. Horses need blinders on their eyes to keep them from being distracted, but this is not so for doves. They do not get distracted; they only see straight ahead.

When I understood this, I asked the Lord if I could see a dove and look directly into its eyes. I soon forgot about this request, but God didn't. A short time later, we were in a guesthouse overseas and a pigeon flew through the open window into the room. The manager was embarrassed and said, "Oh, that never happens."

I laughed and replied, "I remember asking the Lord if I could see a dove close up and He lets me see a pigeon!" But I wondered to myself, what is the difference between a pigeon and a dove? When I returned home I looked in the Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia on my computer, and found there is no biological distinction between pigeons and doves. They are from the same species. The small species are usually called doves and the larger species pigeons, but even this usage is inconsistent. The pigeon constantly cocks his head when in new surroundings to increase his vision. I was delighted to find that the Lord had answered my request.

Prophetic Word Is Seed

When the Groom speaks over her that she has eyes like a dove's, He is referring to the fact that she is, or will be, focused on Him. When a prophetic word such as that is spoken over the maiden, she desires all the more to have singleness of vision. She knows in her heart how easily she gets distracted, but the Groom doesn't even seem to notice. Instead He speaks that which He sees coming forth in her life.

For example, remember how in the Old Testament, the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and addressed him as a valiant warrior (Judges 6:12). At that point, Gideon was not valiant or even a warrior. He was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save it from being stolen or burned by the invading Midianites. The Israelites were hiding in caves and dens and living in fear of invaders. Yet, because of their cries and God's mercy, the Lord chose to send an angel to call out Gideon to be their deliverer. Gideon responded and fulfilled that prophetic word only after confirmation of his call.

The Bride Responds

*How handsome you are, my beloved,
and so pleasant! Indeed our couch is luxuriant!
The beams of our houses are cedars,
our rafters, cypresses (1:16,17).*

Now the maiden is enjoying a rest on the couch. She has withdrawn for a while from society and sees the strong cedars and cypress rafters above her.

As David sang, He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold...the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God (Psalm 62:2, 7).

Who Is the Rose of Sharon?

*I am the rose of Sharon,
the lily of the valleys (2:1).*

As we continue following our maiden in her initial love experience, we find the bride calling herself the rose of Sharon. This rose was very common on the hillsides, as was the lily of the valleys. She is considering herself as very ordinary in her own eyes. Then her Beloved speaks over her that she is:

Like a lily among the thorns (2:1)...

The Groom calls her outstanding. She is spotless and beautiful among the thorns – among unregenerated mankind. Even the other maidens could not compare to her. This part is a mystery. How could the Groom see the individual believer, each of us, as a spotless, beautiful lily when we know that we have neither of these qualities. Like Paul, we say, I am chief among sinners and not beautiful at all, and there are so many lilies in His field much more beautiful than I. We are never to compare ourselves with others. We are to see ourselves as He sees us. In His eyes we are outstanding.

*Like an apple tree, among the trees of the forest,
so is my beloved among the young men.
In his shade I took great delight and sat down,
and his fruit was sweet to my taste (2:3).*

In this verse and the next few verses the maiden is still enjoying His presence. She has left the couch and is sitting in the shade of an apple tree. From there she goes to a banquet table and enjoys His love and raisin cakes.

Then the Groom speaks these words to others:

*I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
by the gazelles or by the hinds of the field,*

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*that you will not arouse or awaken my love,
until she pleases (2:7).*

The daughters of Jerusalem – fellow church members – are encouraged to leave her alone. Gazelles are very gentle, sensitive animals which frighten easily. It's like He says, "Be sensitive to me and leave the maiden alone for awhile. I am ministering to her and do not arouse her or awaken her until she pleases, or feels she is ready. She is in a season of rest where I am sanctifying her."

Jungle Ministry

All of us need to go through seasons of refreshing and rest. My husband and I have ministered and taught in the jungles of Asia for almost six months out of every year for four years. We would spend three months there, and then come home to take care of things at home. We would rest, gather natural and spiritual supplies, and then return for another three months. We had a farm in the jungle where we had planted many fruit trees and vegetables. We had constructed many buildings. The students needed a break in the hot season also.

The classroom building was used for church every Sunday and the students and staff were accustomed to having a devotional time together every evening. They were gifted in music, and almost everyone could play the guitar. These were special times when we could practice their language and they could try our English. Music was a great bonding influence. As the years went by, our praise music got louder and louder. A drum set was donated to us. Then the spiritual dance began and the warfare songs. Many of the nearby village people came to enjoy our music and the peace and joy we had. Many received Jesus as their Savior.

A television set and VCR were soon donated to us and we showed teaching videos translated into their language, and many other English videos. The showing of the *Jesus* film resulted in many salvations and healings.

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The Lord also brought many workers from the States. Some did construction work and others taught. All were a great help. The visitors and the students and we made many evangelistic trips into the surrounding mountainous areas. We covered an area of about 300 square miles, mostly on foot! We literally climbed the mountains.

Now back to our love story. Someone else is climbing on the mountains.

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Chapter Two

My Beloved Is Climbing on the Mountains

There is an exciting word picture of our handmaiden. The Groom had apparently left the handmaiden in the banquet hall reclining on the couch. She says to those around:

*Listen! My Beloved! Behold, he is coming,
climbing on the mountains,
leaping on the hills! (2:8)*

What is the mountain of difficulty you are facing? He is coming to you. There is no mountain that He cannot climb.

*Behold, he is standing behind our wall,
He is looking through the windows,
He is peering through the lattice (2:9).*

The bride must come out from behind the wall – whatever the wall may be. It can be tradition, fear, or unworthiness. It is anything that stands between Jesus and His bride.

The bride must venture to love even when it's a risk. Love will bring a return, but not necessarily from the recipient of the love.

My Beautiful One

*My beloved responded and said to me, 'Arise,
my darling, my beautiful one, and come along.
For behold the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone,
the flowers have already appeared in the land;
the time has arrived for pruning the vines...'*

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*The fig tree has ripened its figs,
and the vines in blossom have
given forth their fragrance' (2:10-13a).*

Now the King comes to her again, saying *my beautiful one*. Every time He speaks to her He calls her *beloved, my darling*, or *my beautiful one*. He speaks tenderly to her. But now He wants her to get up from her bed of ease and come along with Him. He implies there is work to be done – places to go.

We know there are nations to speak to, for His heart is in the nations. Then with the many signs of spring, He wants us to look to the future. Flowers and blossoms speak of new, resurrected life and fruit or seeds to come. He repeats the refrain, *Come along*.

*Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come
along! O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in
the secret place of the steep pathway
(2:13b,14a),*

In this passage, the bride must be hidden in the cleft of the rock. Clefts can be hard, dry places the bride is called to, a cross experience, or something confining. There were also (*secret places of the stairs* – KJV) which she must climb. This was going to take some effort, for her Beloved was always on the move. She couldn't sit for long and enjoy the rest as much as she wanted to.

Then as she climbs, He responds:

*Let me see your form, let me hear your voice;
for your voice is sweet,
and your form is lovely (2:14b).*

So many people feel they can't sing a pleasant song to the Lord. God isn't speaking of our ability to sing beautifully. He is speaking of a heart attitude of praise. He asks us to make a

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joyful sound – even a shout. Shout joyfully to God, all the earth; sing the glory of His name; make His praise glorious (Psalm 66:1,2). Many times in the Old Testament, He says He enjoys our songs of praises. Sing to Him a new song (Psalm 33:3a).

The word *form* can also mean our countenance or appearance. The King James Version uses the word *countenance*. It means our general appearance. So many of us may think we are too fat, too tall, too short or whatever. If our self-image or self-respect hinges on something we can change, we should ask for help. He is interested in every aspect of our lives and accepts us in our present form. In fact the Groom says the bride's *form is lovely*.

Foxes Spoil the Vines

*Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes
that are ruining the vineyards,
while our vineyards are in blossom (2:15).*

Little foxes gnawing away at the base of the plant would cut off all the juicy nutrients necessary for the whole vine. There would not be fruit. So also the sin in our lives, even those we may consider small, or those we excuse as being part of our personality, if not taken care of, will cause us to lose our fruit.

We know that there are not “little” and “big” sins, for James 2:10 says: For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. These are the days that judgment begins at the household of God (1 Peter 4:17). He is calling for holiness in our lives like never before. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil (Proverbs 8:13).

*My beloved is mine, and I am his;
he pastures his flock among the lilies (2:16).*

How wonderfully sweet to know He is ours and we belong to Him. What a quiet confidence this can bring.

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Our maiden knew her Beloved pastured His flock among the lilies. The lilies are the other church people with pure hearts and clean lives.

We need to fellowship in a local body of believers where there is a high concentration of people who are seeking the Lord with all their heart. The pastor should understand or be open to the present move of God concerning apostles and prophets. Unbelievers should be getting saved and the sick should be getting healed. The pastor should desire the pure Word of God.

Separation, Search, and Fellowship

*Until the cool of the day
when the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved,
and be like a gazelle or a young stag
on the mountains of Bether (2:17).*

The bride admits she has shadows in her life and needs Him. The word *Bether* means separation or cleavage. Somehow, she had become apart from Him. The next few verses imply that she has a dream.

*On my bed night after night I sought him
whom my soul loves; I sought him
but did not find him.
I must arise now and go about the city;
in the streets and in the squares I must seek
him
whom my soul loves.
I sought him but did not find him.
The watchmen who make the rounds in the city
found me, and I said,*

*‘Have you seen him
whom my soul loves?’ (3:1–3)*

The maiden no longer felt His presence.

We all go through times when we do not feel His presence, yet we know He never leaves us or forsakes us (Hebrews 13:5). We can find Him if we search for Him with all our heart.

There have been many times when my husband and I have ministered and felt no special anointing. There was no visible change in the expression on the recipient’s face. Yet to our surprise the person will later come forward and testify how the Lord had touched and healed him.

In Africa, it is different. The ones we ministered to are very expressive.

All in all, we can’t depend on feelings. We must operate in faith and what God’s Word says we can do. Then we use our faith to believe for the manifestation of God’s healing power.

Kenneth Copeland once said, “Your faith is the only thing that continues to connect them to the power source.”

In other words, the Lord showed me not to worry about the response we see. We are to stay in faith that those to whom we have ministered will receive their healing. We lay hands on the sick in obedience to His command.

The city referred to where the maiden looks for her Beloved could be a dead or half-dead church. Streets and squares could refer to other groups of people who have no relationship, or a very superficial relationship with God. The maiden soon realizes how empty and desperate her life is without His presence and she continues her search.

She Finds Him

*Scarcely had I left them when I found him
whom my soul loves; I held on to him
and would not let him go,*

*until I brought him
to my mother's house (3:4).*

Finally she finds Him and hangs on to Him with all her being and brings Him to her *mother's house*.

This term *mother's house* is also used in chapter 8, verse 2. According to Galatians 4:26, The Jerusalem above is free, she is our mother. This meant that the maiden was born or registered in the heavenly Jerusalem and she felt a freedom to fellowship with her Beloved in that house.

David speaks of people being registered in the heavenly Jerusalem. But of Zion it shall be said, "This one and that one were born in her" ...The Lord shall count when He registers the peoples, "This one was born there" (Psalm 87:5, 6).

In this part of the prophetic song, the maiden is enjoying sweet fellowship, knowing she was born from above. Maybe she apologized for being so hesitant in answering His call to *come along*. Maybe she had become lazy, too busy or didn't cultivate their relationship. Now, she clings to Him.

He Lets Her Rest

*I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
by the gazelles or by the hinds of the field,
that you not arouse or waken my love,
until she pleases (3:5).*

Now He does not allow her to be disturbed again while she is maturing in her love. He is tenderly dealing with her and does not want her to be interrupted until she is ready.

This can only indicate a time in our lives when we must withdraw from people and let the Holy Spirit minister to us. There is inevitably that feeling, which comes from the enemy, when one feels guilty for not going here or there, or doing some other job. Remember, He said the maiden had dove's

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eyes. We must always keep our focus on Him and not allow others to put pressure on us to perform or work.

After her rest there will be a more exhilarating time with Him. Her desire was to run and to be drawn and He was pleased and was drawing her closer. Soon the maiden in the Song of Solomon will be getting ready for her wedding.

The Wedding in the Hills

In the area where my husband and I ministered, the people engaged in a very colorful marriage procession. The groom, his attendant, friends, and family would proceed first, accompanied by any musical instruments available – usually guitars. All would come walking down the dusty road headed toward the church. Next would follow the children, and flower girl and boy. The bride and her similarly dressed attendant would follow along with their parents and friends. It was very colorful because many would wear their national costumes. All were joyful and many sang as they proceeded down the road.

Recently, my husband was invited to officiate at the wedding of one of our graduates. This wedding was to be a double wedding with the graduate's brother being a groom also. The bridesmaids were the groom's sisters, who had also graduated from our school, and were now teaching for us. We had known these sisters and one brother for seven years and we dearly loved them.

However, getting to their home village required a truck ride of five hours on a concrete road and five hours over a dirt road, which wound through the hills, valleys and streams. It would be an exhausting trip, and I was not especially excited about going. I was allowed to sit in the cab of the truck while my husband, four American visitors, and many nationals stuffed themselves with luggage, bedding, and food in the back of the truck. After ten grueling hours on the road, we arrived safely.

The kind parents of the grooms welcomed us warmly and made the six Americans as comfortable as possible in their bamboo house. These parents had encouraged their three

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children to continue at our school for four years and then to be available for teaching at the school. Obedience and respect for elders is a great virtue in these people. Love and faithfulness was evident in this family. The atmosphere was refreshing – even though it was difficult on the flesh.

Our team was asked to speak to crowds constantly before the wedding. People came from long distances not only to see six Americans, but also to observe the preparations for a big wedding. After we spoke, many received Jesus, the baptism of the Holy Spirit and healing in their bodies.

One of the girls was very creative with her hands and she spent days in making the decorations. After the wedding party's personal things were made, she helped decorate the church with crepe paper streamers, banners, balloons, flowers, and palm fronds. It was a wondrously joyous occasion.

The wedding day started very early with the groom's family and friends serving all the visitors a meal. We heard there were 1,200 in attendance. After we "decorated" the girls in the wedding party, the procession began down the dusty road accompanied by singing. At the church, every seat was filled. Some were sitting on the open railing and many others on the hill outside. Music was a big part of the wedding. The laughter and clean fun was contagious, and the name of Jesus was exalted.

Our graduates were signs and wonders because they could all preach, teach, pray for healing of the sick, and speak English. The Lord had made them great lights to their people. Now the people in that village want a Bible school. The American visitors were graduates of Spirit Life Bible College, and they also ministered in great power. Together, we had a wonderful time. The minor inconveniences were an occasion for great laughter. What seemed to be difficult at first turned out to be a great joy.

Being part of that wedding helped me to understand what the weddings were like in Bible times.

The King's Wedding to the Maiden

*What is this coming up from the wilderness
like columns of smoke,
perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
with all the scented powders
of the merchant? (3:6)*

What a joyous occasion we will experience at the wedding feast of the Lamb when we are finally united to our Groom!

Yet, first of all, the maiden had to come from the wilderness. The wilderness speaks of hardship. Christ also had to come from the wilderness where Satan tempted Him after the power of the Holy Spirit had fallen upon Him.

The columns of smoke accompanying the maiden remind us of the fiery smoke when God cut the covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15:17. The smoking furnace symbolized His presence securing the covenant, which promised blessings to Abraham including land and multiple descendants.

The columns of smoke were perfumed with myrrh. As we mentioned before, this sweet smelling substance was widely used for embalming. In Greek it was called "smyrna." It is a well-known gum resin from a plant growing in great abundance in the Holy Land and was also an ingredient of the holy anointing oil. The myrrh signified that the maiden has chosen to put to death her life apart from her Beloved. She and He now exude a delightful aroma like *all the scented powders of the merchant*.

Inevitable Warfare

Behold, it is the traveling couch of Solomon; sixty mighty men around it, of the mighty men of Israel. All of them are wielders of the sword, expert in war; each man has his sword at his side, guarding against the terrors of the night (3:7,8).

The first things noticeable in the procession besides the columns of smoke were the sixty mighty warriors surrounding the marriage couple.

The warriors signify that when we are joined to our King, it is inevitable that the spirits of darkness become angry and desire to destroy us.

This warfare began in heaven when Satan revolted and was thrown out from God's presence (Isaiah 14:12-17). Ever since that time, Satan and all his fallen angels have been determined to keep us from an intimate relationship with our Beloved.

However, the maiden is not alone in this battle. Her Lord is by her side, and the *mighty men* signify the angels that are camped about them. **The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them (Psalm 34:7).** What a comfort to know that when we are about our Father's business we are surrounded by angels – in fact, they go before us! They will be engaged in intense spiritual warfare.

Thank God, we have His name, His authority, His gift of the Holy Spirit, His anointing, and we know how the battle ends!

***Snakes, Scorpions, Centipedes and
Buffalo***

During one of the first months when my husband was teaching on the authority of the believer, a cobra slowly slithered toward the school. Because the building was enclosed with only a few feet of bamboo with wide openings at the dirt floor and also at chest height, the snake was clearly visible, and was a real threat. One of the young men called out in his native language, "Snake, go, in the name of Jesus!" Quickly the snake turned and left! The young man and all the classmates were amazed and thrilled. We had a real-life demonstration showing that believers do have authority in the name of Jesus!

At another time, the squawking of chickens in their coop awakened one of our workers. He jumped out of bed and with machete in hand ran to the coop and quickly killed a large python. I was told they ate the meat for breakfast.

Many times my husband and I were dangerously close to scorpions, and the very unpredictable centipede. This centipede hides under wet leaves and loves water. It is quite large and colored a dull red, and doesn't walk in a straight line. They warned us that its bite is much worse than the scorpion's. I saw these creatures many times but thankfully was never bitten. Our students were always on the lookout for us and warned us in time. Their sense of the scorpion and centipede's presence was very acute.

Another time two of our students were travelling down a path with a young boy, and they encountered a large bull buffalo obstructing the path. They tried to go around him but this irritated the creature. Then, they threw stones at him, but still he would not move and let them pass. He got more and more incensed and finally charged at them. They ended up in a tree – a small tree at that.

Looking at each other, they said, "Why don't we try what the teacher told us about the name of Jesus?"

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They called out in a loud voice, “Buffalo, go, in the name of Jesus!” They said, “That bull ran as fast as he could, with his tail between his legs like someone was chasing him!”

When we decided to follow Jesus, we encountered a large resistance. Warfare is inevitable. Thankfully, we have His Word to help us win the battles, and He has refreshing times planned for us between the battles.

Our maiden had a refreshing time planned for her on the couch with her Groom when she needed new energy.

The Luxuriant Couch

King Solomon made for himself a sedan chair from the timber of Lebanon. He made its posts of silver, its back of gold and its seat of purple fabric, with its interior lovingly fitted out by the daughters of Jerusalem (3:9,10).

King Solomon made for Himself (and His bride) a luxuriant traveling couch, which reminds us of the mansion Jesus is preparing for us in heaven. It's not a little shack – it's a mansion! He prepares good, beautiful gifts for us.

In Jewish history, the bed consisted of a mattress of one or more garments underneath and a finer blanket to cover one's body and a pillow. However, the couch which was prepared for this bride was luxuriant, which implies that it was probably covered with a “canopy of silk, satin, or brocade and ornamented with jewels”.¹ The timber, silver, gold and purple speaks of the King using the best and most expensive for His bride.

The *daughters of Jerusalem* refer to the other maidens in the church who admire the bride, but who haven't made the full-fledged commitment and died to self.

Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and gaze on King Solomon with the crown with which his

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*mother
has crowned him
on the day of his wedding,
and on the day of his gladness of heart (3:11).*

It seems these are bystanders here speaking in answer to the question in verse 6, *What is this?* The mother is the heavenly Jerusalem we spoke of before (3:4) – the Jerusalem above.

The Prophetic Word Speaks to the Seed

Now we come to an exciting part in our study of Song of Solomon in which the Groom affirms His deep love for the bride because He sees what she will become, and is becoming more and more in His eyes. Remember again how Jesus spoke of Peter as the rock in Matthew 16:18? Within a very few years he became a powerful spokesman for his Savior. The King/Groom now sees these virtues in us, the bride, if we continue to follow Him. Let's see what these descriptions of her symbolize.

*How beautiful you are, my darling,
how beautiful you are! (4:1)*

He repeats the description for added emphasis. The King James Version uses the word *fair*, which in Hebrew means “beautiful, bright or handsome.” Remember that these descriptions are to be taken spiritually. When God looks at us, He sees us as covered with the blood of Jesus and with His robe of righteousness.

Many times in the Old Testament the Israelites were described as the *virgin daughters of Zion* (2 Kings 19:21, Isaiah 37:22, Jeremiah 14:17, 18:13, 31:4, 13, 21, Lamentations 2:13) even though they had committed spiritual adultery earlier. Because their sins were confessed and were covered, they were considered virgins again. Which one of us hasn't committed

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spiritual adultery by having other gods before Him – especially ourselves.

Self was on the throne for too many years of my life, and nearly destroyed my marriage – but God was gracious and loved me and tenderly brought me back to Him. He restored our marriage and we have been together for more than 40 years! I have a wonderful husband who puts God first and who has a heart burning to spread the good news to people in other nations who have not heard about Jesus.

The battle with self is still not over. Just recently, I was praying about whether to go back overseas to a different nation where it is not only uncomfortable but also it is more expensive than America. My natural reasoning was fleshly because the Lord showed me in Roman 8:13, For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit, you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Other Virtues

Your eyes are like doves behind your veil.

*Your hair is like a flock of goats
that have descended from Mount Gilead.*

*Your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn ewes
which have come up from their washing,
and all of which bear twins,
and not one among them has lost her young.*

*Your lips are like a scarlet thread,
and your mouth is lovely.*

*Your temples are like a slice of a pomegranate
behind your veil.*

*Your neck is like the tower of David
built with rows of stones,
on which are hung a thousand shields,*

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*all the round shields of the mighty men.
Your two breasts are like two fawns,
twins of a gazelle, which feed
among the lilies (4:1b-5).*

There is much symbolism here with various meanings. I will just pick out a few words for explanation.

The *goats* on Mount Gilead were raised to be slain for the temple worship. In this compliment to the bride, He sees that she is surrendered to Him and wants to give herself as a spiritual sacrifice.

Teeth speak of her ability to eat and chew the Word. The *twins* could be faith and love, for faith works by love, or they could be the righteousness and justice that are the foundations of His throne (Psalm 89:14).

When my husband and I did spiritual warfare in Asia, the Lord showed us to go through the motions of pulling out the independence monument, or obelisk which meant independence from Him, planting a new one and speaking righteousness and justice over the new stake we were planting. The Lord said that as we plucked up, planted a new one and prophesied over the land, that His Word would not return void (Isaiah 55:11-KJV). We believe the masses of people there who have not heard the gospel shall hear it soon.

Scarlet thread reminds us of the story of Rahab's salvation found in Joshua 2:18.

The *lovely mouth* means her words were truthful, gracious, and full of wisdom.

A *pomegranate* is full of seeds. This compliment refers to her creative thoughts, her being full of life and productive for the kingdom of God.

The *neck* speaks of her "will." It was strong like a tower. She knows her authority and is able to command a thousand warriors. She knows she is in a battle but with His power, she will endure in the face of adversity, trial or persecution. She

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has made up her mind to fight for and alongside her lover, because with Him she always wins.

The *breasts* signify her ability to feed and nurture others. The Groom sees her as capable of giving out food at the proper time. How blessed is the servant who does this (Matthew 24:45,46).

The only way we can feed and nurture others is first to feed on the Word ourselves. This feeding will help us store up energy and be aware of the enemy's attacks. For the Christian, warfare never really ends.

Chapter Three

***How Do You Dodge
a Charging Elephant?***

One morning just after dawn, I was awakened to a startling noise just outside our bamboo hut. The earth was trembling, and I could hear a low rumbling noise accompanied by the clinking of a chain. Alarmed, I sprang out of my bed and looked out our window. Walking slowly up the slight incline to our hut was a huge elephant complete with two very large white tusks. A long chain was dragging from one leg.

My husband, who had been shaving in the attached room, peered over the bamboo and discovered the elephant also.

“Honey, get out of the house immediately,” he yelled.

“I know – It’s not safe in here!” I replied.

In the jungles, I normally sleep in slacks and a tee shirt, and it was no problem in leaving the hut immediately. There was the distinct possibility that the elephant could bring down the whole house with one sweep and pull of his trunk and I didn’t want to be buried under a heap of bamboo, leaves and belongings – especially with an elephant stumbling around!

Jack ran outside with his face half-covered with white lather and immediately we started praying out loud and commanding that elephant to leave our house alone.

By this time, the students had come running out of their dorms and had begun praying and yelling at the big creature. The girls, who were assigned to cooking for the day, had been busy in the kitchen building. They grabbed some pots and pans and began banging on them with spoons in order to scare him off.

The elephant turned to the left. As he backed up, his backside hit a trellis, and in anger he lashed out with his trunk and pulled the whole trellis down. This trellis had been supporting a favorite edible gourd.

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The elephant turned around again, took two steps toward us and then turned again.

On the next turn, he was incensed and started to charge us. I dashed behind the closest tree, which was small. I knew it couldn't hide me. The elephant had seen me and with one sweep of his trunk could certainly finish me off. What a helpless feeling!

Suddenly, the elephant stopped, turned again to his left and started toward another house. By then, we knew we should not pray and yell so loudly. We knew it was a spiritual attack and that we should use wisdom and not frighten the animal more.

He turned again and charged us. Three steps later, he turned again toward the bamboo house.

One of our men students, Maung, meanwhile, had run to the kitchen and was now holding a large machete in his hand. These machetes are the working tool of the natives and are useful for many jobs. The elephant driver uses this same tool to goad or discipline a disobedient elephant when applied behind the ears.

Maung said, "He'll be afraid of this so I'll just get close to him." With great courage, Maung walked up to the elephant, making the instrument clearly visible to him. Miraculously, within seconds the elephant was following Maung up the hill toward the school building.

The girl's dorm was on the path to the school. It was supported by good solid posts and elevated ten feet off the ground, as was the custom. One pull from the elephant's trunk would destroy weeks of hard work. We had seen the destruction the elephant had done to the trellis and knew him to be a destructive animal. The girl's dorm contained a wooden floor and was quite valuable. But now, because of prayer and the sight of the machete, the elephant walked calmly up the hill past the dorm.

Now only the concrete school remained for him to pass.

"Oh good," I said to my husband, "the elephant can't destroy the school. It's made of concrete."

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“Oh yes he can,” Jack replied, “but God can stop him.”

Much to our joy, Maung led the elephant past the school, down the road, across the stream and started toward a neighboring farmhouse. By that time one of our workers appeared to help him. The two men led the elephant into the forest near the farmhouse, about ten minutes away. One of them walked in front of the animal and the other walked behind, grabbed its long chain and wound it several times around a strong tree. When they arrived at the house, they informed the farmer of the stray elephant, which was then secured to a nearby tree.

Victory the Day Before

The elephant incident was a direct spiritual attack against us and against our school because we had just had a tremendous spiritual victory. The day before we had a graduation ceremony at our newly dedicated concrete church/school building. The room was packed with a crowd of 150 people inside and many others were peering through the windows. Many of the leaders of the nation had come to see our new building. Others had come to see the overhead projector, which put their language and English on the wall. We even had lights, fans, and a speaker system for the guitars and keyboard. Friends in the States had donated a beautiful blue drum set which added so much to the music. Praise and worship was marvelous with some of the leaders clapping their hands or raising them for the first time. The message at the graduation was powerful also.

After the ceremony, the students and helpers served all 150 of our guests a sit-down meal. The leader and his wife came to our house so we could visit and have coffee and cake. We talked through an interpreter and they remarked how peaceful and beautiful our campus was. It was a great day of victory.

The next morning we were planning to pack and leave early to return to the States. The reason I tell this story is because the

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enemy of our souls is always especially angry with us, either just before, or just after a great victory.

Elijah's Battle

Remember in the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel how fire from heaven consumed Elijah's sacrifice? All the people saw the fire that fell from heaven and knew that the Lord was God. Baal was proven to be ineffective against God. Elijah had all five hundred of the prophets of Baal slain. The day was a tremendous day of victory. Following this victory, Elijah prayed for rain and the rain came, ending three years of drought. To complete this wondrous day, Elijah was given enough strength to outrun Ahab's chariot.

But then, immediately following these victories, one woman, Jezebel, caused Elijah to sink into despair, flee for his life, and wish he were dead. Fear, self-pity, and depression came immediately after these two tremendous victories. Elijah despaired because he thought he was the only one left who sought God.

The Lord was gracious. He found Elijah, spoke to him, and gave him new direction. The Lord also encouraged him by letting him know there were seven thousand in Israel who would not bow to Baal. Elijah survived the aftermath of victory!

There was a time when my husband and I sustained a real hit from the enemy though. Later I'll describe how the Lord brought us through to victory. The "hit" was in the form of malaria. We were not wise in disobeying some natural laws in caring for our bodies. This could be classified as natural thinking, pride or "self".

The Continuing Battleground - Self

We can't blame the devil for every conflict. Often it is our own flesh, or natural thinking which has to die. The maiden in our story has now made a decision to die to herself even more

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completely. She refers to this as going to the mountain of myrrh.

*I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh
and to the hill of frankincense (4:6b).*

She has become aware of her Beloved's awesome love and will take an added risk of dying to self in a new way.

Death has a different meaning to the unbeliever. The world extols death now. The rappers sing of it. Teenagers think of it in increasing numbers, and many feel this is the only way out.

In one church where my husband and I ministered, we felt in the Spirit that the spirit of death was making inroads even among believers. It begins with discouragement, and becomes depression. It disguises itself so that even Christians think it would be better to go home and be with Jesus than to continue the battles of life. This is a delusion of the enemy.

I can remember a few times overseas when I was discouraged because of the heat, cultural traditions and feeling so isolated. A spirit of rejection came on me in these strange surroundings. Yet, every evening, we had devotions together as a group and would sing praises. Without the praise, worship and the vision, I surely would have given up. I remembered that His promise was to bless me, and that my spiritual descendants would be a blessing to their nation. I'm sure this feeling of rejection was an attack of the enemy to get me out of my call.

The church of Satan is out in the open now, sending curses against us to discourage or kill us. However, we know that a curse without cause does not alight (Proverbs 26:2). We must lead a holy life, which includes death to our self-life, so that no curse will come on us. We are called to bless those that curse us. People are hungering for the supernatural now more than ever before. They need to see the power of God evident in our lives, in our love, compassion and humility.

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I didn't understand at that time about the warrior calling like I do now. Now I know a little more about stirring myself up immediately and speaking out loud His promises. The battle is increasing, but we should not be ignorant of the enemy's devices. Let us rise up, do the intercession, lead a holy life, and bring confusion on the enemy's plans. There is a time to rest in His love, but there is also a time to go to war, to take the offensive and see the spirits of death, depression and delusion leave. **The Lord is a warrior (Exodus 15:3)**, and we must learn to fight the battles with Him. This is the greatest time to be alive. His power is available to us like never before. He is waiting for those who have been transformed by His love and who have a revelation of spiritual warfare to break the power of the enemy over people and territories. We have the keys; He has given them to us. Hallelujah!

Department Store Emergency

I was in a local department store and a message came over the intercom, "If there is anyone in the medical profession in the store, please come to the jewelry department. There is an emergency!"

Having worked in a hospital laboratory for several years, but especially because I knew the "Great Physician," I walked over to the area and saw a man lying on the floor obviously in the throes of death. I knelt beside him and prayed loudly rebuking the spirit of death, and he began to slowly awaken.

His eyes opened and he tried to get up. I gently pushed him down and put a package of sheets, which I had in my arms under his head. The store manager said he had hit his head on the purse rack. Knowing the paramedics had been called and would soon arrive, I kept him flat and asked him his name. There was no response, so I prayed for his circulation and memory.

As he was coming more fully to consciousness, I told him he had a call on his life, and that Jesus loved him and had died for him. A crowd had gathered, and they also heard the good

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news about Jesus' love. By the time the medics arrived, the man was able to say his name. The store supervisor told me all the packages I had in my hands were a gift and she also gave me a certificate for twenty-percent off on my next purchase! A woman from the flower department presented me a yellow silk rose.

Our maiden had spoken about going to the mountain of myrrh or death to her self-life. Fear of man is an expression of self-life. This fear can keep us in bondage so we will not be available to minister to someone at a moment's notice.

Altogether Beautiful, No Blemishes

The verses following are some of the most amazing in this whole Song of Solomon. The King is becoming more expressive in His love because He sees His bride is responding. She still needs maturing, but she had decided again to put to death her self-life. At this point the King calls her *altogether beautiful*.

*You are altogether beautiful, my darling,
and there is no blemish in you (4:7).*

What a thrill that must have been for her to hear Him say, *there is no blemish in you*.

It seems so hard for us to accept these words when we feel so inadequate. We know we are covered with the blood of Jesus and that all our past is washed away, and yet we are so aware of how far we must go to reach perfection.

The King sees no blemishes in us. He sees a pure heart when we have confessed all known sin.

*Come with me from Lebanon, my bride,
may you come with me from Lebanon.
Journey down from the summit of Amana,
from the summit of Senir and Hermon,*

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*from the dens of lions,
from the mountains of leopards (4:8).*

Our Beloved is now calling us to go through Lebanon, the high places – to come higher with Him. He wants to show us the Promised Land from the heights. We can have our minds so set on the details in life that we fail to see the great promises and rewards ahead. He graciously calls us apart to renew our vision.

The lions and leopards have been trying to war against us and eat away at our vision or calling, but we must recognize these assignments and break their power by strong prayer.

A Ravished Heart

*You have made my heart beat faster, my sister,
my bride, you have made my heart beat faster
with a single glance of your eyes,... (4:9)*

Think of it a moment! The King/Groom is speaking this over us, the bride. *You have made my heart beat faster.* The King James Version says, *You have ravished my heart.* Amazing! How could it be? The Word says He said it! Let our spirit grasp this for a moment.

King David wrote, *They drink their fill from the abundance of Thy house; and Thou dost give them to drink of the river of Thy delights (Psalm 36:8).*

The prophet Zephaniah wrote, *The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy (Zephaniah 3:17).*

*How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride!
How much better is your love than wine, and
the fragrance of your oils than all kinds of
spices!*

Your lips, my bride, drip honey; honey and

*milk
are under your tongue, and the fragrance
of your garments is like
the fragrance of Lebanon (4:10,11).*

Our Beloved is saying again how much He appreciates our love. He actually says that our love is much better than wine. Previously, in chapter one, verse two, the maiden said that her Beloved's love was better than wine, and His oils had a pleasing fragrance. He turns around and compliments her saying **her** love is much better than wine, and **her** oils were better than all kinds of spices! She didn't fully express herself at first but because He returns the compliment even richer, she can be quiet in His love.

The *honey and milk* refers to the promises of God, which are in our mouth. The testimony of the Lord is sure...they are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb (Psalm 19:7, 10).

He Honors Her Even More

*A garden locked is my sister, my bride,
a rock garden locked, a spring sealed up.
Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates
with choice fruits, henna with nard plants,
nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon,
with all the trees of frankincense, myrrh and
aloes, along with all the finest spices (4:12-14).*

The Groom is saying that our lives are secured and protected by Him and the angels. In essence He is saying that no weapon formed against us shall prosper. The next two verses name nine fruits and spices, which refer to the nine fruits of the Spirit and the nine gifts of the Spirit working in us.

Submission and Trust

*Awake, O north wind, and come, wind of the south; make my garden breathe out fragrance, let its spices be wafted abroad.
May my beloved come into his garden and eat its choice fruits! (4:16)*

Having been delighted with His love, the maiden has made herself available to the north wind, which is usually cold and biting, or to the south wind, which is usually cool and refreshing. Her goal was to *breathe out fragrance*.

This is not to say that we submit to all circumstances which come our way and say, “Thy will be done.” There are cultural traditions, religious spirits, and customs, which we do not need to submit to. I believe that the Lord has provided for us to be healthy and prosperous. Religious tradition has robbed us of so much of the abundant life, which is God’s plan for the body of Christ.

We can break the power of religious spirits and other assignments against us by praying out of the depths of our spirit, and then listening. The Holy Spirit will inform us, or expose the works of the enemy. By prayers of travail, we can abort the demonic assignments against us before they can attack us.

I believe the maiden is saying here that she is available to go wherever her Beloved wants her to go, whether the wind is from the north or from the south. She wants to *breathe out fragrance* wherever He has asked her to go.

She then invites Him into His garden of her life to enjoy the fruit of their labors.

*I have come into my garden,
my sister, my bride;
I have gathered my myrrh*

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*along with my balsam.
I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey;
I have drunk my wine and my milk.
Eat, friends; drink and imbibe deeply,
O lovers (5:1).*

Chapter Four

Dirty Feet

*I was asleep, but my heart was awake. A voice!
My beloved was knocking: Open to me, my
sister,
my darling, my dove, my perfect one!
For my head is drenched with dew,
my locks with the damp of the night (5:2).*

The bride has a second dream of being separated from her Beloved. She hears Him knocking at the door, calling her name with all His love words. His head, He says, is drenched from being out overnight and into the sunrise. He has evidently suffered some hardship and comes to her for fellowship. However, she responds according to her old nature. She needs additional transformation.

*I have taken off my dress, how can I put it on
again? I have washed my feet,
how can I dirty them again? (5:3)*

One time this verse really spoke to me. I had just returned from overseas ministering in the jungle where your feet get really dirty and bruised. I had finally cleaned my feet and now we needed to make airline reservations to return. My flesh said, "It's too early. I'm not excited about going back. I don't want to dirty my feet again." The Lord reminded me of this verse from the Song of Solomon. I felt so foolish. He then reminded me of how He had said. **How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things! (Romans 10:15)**

Hesitation Brings Remorse and Searching

My beloved extended his hand through the opening, and my feelings were aroused for him. I arose to open to my beloved; and my hands dripped with myrrh, and my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the bolt (5:4,5).

The Shulamite maiden rose to open the door, after her feelings were aroused. Her hands dripped with myrrh, meaning another death to self.

I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and had gone! My heart went out to him as he spoke. I searched for him, but I did not find him; I called him, but he did not answer me (5:6).

She opens the door, but finds that He had gone. In grief the maiden looks for Him, calls, and there is no answer. She dresses herself and goes searching for Him. Sometimes it may feel like He is far away. Let us check our response to His knocking. Did we eagerly open our heart and obey Him after His knock? Repentance, obedience and searching will find Him again.

The watchmen ... found me, they struck me and wounded me; the guardsmen of the walls took away my shawl from me (5:7).

These watchmen are probably other religious people in her church or even her family. They scorn her, mock her and take away her covering, possibly her prayer support. They do not

want to fellowship with her again. However, her reaction is very significant. She does not hold a grudge against the watchmen, guardsmen or even her Beloved. She doesn't understand why her Beloved did not answer her, but she decides to actively pursue Him even more. She did not suffer from rejection.

The Rejection Syndrome

So many people in the body of Christ have suffered from rejection, beginning when they were young children. In school their playmates may have teased them. In sports they could not attain a quality standard. At home their parents may have spoken harsh words over them. Many children are products of divorce or sexual abuse, and these feelings are carried over into adulthood. In the church they expect to be fully accepted, and when these feelings of rejection come up again, they may get discouraged, leave the church, or spread strife among the brethren.

In fact, this feeling or spirit of rejection made its first appearance in the Garden of Eden when the serpent asked Eve, 'Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?' (Genesis 3:1) Eve answers that there was one tree from which they could not eat or touch, lest they die. Then the serpent lies to her and tells her that she shall not surely die, but that God knows that when she eats from it, her eyes would be opened and she would be like God – knowing good and evil. The serpent wanted Eve to believe that God was withholding something very desirable from her. In other words, God had rejected her.

The truth was that God had given Adam and Eve a place of abundance in which to live, and where He could walk and talk with them every evening. Yet, the serpent placed that first thought of rejection in Eve's mind.

I believe the love of God expressed in the Song of Solomon can banish that feeling of rejection once and for all. We need to

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picture ourselves as this maiden, (even if you are a man), and receive these lovingly inspired words as if the Groom, Jesus, or God the Father, is speaking directly to us.

Let's review again:

*You are altogether beautiful, my darling,
and there is no blemish in you (4:7).*

You have been washed by the blood of the Lamb and now have His robe of righteousness. You can go on in triumph and defeat that feeling of rejection. The Lord God has accepted you. He would not lie to you.

God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent; has He said, and will He not do it? (Numbers 23:19a)

Moses referred to the children of Israel as a treasured possession. And the Lord has today declared you to be His people, a treasured possession, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments ((Deuteronomy 26:18).

*'I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
if you find my beloved, as to what you will tell
him: for I am lovesick.' 'What kind of beloved is
your beloved, O most beautiful among women?
What kind of beloved is your beloved,
that thus you adjure us?' (5:8,9)*

The maiden is lovesick and forgets all her hurt and actively pursues her *Beloved*. When she encounters others who ask about Him she is full of praise for Him.

Praise for her Beloved

Now begins one of the most exciting, heartwarming passages in this Song concerning our Beloved. The maiden gets her focus off herself, her possible feelings of rejection and begins to give to others less spiritually mature, a description of her Beloved.

Little did Solomon know when he wrote this beautiful love song that these descriptions from the maiden's mouth would be applied to the Messiah.

The maiden saw her Beloved as most handsome. We can see that now too, but we need to also see how He became disfigured and marred for our sakes. As we compare what happened to Him later, when He paid the price for our sins, we can grow in appreciation and love for Him.

*My beloved is dazzling and ruddy,
outstanding among ten thousand (5:10).*

Watchman Nee's book, *Song of Songs*, says *dazzling and ruddy* indicating that "He was vibrant with fullness of life and power. It was the healthy glow of youth."² Remember how He later willingly gave up this vibrancy and fullness of life.

Outstanding among ten thousand. We know Him now as outstanding among all.

His Head of Most Fine Gold

His head is like gold, pure gold (5:11a).

The Hebrew word here is "paz" meaning pure, refined gold. It refers to His divine attributes and God's glory, which rested upon Him even as Adam and Eve were clothed with glory before the Fall. That was the same head that would wear a crown of thorns for us. He was gashed and bleeding for our redemption, our healing, and our deliverance. Some say this piercing was for the healing of all mental illnesses.

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Surely we all know the mind is where the enemy attacks. It is the seat of the will, the gate for the enemy. But **We** are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).

How we thank Him for being gashed for us so we can have the victory! I believe, when we see our Savior, we'll be able to see not only the scars on His hands and feet, but also the scars on His forehead.

*His locks are like clusters of dates
and black as a raven (5:11b).*

This speaks of fullness and signifies vigor and power. Maybe now the Shulamite maiden remembers how in her dream His locks were drenched with dew and damp from the night, and she hadn't let Him in the door. He had been exposed to the elements – possibly for her. Feeling remorse, she continues in her praise for Him.

*His eyes are like dove's,
beside streams of water,
bathed in milk, and reposed
in their setting (5:12).*

This is an appreciation only a lover can give after looking intently, lovingly into His eyes. She had been very close to Him. Watchman Nee says, "the most beautiful feature of a dove is its eyes."³ Her Beloved's eyes sparkled and were pure as milk, meaning His thoughts were pure and only of her as they looked at her.

*His cheeks are like a bed of balsam,
banks of sweet scented herbs; (5:13a)*

These are the same cheeks which would more than one thousand years later be given to those who pluck out the beard

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(Isaiah 50:6). Remember how they spit upon Him after hitting His head with a staff? (Matthew 27:30) The blood must have run down and matted in His hair and beard. Just days before, Mary had anointed His head and feet with costly, scented perfume (Matthew 26:7, John 12:2). As our Savior smelled this, He probably remembered Mary's pure love.

These sweet smelling cheeks were given to the scoffers and were disfigured and bruised for our iniquities. This event is described by the prophet Isaiah.

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed (Isaiah 53:4, 5).

*His lips are lilies,
dripping with liquid myrrh (5:13b).*

Lilies represent purity, and we know He always spoke the truth. Those in the synagogue were amazed at His words. John wrote, Never did a man speak the way this man speaks (John 7:46).

Luke wrote, And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips (Luke 4:22).

There were words of compassion, love, healing, and forgiveness, but rebuke when He came against demons. Now we have His words recorded in Scripture, and they are spirit and are life (John 6:63).

Hands of Gold

*His hands are rods of gold
set with beryl; (5:14a)*

Hands speak of the ability to work, touch, bless, lift up, feed, and wash. His hands worked as a carpenter; touched those with leprosy; blessed the children; lifted up those from a pallet

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of sickness; fed the five thousand; and washed the disciple's feet.

Gold represents His divine nature. In Asia, we see idols covered with gold, and some pagodas covered with gold. There is no divine nature here. Serving those gods has done them no good. Most of the people are desperately poor, sick, and without hope.

*His abdomen (belly – KJV) is carved ivory
inlaid with sapphires (5:14b).*

The abdomen or belly was understood in that day to be the seat of the emotions. His death gave us the life that flows out of our innermost being (John 7:38).

Carved ivory was taken through great pain to the elephant at his death. This would indicate that His love for us was born out of His sufferings unto death as a sin-bearer.⁴

Sapphires indicate heavenly clearness as in Exodus 24:10, where it describes the place where the God of Israel met with Moses and the seventy elders. The ancient stone was also known as lapis lazuli, varying from ultramarine to a dark violet blue.

Legs Like Pillars of Alabaster

*His legs are pillars of alabaster (marble – KJV)
set on pedestals of pure gold (5:15a).*

Legs speak of the ability to stand. *Pillars of alabaster* indicate great, unsurpassed strength. Gold is mentioned three times by our maiden. Let us see Him also as even more precious than gold and beautiful stones.

Solomon next used a stately tree to describe Him:

*His appearance is like Lebanon,
choice as the cedars (5:15b).*

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Merrill Unger gives a fine description of these trees. “At Bsherreh in the Republic of Lebanon about a hundred miles north of Beirut, exists a fine group of the ancient cedars of Lebanon. These noble trees display the characteristics of the ancient trees. They have reddish brown bark and sturdy trunks as much as forty feet in girth (circumference). They have a very wide branch spread, and bear cones, some five inches long, and have bright green needles about one half inch long. A fine prize for architectural uses, they grow very slowly. In comparison with the trees found in Bible lands, it was the ‘king of trees.’”⁵ This would give us a word picture of our Lord being strong, stately and able to endure winds and seasons.

He is not only more precious than gold and beautiful stones, He is stronger and more kingly than a cedar tree. Truly He is much more than these things. What words are there to describe Him? We can only worship Him in His splendor.

His mouth is full of sweetness, and he is wholly desirable (altogether lovely – KJV). This is my beloved, and this is my friend,... (5:16)

True Worship

The maiden has now progressed to a high level of worship. She doesn't mention how He took her from the vineyards and fed her apples, raisin cakes or how she was beaten and couldn't find Him. She concentrates fully on His attributes.

This type of true worship is required for us to be transformed. How often does our worship consist of only praise for what He has delivered us from, and what He has given us? He desires a higher level of worship, in which our eyes are totally off ourselves and concentrated on His qualities.

This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, the maiden says.

Let us press on to please our best friend, and extol Him for who He is – the great I AM. This adoration will give us the new energy we need for the end-time battle.

The Daughters' Response

Now there is an amazing response by the daughters of Jerusalem, which represent less mature Christians. The maiden has spoken so glowingly of her Beloved that they want to find Him too.

Where has your beloved gone, O most beautiful among women? Where has your beloved turned, that we may seek him with you? (6:1)

The friends observe how the maiden glows with health and vitality as she describes her Beloved, calling Him *most beautiful*. David wrote that, *Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary (Psalm 96:6)*.

We are His sanctuary, so, when we praise Him, He gives us beauty. Again in the words of King David, *Praise is comely for the upright (Psalm 33:1, KJV)*. “Comely” means “suitable or beautiful” in the Hebrew. There is truth for us to glean here. Remember our maiden had called for her Beloved and He had not answered her. She began looking for Him in the city streets and was struck, wounded and stripped of her shawl, yet she has no bitterness toward her Beloved. When asked to describe Him, she paints such an amazing picture that the other women want to find Him also and they see her as very beautiful.

Do we refuse to allow even a tiny seed of bitterness to enter our heart when we don't understand our Beloved, or when we don't understand what is happening to us? Do we continue to call Him Wonderful, Counselor, the Prince of Peace, the Awesome God, Lord God Almighty, the Good Shepherd, the Bright and Morning Star?

One time I was suffering from malaria and a song written from the Word kept running through my mind. *Ascribe greatness to our God! The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He (Deuteronomy 32:3, 4)*.

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I took my medication but still ended up in the hospital just after we had arrived back home. I took my portable tape player with me to the hospital and played praise tapes constantly, believing that if I stayed in the presence of the Great Healer, I would recover swiftly.

Praise is a powerful weapon. My recovery did come quickly, for I was released from the hospital within three days, but my husband had a bigger battle. I'll describe his battle later.

The Bride's Revelation

Now it seems the bride remembers where her Beloved is staying. Praise and worship has opened the heavens and her mind, and she remembers where she can find Him. She says:

*My beloved has gone down to his garden,
to the beds of balsam, to pasture his flock
in the gardens and gather lilies (6:2).*

She remembers that when they had visited the vineyard before, noticing the ravages of the foxes, that *He pastures his flock among the lilies (2:16)*. This is still the body of believers where the pure Word is spoken. She knows she must return there.

To us, this means we need to continue fellowshiping in a body of believers and forsake not our assembling together (Hebrews 10:25). Bitterness or "flakiness" comes when we believe we can worship Him totally outside a group of believers. We need to be connected to a local body of believers.

The maiden also remembers the words spoken in that vineyard, *My beloved is mine, and I am his (2:16)*. Her focus has changed a bit now, for she says:

I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine,...
(6:3)

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She has sold out to Him, saying she belongs to Him first and then that He belongs to her.

The Groom Praises the Bride

I believe the response on her part that she no longer belongs to herself, but to Him, produces the following response from Him:

*You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my darling,
as lovely as Jerusalem, as awesome
as an army with banners (6:4).*

This is now the eighth time the Beloved addresses the maiden (us, the church) as *beautiful* and *my darling*. There was no condemnation for her because she had not immediately opened the door to Him the last time He came to her.

Tirzah means “delightfulness, pleasantness” and was a beautiful Caananite city overcome by Joshua, and later occupied by the kings of Israel, where they dwelt in a palace located there.

Not only was the maiden as beautiful as Tirzah but she was as lovely as Jerusalem, the city of the great King, referred to in Psalm 48. We know there is a heavenly Jerusalem too, where the streets are made of gold, and where we shall celebrate the wedding feast.

Awesome as an Army with Banners

As awesome as an army with banners is spoken over her twice. This is an astonishing word picture of us as being victorious and striking fear in the hearts of our enemies. See in your imagination a moment, two to three million Israelites on the march coming through the wilderness. Judah leads the procession with the banner, the standard ensign of the lion, held high. Next follows Issachar with his banner, probably with an ensign of a donkey. Zebulun follows next with a banner or ornament of a ship. “The standards were made of wood or metal and ornamented with various devices and shaped in the form of some sacred emblem.”⁶

King Balak of Moab views this procession from a mountaintop and he is overcome by fear, so he hires Balam to curse Israel (Numbers 22:1-6). Balam cannot curse them but prophesies many great things over Israel, which puts more fear into the king’s heart.

We are like this victorious army viewed by King Balak. In these last days, we too should strike fear in the heart of our enemies. The Scripture says two times that we, the church, are *as awesome as an army with banners*. Let’s receive this into our spirit. Therefore we can say:

**“Because of Jesus Christ,
I am as awesome as an army with banners.
The devil fears me, and everywhere I walk is my territory.
I walk in His anointing, cleansed by His blood
and eager to share the love of Jesus.
I am victorious!”**

Our Love Confuses Him!

*Turn your eyes away from me,
for they have confused me;... (6:5a)*

Here is another example of His amazing love for us. Remember how the Groom said the maiden had *ravished my heart* (KJV) or *made my heart beat faster with a single glance of your eyes?*

Watchman Nee says, "This is a move which is designed to challenge a return expression of love. The Lord conveys the idea that He is irresistibly overcome by the strength of such love. The real ways of the Lord are known by those who can look beyond His seeming rejection or delay or spurning to His appreciation of the strong affection in His saints."⁷

New Seed Thoughts

In case there is any doubt in the bride's heart, her Beloved repeats the same compliments He gave her previously, lest she forget the depth of His love. He describes her hair, teeth, and temples. I believe that the temples, which house the thought processes (the seeds), just as the pomegranate contains many seeds, refers to new seed thoughts of creativity He gives us for the last day's victory. Seeds always speak of new life, new birth, and potential.

I believe the Lord is giving His church new ideas of how to spread the gospel. No longer should we confess, "I am not creative." We know that the Almighty God dwells within us. We are partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) and therefore have creative ability.

*There are sixty queens and eighty concubines,
and maidens without number; but, my dove,
my perfect one, is unique:*

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*She is her mother's only daughter; she is the
pure child of the one who bore her (6:8,9a).*

We Are Unique

The *queens* and *concubines* refer to other ones in the church, some of whom have a deep relationship with the Master, and others who have a more superficial relationship with the King. The *maidens* are possibly those who haven't even met Him yet.

Then the King speaks of her uniqueness and perfection. In His eyes we are all unique and gifted as no other. We are the only ones gifted to touch certain lives. Souls are hanging in the balance, depending on our unique gifting. Let us rise up and do our part. He also said she was *perfect*. This is because of our relationship with God, even as Job was described as perfect. Our Father God said we were not lacking in any gift, that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and in all knowledge (I Corinthians 1:5, 7).

Remember how the King told the maiden she was *altogether beautiful*? The enemy of our souls would speak negative thoughts to us, but we should repeat the words the beloved King says over us.

The Glory on Us Grows

*The maidens saw her and called her blessed,
the queens and the concubines also,
and they praised her, saying,
Who is this that grows
like the dawn,
as beautiful as the full moon,
as pure as the sun,
as awesome as an army with banners (6:9b,10).*

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These are the days when others are going to see the glory of God on certain individuals. They'll see the blessings overtake them and praise our heavenly Father. If we are obedient in all areas and lead holy lives, the glory on us will grow. King Solomon said, *The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day (Proverbs 4:18).*

Thank God, we are being changed from glory to glory and into His image more fully, as we submit to Him each day. Let us submit to the fire of His glory, and ask Him to expose any chaff and burn it off us.

There is a hunger we need to develop and fan into flame so that we can know and experience Him more fully.

We hear of revival spreading through our land and we say, "Bring it here, Lord, and begin with me." Sometimes I feel a touch of His Spirit and I feel I don't know a thing, and I am so sinful. However, the cry of my heart is to not just have a touch but to have a continual sense of His Spirit. I want to go on to know Him and His ways more fully, so I can sense His direction more accurately.

The Lord God is moving in an awesome way now also in other lands, so that Buddhists and Muslims are having visions of Jesus in their countries and are praying to receive Him as their Savior! These truly are the last days!

Notice now in the last part of verse 10, the bystanders are saying that the maiden is *as awesome as an army with banners*. They seem to be surprised at her transformation.

Fruit Inspectors

I went down to the orchard of nut trees to see the blossoms of the valley, to see whether the vine had budded or the pomegranate had bloomed (6:11).

Now the maiden is speaking about going to inspect her orchards. She understands the necessity of checking regularly to see if little foxes have destroyed the vines or insects have destroyed the blossoms. She expects to find that her work in the kingdom has borne fruit. The seed she has planted and watered in finances, love and prayers will blossom and bear fruit, for she has spoken prophetically over her seed. She has watered it well with her faith and love. She has co-labored with Him and expects a harvest.

We are watchful also for false prophets, for they are like bad trees and we know them by their fruit. The apostle Matthew tells us, Beware of false prophets.... You will know them by their fruits...even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit... Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits (Matthew 7:15-20).

Even as the apostle Paul visited the churches he had planted, he wrote them, spoke faith over them and warned them against false prophets. We too, continue relationship with our overseas fruit and the schools we co-labored with Him in planting.(We now have two more schools in operation overseas). My husband and I rejoice to be able to revisit our orchards and see what His Word has accomplished.

Some seeds became fast growing trees, some grew slowly, and some have seemingly refused to grow thus far. Yet the Word was planted in their hearts and we speak over that seed. So shall My Word be...it shall not return to Me empty, without

accomplishing what I desire and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:11).

Transported with the King

*Before I was aware, my soul set me
over the chariots of my noble people (6:12).*

Watchman Nee helps us with the interpretation here, “Before she realized what was happening, she found herself being carried by her Beloved in His chariot across the fields of earth. Their personal chariot was accompanied by others, all of which are spoken of as ‘the chariots of my people of a willing heart.’”⁸ I feel she is so delighted with what she has seen in the orchard because of the little seeds she has planted, that her heart has filled her with joy, and she erupts in high praise so that she is transported in the spirit to His chariot.

Bystanders Are Amazed

*Come back, come back,
O Shulamite, come back,
come back that we may gaze at you!
Why should you gaze at the Shulamite,
as at the dance of the two companies? (6:13)*

Here it seems the daughters of Jerusalem are calling. Watchman Nee says, “The Holy Spirit is by means of this request earnestly entreating her to return and come into view in these end days so that others less mature might look upon her. She was indeed as a chariot moving swiftly and progressively, going on from victory to victory, riding on with her Lord and with no impediment to her progress.”⁹

The *dance of two companies* was a victory dance. The two armies or companies refers back to Mahanaim (Genesis 32:2) where Jacob met God's host. At a later time, Elisha's servant saw the angel host also when Elisha asked the Lord to open the

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servant's eyes: **And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha (2 Kings 6:17).**

When we are in the center of His will, we can expect a host of angels to accompany us.

Jesus Himself could have used this host of angels to protect Him in the garden before the crucifixion, or during the crucifixion. However, He knew that Scripture must be fulfilled and that He would eventually bring many sons to glory with Him. Praise His Name!

There was a time in our lives when we needed a host of angels to protect us because a war with real rifles and gun shots came right to our campus. We had to flee but the angels were there with us.

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Chapter Five

*Through the Valley
of the Shadow of Death*

By January of 1995, our campus had grown to be a beautiful place. Visitors who came said it looked like a Garden of Eden. The students, workers and we had planted many fruit trees, pineapples and a vegetable garden. Most of the buildings were now made of wood with metal roofs. Our school/church building was concrete and wood. Roberts Liardon had come to minister to us and dedicate the building. The orchids, roses, lilies, bougainvillea, and gardenias bloomed in their season, and many fruit trees and pineapples were beginning to produce.

For five years we knew a war was going on far off in the distance, but the Lord had told us to stay and build and battle in the spirit for the conflict to end. Many evangelistic trips were made into the surrounding hills with a measure of success.

Our praise and worship was glorious, but one day after breakfast, one of our young men returned from the neighboring village with the news that the opposing army was approaching rapidly. We also heard that everyone else had already fled. A truck was available to transport our goods to the river where we could load them into our boat, and flee downstream to a safer location. It was hard to understand, but we obeyed a neighboring leader who had brought us his truck.

In a daze, Jack and I hurriedly packed our belongings, disliking very much to leave our new comfortable, beautiful house and not understanding God's direction.

The young people packed rapidly. The girls packed the kitchen goods and the boys packed the equipment and furniture from the school. In successive loads to the river, to the boat and then downstream, we unloaded on the other side of the river. With great effort the generator was even transported. Physically, our young people are very strong.

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After a few trips, we were all over on the other side and the “friendly” army went to protect our school, but within minutes of our safe retreat, we heard explosions coming from the campus. A battle was going on and one young man later died defending the school. His injured body was brought to our side of the river and one of our teachers prayed with him to receive Jesus before he became unconscious. By boat, our young men took him and some other wounded soldiers to a hospital further down the river. When they returned, they took the engine off the boat and sunk the boat in the river.

The next morning, our group, and several others, climbed a steep mountain in order to retreat further, believing this new place would be safe from the opposing army. We did this with great effort. Our students and helpers made several trips up and down the mountain carrying the most important goods. Much of our equipment was sent by truck to a distant village for storage, where it was protected by the angels.

School Resumes at a New Place

Within two days, Jack and our school director found a new location for our school on the backside of a mountain where clean water came out of the rock. We continued to hold school with the students sitting on mats and all of us sleeping under a canopy. The girls slept close to us, and the young men found creative places to spread their mats or string their hammocks.

Strong warfare and praise continued. We remembered how David had to flee from his enemies and how he found refuge in the Lord. One Psalm was especially meaningful: The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold (Psalm 18:2).

Our students, teachers and our national director urged us to return to America, but we refused, saying that we were family and wanted to stay with them until the semester was over.

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It was a beautiful spot where we stayed among the trees but living was very primitive. People who daily came past our area wondered why we were so joyful and not afraid. We were able to share with them several scriptures the Lord had given us.

I loved seeing the elephants pass us daily with a load of goods. One of our teachers had taken three white rabbits with us and the elephants always left the narrow path to gaze at the unusual, little furry creatures.

We continued our evening devotion with loud songs of joyful praise. We also did warfare prayer against the spirits of darkness daily, as was our custom. We knew we were not to hate our enemies – that our enemies were not flesh and blood but mind-blinding spirits – spirits of prejudice, pride anger and many other things.

There was also deep soul searching and openness to hear from the Lord. The nationals we had identified with were not pure in their motives, but there were many godly people among them. We believed that God would reveal Himself to us and to the national leaders.

Evangelistic Opportunities

As the weeks passed, more and more people found their way to our campus. Because our worship time was so joyful and there was an absence of fear, many built their huts close to ours. We were happy to be able to share Jesus with more people and to pray for their sick. One little girl I remember was in a coma from malaria, but after prayer she opened her eyes and gradually regained her strength. Two days later she was playing outside. Her parents were overjoyed because her older sister had died of malaria. Many parents and children came to our evening worship service, and received the Lord and healing for their bodies.

One of the songs our teachers and students taught the children in their language was a classic by Bill and Gloria Gaither, “Because He Lives, I Can Face Tomorrow.” This song rang through the campsite day after day because the children

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enjoyed singing it so much. It was a great testimony and encouragement to all within hearing range.

Malaria Strikes

Gradually the good food ran out and the heat became worse. We enjoyed teaching, worshipping and praying together, but our strength was running out. It was just a few days before graduation and our return home when Jack and I both were attacked by malaria. It was so slight an attack that we thought nothing of it. Then we were forced to deal with a breach of integrity in our director, which really discouraged my husband.

The day after graduation, we left for America and we arrived home exhausted. We had a wonderful reunion with our children and grandchildren, but the second day at home, my husband became incoherent. I rushed him to the hospital and thankfully, there was a doctor from India on duty. He knew how to deal with malaria. It turned out Jack was suffering from *Malaria falciparum*, the most virulent strain of malaria, which attacks the membrane around the brain besides destroying the red blood cells. Another name for it is Blackwater Fever from which a survival rate is about twenty percent. With large doses of malaria medication, there was a distinct possibility that Jack's heart would be damaged, or that his memory would be seriously impaired.

I refused to believe the bad news but stood on the Word of God. Many of our friends were notified, and immediately intense prayer went up to the throne room. Two days later, the doctor said my husband was dying.

Wondering if her father had completely lost his memory, one of our daughters said that day, "Dad do you know who I am?"

Opening his eyes, Jack said, "Sure honey, you're Napoleon." His sense of humor quickly put her at ease.

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The third night, the spirit of death came into the hospital room and spoke to Jack. “You’re going to die this night,” it said.

“No, I’m not!” Jack replied. “You have no authority over my life. I have authority over you. I’ve met you before (overseas in sick people) and my job is not finished yet. Now get out of this room!”

The nurses probably thought Jack was raving mad. Actually, he was – mad at the devil’s lies. After that, he gradually began to get well. The doctor was amazed because there was no heart damage and no loss of memory. Prayer works! Authority in Jesus’ name works!

I was in the hospital at the same time with a milder case of malaria. I already shared in an earlier chapter how the Lord healed me.

That year was quite devastating to our ministry spiritually, physically and financially. We know Christians suffer great attacks from the enemy. During this time, we knew God’s great love for us. He had revealed it to us through the Song of Solomon. It was those promises and many others that gave us stability in those most difficult times. By faith and patience we inherit the promises, **if** we never give up. Our Christian brothers, sisters and children were a great help also.

J. Hudson Taylor Comments

Just recently I was given another book on the Song of Solomon entitled *Union and Communion* by J. Hudson Taylor. This author spent many years in China as a missionary and established the China Inland Mission. Mr. Taylor, like the apostle Paul, poured his life out so that others might come to a saving knowledge of Jesus. He wrote something in his book that helped me keep things in perspective, because I sometimes make the mistake of comparing my ministry to that of other highly successful ministries. He wrote, “Measure thy life by loss instead of gain; not by the wine drunk, but the wine poured forth.”¹⁰

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What does the Lord say when He looks at our life; not how big our ministry is, or how many books we have written, or how many countries we have gone to, but He looks for a humble, obedient heart that has been poured out for Him. Have we pleased Him by giving and being willing to suffer for Him in advancing His kingdom and doing our part in the kingdom? Can He say to us on that last day: **Well done, good and faithful servant ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord (Matthew 25:23 KJV).**

Restoration Begins to Come

There is yet another truth that needs emphasis in the body of Christ for these last days. It is the truth that the Lord is a Restorer. In years past, the traditional church has given much money to advance the kingdom and has as it were “kissed the money good-by.” We are learning now that we can claim a return, not only from the offering given (that which is above the tithe), but a return from what the enemy has stolen. **Men do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy himself when he is hungry; but when he is found, he must repay sevenfold;...(Proverbs 6: 30, 31a)**

A few months had passed, the director was replaced temporarily by an American couple, but this location was accessible only by five hours of walking or riding an elephant. Other Americans came to help teach. Later, Jack and I went to visit the school again. The elephant ride to this new location was one of the high points of the year. Soon we had to move again because it was too costly to bring supplies to this remote place. The next location was in an area where we as foreigners were not allowed to sleep. Consequently, we needed to rent a house and visit our new campus daily in order to teach. Knowing from Song of Solomon that our Groom loved us, we began to claim a restoration in the form of buildings. Within months, while we were in America, we began to hear of the fruit of our faith.

The Haunted House

Other Americans went to teach, and informed us by long distance phone that a big house was available in a village close to the campus. However, the house was “haunted”. In this house a man had murdered his wife and had been put in prison. The village people were afraid to live in that house; consequently, it remained empty for months. When we arrived from the States, we took a good look at the house and heard more of the story.

The neighbors had been awakened and frightened every night because dogs would bark and would be seen chasing something invisible around the house. They claimed to have seen forms in the upstairs bedroom where the murder took place and they also saw forms walking up the stairs.

The house was 2,600 square feet, quite new, with white tile on the main floor and all wood with shutters for the windows. There were two tiled bathrooms, one upstairs and one downstairs. Upstairs in the master bedroom, a red and white cord was tied around the post, supposedly to ward off the evil spirit. When we saw the house, we were excited because we sensed that this was God’s way of providing restoration for us. We also saw its potential for housing the teachers, visiting Americans or even holding church! When we heard that the rent was only sixty dollars a month and that much of the wooden furniture in the house would remain, we decided to take it. We knew, because of our authority in Jesus name we could drive off that evil spirit.

After signing the rental agreement, we first cut the red and white cord from the post and then gathered downstairs for prayer. After only ten minutes of prayer, the evil spirit left. We could actually feel it leave. My husband said the hairs on his arms stood upright as it left. And then, peace came.

We swept up a bit, ate and went to sleep. It was a wonderfully sweet, quiet sleep. Not a dog barked. The next morning we were outside sweeping and the neighbors came to

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talk, all smiles, and asked our teachers what had happened. It was our great joy to explain to all that Jesus lived there now, since His Spirit was in us, and that He had given us authority over all evil spirits and ghosts.

A few days later, we invited many of the neighbors in for an open house. Reluctantly, they came and enjoyed refreshments and songs with us. Many children came also, and they were delighted. This victory gave us an open door to minister healing to some of the neighbors. This house was just a beginning of the restoration.

Familiar Spirit

The evil spirit, which was at that house, was a familiar spirit and not the spirit of the dead woman. Familiar spirits are evil spirits, which observe our behavior and likes and dislikes, and come to deceive or torment the living relatives. Once a person is dead, his spirit no longer has a voice in the earth. Solomon wrote, For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten. Indeed their love, their hate, and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6).

Also, we know that Christians are to have nothing to do with mediums, spiritists or necromancers (Leviticus. 20:6, 27, Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

Jesus has given us authority over all evil spirits. He said to them, ... Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you (Luke 10:18a, 19).

The big house we took back from the devil was a wonderful place of rest. Our God has good things planned for us, in fact, beautiful places where we can rest in His love and get new energy before the next encounter.

Now let's go back to our love story in the Song of Solomon.

Feet in Sandals

*How beautiful are your feet in sandals,
O prince's daughter! (7:1)*

Isaiah wrote about beautiful (or lovely) feet on the mountains when we bring good news, announce peace and bring happiness. How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" (Isaiah 52:7)

Paul also quotes this verse in Romans 10:15 in order to inspire the early believers to take the gospel to regions beyond.

The Bride's Other Qualities

*The curves of your hips are like jewels,
the work of the hands of an artist.
Your navel is like a round goblet
which never lacks mixed wine;
Your belly is like a heap of wheat
fenced about with lilies.
Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a
gazelle. Your neck is like a tower of ivory,
your eyes like the pools in Heshbon
by the gate of Beth-rabbim; Your nose is like
the tower of Lebanon,
which faces toward Damascus (7:1b-4).*

There are many meanings, which one can glean from this description of the maiden, but I will just pick out a few.

The *breasts* indicate the ability to feed others. The *neck* being like a tower of ivory, symbolizes the strength acquired through growth, and death to self, even as the elephant must die in order to acquire the ivory from him. This implies that

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“she was prepared for any cost, even to suffer death, in order that the Lord’s purpose be realized in her life.”¹¹

Her *eyes* were like the pools of Heshbon. Heshbon was the ancient capitol of Sihon, about twenty miles east of the Dead Sea. It was known for its lush reservoir fed by a spring. It is elevated four thousand feet above the Jordan River and thus is an extremely desirable location with clear, clean water. If the Groom says our eyes are like this, it must mean that our spirits are pure and clean.

Before I go on with the descriptions and how they relate to us, let me explain how Jesus made somewhat similar prophecies over His disciples.

Jesus Speaks Prophetically over His Disciples

Jesus said something about His disciples even before it was manifested in their souls. In John 17, Jesus was praying His high priestly prayer over His disciples, prophetically speaking over their spirits before the manifestation was evident.

Now they have come to know that everything Thou hast given Me is from Thee; for the words which thou gavest me I have given to them; and they received them, and truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me (John 17:7, 8).

This prayer was said over the disciples before Jesus’ crucifixion. If they *truly understood*, why were they so surprised when He appeared to them after His resurrection? Why did they return to fishing? Also, why did John and James ask to sit on thrones next to Jesus? The answer is that Jesus saw into the future and was speaking over the spirit-man which would later, *truly understand*.

You can receive these descriptions of yourself as God’s prophetic word over you, the bride. You have eyes as peaceful and pure as the pools in Heshbon. There is no fear, distrust, rejection, or competition, for you rest in His abiding love. He

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will direct your footsteps and show you His plan for your life step by step, for He trusts you to give Him all the glory.

The *nose* is like the tower of Lebanon. The tower of Lebanon was a famous and beautiful landmark, evidently a lookout tower, near the eastern slopes of Mount Hermon, facing Damascus. It afforded an excellent view of Damascus, which was on a trade route. The primary purpose of a tower was its ability to give warning about an invading army or any disaster.

This simile suggests that the bride was endowed with the gift of distinguishing between spirits, by which she could discern the spirit behind the words and actions of others. The bride needs this gift urgently in these last days, because the battle is increasing and we must not be ignorant of the enemy's devices. We must stay in tune with the Spirit of God, not make hasty decisions, but believe we will know things by the Spirit. The Lord wants to warn and protect us, if we will only take time to listen to Him.

Many times overseas I have asked the Lord to sharpen my discerning of spirits, because I do not fully understand the language of those to whom we minister, and I tend to feel handicapped by the language barrier. The Lord said He would tell me what I needed to know. He said that even if I did understand the language, people don't always say what they believe. Actions will prove what one believes.

Let's believe that this gift of distinguishing between spirits is working in our lives.

*Your head crowns you like Carmel, and the
flowing locks of your head are like purple
threads;
the King is captivated by your tresses (7:5a).*

Mount Carmel was the place where Elijah built the altar. God's fire came down, and victory was achieved over the prophets of Baal. This simile speaks of our victory. Purple

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locks signify authority, because purple was always the color of king's robes.

So we see that the bride has discerning of spirits, authority, and victory, and the King speaks this over us. In fact, our tresses captivate Him. In Hebrew, the word for *captivated* is "acar," which means "to yoke, hitch, to fasten, bind, gird, harness, hold, keep, imprison, put in bonds, or tie." This speaks of our covenant relationship with Him.

When we willingly bind ourselves to Him, He has promised to fulfill His Word in us. In a sense, He willingly binds Himself to us.

How beautiful and how delightful you are, My love, with all your charms! (7:6)

Beautiful or *fair* (KJV) in Hebrew means "bright, comely, goodly, pleasant." This is the beauty on the inside of her, which delights Him. Then He calls her, *my love*, an endearing term which He uses nine times. Remember, the King had called her *most beautiful* when He first addressed her in the first chapter. Is there any doubt that the King loves the maiden? Is there any doubt that the Savior loves us? He sees on the inside, and calls forth that which can respond to Him. Do we need to hide behind a fortress, or fear what man thinks of us?

The Palm Tree's Significance

*Your stature is like a palm tree,
and your breasts are like its clusters (7:7).*

King Solomon had a deep appreciation for the beautiful palm tree, for we find that the temple he constructed for the Lord was decorated with carved engravings of cherubim, palm trees overlaid with gold, and open flowers (1 Kings 6:29-35). The two doors were embellished with cherubim, palm trees and flowers.

In Scripture, the palm tree referred to is usually the date palm. This lovely tree often grows to a height of eighty feet and lives 150 to 200 years! Its sap yields sugar, and its fruit is highly edible and nourishing.

Hudson Taylor says, "The fruit of the date palm is more valued than bread by the Oriental traveler, so great is its sustaining power. The fruit-bearing powers of the tree do not pass away; as age increases, the fruit becomes more perfect as well as more abundant."¹² The seeds are ground and yield food for camels. The leaves are used to cover roofs, make baskets, fences and mats.¹³

King David likens the righteous man to a palm tree *The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree,...* (Psalm 92:12)

The palm tree has a long taproot that goes down to deep sources of water. It grows in almost desert-like conditions, which makes it a fitting symbol of constancy, patience, uprightness, and prosperity.¹⁴

Through history the palm branches were symbols of joy, deliverance and victory. In the Old Testament, palm branches were used in celebrating the feast of tabernacles to cover their roofs, and later the children used them in welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem.

Your breasts are like its clusters, refers again to the mature Christian's ability to feed others.

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*I said, 'I will climb the palm tree,
I will take hold of its fruit stalks.
Oh, may your breasts be like clusters of the
vine, and the fragrance of your breath like
apples,
and your mouth like the best wine!' (7:8,9a)*

Watchman Nee helps us understand these phrases. "The Lord purposes to have fellowship with believers, and here it appears as though He is in search of such as this loved one... Having such a spiritual stature and having life and strength in her branches, He had something to take hold of for fellowship."¹⁵

Having fellowshiped with her King, she had the smell of freshness and taste of new wine. Oh the joys when we shall drink the wine with Him at the wedding feast!

*It goes down smoothly for my beloved, flowing
gently through the lips of those who fall
asleep. I am my beloved's, and his desire is for
me (7:9b,10).*

It here refers to the new wine, which we will taste at the wedding feast. The *sleep* is that state of rest we find in Him where there is no competition in ministry, performance or doing anything for Him. It's a time when we have tasted His goodness and have a deep knowing that He is in control of everything.

He judges the just and the unjust, and He vindicates the oppressed of His people. I believe that He delights in this total rest in Him. Matthew wrote, *Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light (Matthew 11:28-30).*

Chapter Six

Taking the Initiative

*Come, my beloved,
let us go out into the country,
let us spend the night in the villages (7:11).*

Now the maiden finally is beginning to know the heart of her Beloved. Previously He had called her to come with Him to inspect the vineyards, and when she had lost Him she had found Him in the garden. Now she knows that His heart is in the gardens (or fields), and she is bold enough to take the initiative to ask Him to come along. She knows He is moving from place to place.

*Let us rise early and go to the vineyards;
Let us see whether the vine has budded and its
blossoms have opened, and whether the
pomegranates have bloomed.
There I will give you my love (7:12).*

She is inviting her Beloved to go with her to inspect the vineyards and the pomegranates. She had previously visited them, and had a special experience in that her soul was set free. She walked in a new awareness of His victory signified by the *chariots* (6:12) and the *dance* (6:13).

In the springtime, one of the things my husband and I love to do is to walk in our backyard and inspect our three fruit trees. There is always the anticipation of enjoying the fruit when it's ripe. It's the same type of anticipation the Lord has when He looks over our fruit.

King David spoke of the blessings of the righteous man who is like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season,... (Psalm 1:3a)

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We also know that we will reap if we don't faint, and that there is a harvest appointed unto us. However, we are reminded that a seed must die before it can bear fruit. Jesus said, *Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit* (John 12:24).

Fruit from a Remote Area

*The mandrakes have given forth fragrance;
and over our doors are all choice fruits,
both new and old, which I have saved up
for you, my beloved (7:13).*

I believe the new fruits are the new adventures that we have recently engaged in. As we obey the command to: *Enlarge the place of your tent; stretch out the curtains of your dwellings, spare not; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your pegs* (Isaiah 54:2), we can anticipate new fruit. As we break through new barriers with the Lord going with us, we can expect new fruit.

The old fruit is the work that we have done in His name over the years. It is the little acts of kindness, the time in prayer spent on behalf of others. It is the words of encouragement, the phone calls, the meals you have prepared for others, the countless little things you have done to encourage a fellow believer. When done in His name, there will be fruit.

We have heard that one of our women graduates from 1991 has been pastoring a church in a remote area since graduation, even though she is married and has two children. She had been at the School of Gospel Ministry for only two years.

Another graduate from 1995 is currently the director of the first school, founded in 1990.

Some of our other four-year graduates have been teaching at other Bible schools in different remote areas.

Two of our graduates have been ordained, and have been accepted as pastors, even though they are still in their late

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twenties. They have broken a cultural tradition against the ordination of young men into the ministry.

Seeds planted long ago in faith and patience will bear fruit.

To be Unashamed of Our Testimony

*O that you were like a brother to me who
nursed at my mother's breasts.*

*If I found you outdoors, I would kiss you;
no one would despise me, either (8:1).*

Now the maiden is wishing she could show her love more visibly for her Beloved. According to the custom of King Solomon's day, it was not acceptable for lovers or even married people to show their affections in public. This still holds for many nations overseas.

Oh that we had the boldness to speak of our Beloved to everyone, not just to say we are Christians, but that we are in love with Jesus. We are the only Bible some may ever read. Lord, help us to love people from all walks of life and be bold in our witness.

*I would lead you and bring you into the house
of my mother, who used to instruct me;
I would give you spiced wine to drink
from the juice of my pomegranates (8:2).*

My mother refers to Galatians 4:26. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. This Jerusalem above is figurative language for the New Jerusalem in heaven. If the Jerusalem above is our mother, then Jesus is the door to that home above. Jesus is the only way to enter that New Jerusalem. As He spoke to Nicodemus in John 3:5, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Jesus said, Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3). In the Greek, the

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words *born again* mean “born from above.” One must be born from above by the Spirit of God.

If you have not been born from above, you can be, by saying a simple prayer of accepting Jesus as your Savior and Lord.

First admit that you are a sinner. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23). And last of all, Romans 10:9, 10 says, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

A simple prayer confessing these things will result in a true miracle of the born again experience. This will be just the beginning of a life of power, not without conflict, but of new joy and victory.

Through daily reading of the Word, prayer and obedience, you will experience a new triumph. But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place (2 Corinthians 2:14).

A Place of Rest

*Let his left hand be under my head,
and his right hand embrace me.*

*I want you to swear,
O daughters of Jerusalem, do not arouse or
awaken my love, until she pleases (8:3,4).*

I believe the first phrase in our text speaks of the maiden's total submission to her Beloved's working in her life. The eternal God is a dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and He

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drove out the enemy from before you, and said, 'Destroy'! So Israel dwells in security... (Deuteronomy 33:27, 28a).

Embracing speaks of tenderness enjoyed by husband, wife, children and other family members. Sometimes it is necessary for us as children to climb up on our Father's lap and let Him embrace us. The enemy of our souls would want us to feel unworthy, but God will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy (Zephaniah 3:17b).

We can rejoice in the words that Jesus prayed over His disciples (and over us) just before He went to the cross. And I have made Thy name known to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou didst love Me may be in them, and I in them (John 17:26).

Smith Wigglesworth has said, "It is one thing to read the Word of God. It is another to believe it." We need to receive His words that He truly loves us, not for anything that we have done, but only for who we are.

The last phrase of our Scripture, *Do not arouse or awaken my love until she pleases*, is spoken by our Beloved to other believers concerning us. It's like He is saying, let my beautiful one rest, do not disturb his or her peace. She must rest and enjoy fellowship with Him. It is more important what we are in Him than what we do for Him. All other world religions are based on a "works" mentality, but Christianity is based on a relationship, a state of being. Is our life hidden away in Christ? Are we abiding in Him? Have we died to self, again today, in order to fulfill His purposes in the earth? The maiden rejoiced in this relationship. She said, *I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me (7:10)*. Let not the world, Christian friends, or even yourself, drive you to work for Him. The devil pushes you – the Lord woos you. He wants you to abide in Him and the fruit will follow. Enjoy His love, receive new energy, and then take some new step of faith in serving Him.

Leaning While Fighting

*Who is coming up from the wilderness,
leaning on her beloved? (8:5)*

Now our maiden is totally leaning on her Beloved. There were periodic wilderness journeys, which speak of the occasional sufferings that we must go through. However in all the persecutions, we are to keep our focus on Jesus and what He did for us at Calvary.

One of the joys of working overseas for Him is that one must lean on Him constantly, because conditions change so often. The Lord always comes through in surprising ways, if one is patient and able to put up with inconveniences.

The teams from Spirit Life Bible College that directed the school while we were in the States, experienced difficulty in holding the school and students together as the campus was relocated twice. They did a very good job hearing from the Lord, teaching, and setting an example of great faith and patience. They too totally leaned on the Lord and experienced marvelous victory.

One time when we returned to teach, a few of our students had left, and our equipment was scattered. It was discouraging although there were many new students. A church loaned us their bamboo building, but it felt like we were starting all over again.

After praise and worship, the Lord spoke to me through Zechariah. *For who has despised the day of small things? (Zechariah 4:10)*. Within a few months, we were amazed at the number of new students who were enrolling, and also at the maturity of these new ones. I was reminded again that I needed to continually lean on Him.

*Beneath the apple tree I awakened you;
there your mother was in labor with you,*

*there she was in labor and gave you birth
(8:5b).*

Again our *mother* is the heavenly Jerusalem. This seems to be speaking prophetically the same as when Jesus spoke prophetically over us in His high priestly prayer. He saw into the future that we would be born and come to believe in Him through the word of the disciples. It was no accident that we were born for this time and place to fulfill a divine destiny. He has a plan and gifts for each of us. My prayer is that you will be strengthened by this book, realize deeply His love for you, and rise up in a higher call with a renewed energy for this end-time battle which will usher in the King of kings.

The labor that is spoken of here, is the labor of Christ making intercession for us daily. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works... (Ephesians 2:10). I believe Jesus anticipates our coming into maturity, and intercedes for this to come to pass. I'm sure He delights when we work with Him, press in, deny our flesh, and obey His Word.

The Seal of Life

*Put me like a seal over your heart,
like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as
death, jealousy is as severe as Sheol;
its flashes are flashes of fire,
the very flame of the Lord (8:6).*

The Bridegroom continues to speak here to the maiden, just as our Beloved says to us, "Do you promise to always love me? Am I like a seal over your heart? Are you set apart only for Me? Remember I gave you My Spirit as a seal. 'You were sealed in Him, with the Holy Spirit of promise, who was given as a pledge of our inheritance...' (Ephesians 1:13b, 14a)."

I believe He also says, "We have an inheritance together, my dear bride. It shall not be long until I come for you and we

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can enjoy each other forever. The marriage feast awaits you. Remember I am a jealous God. You must have no other gods before Me. What other god has ever done for you what I have done? I've redeemed your life from the pit, transferred you from the kingdom of darkness into My marvelous light and set your feet upon a rock. As you walk with Me daily, I'll show you if your heart wanders. Stay close to me and I'll tell you My secrets."

He Is a Jealous God

*Many waters cannot quench love, nor will
rivers overflow it; if a man were to give all the
riches of his house for love,
it would be utterly despised (8:7).*

This verse can be explained further by Proverbs 6:34, 35. For jealousy enrages a man, and he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not accept any ransom, nor will he be content though you give him many gifts.

It's like our Beloved is saying to us, "A natural man is enraged by jealousy when his wife is unfaithful and any gift given to him will not appease his anger."

Yet, our God is an abundantly forgiving God, as He showed us in the book of Hosea. Israel had committed spiritual adultery many times but the Lord God had the prophet Hosea act out the same forgiveness for his wife as the Lord had for wayward Israel.

*We have a little sister, and she has no breasts;
what shall we do for our sister
on the day when she is spoken for? (8:8)*

The *little sister* is the younger Christian who has joined the family of God. She is not capable of feeding others the milk of the Word. Being *spoken for* means that she also has a high

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calling on her life. Her gifting needs to be identified and encouraged.

If she is a wall, we shall build on her a battlement of silver; but if she is a door, we shall barricade her with planks of cedar (8:9).

Jeanne Guyon has the best interpretation for this scripture that I have read. Speaking of the younger sister, she wrote, “The Lord replies, ‘If she already knows surrender of her own will to Me and also has confidence in Me, we will begin to build on that foundation; and we will build bulwarks of silver. This will defend her against those who try to dissuade her from an inward walk – especially from human reason and subtle aspects of self-love. But if she has just come through the door, just beginning to learn the life in Christ, we will build her up with grace; we will frame her with graces and characteristics which will have the beauty and strength of cedar.’”¹⁶

I was a wall, and my breasts were like towers; then I became in his eyes as one who finds peace (8:10).

Since the maiden followed her Beloved, she was able to feed more and more people. She became more valuable in her Beloved’s eyes. She found great peace and joy in this destiny. She knew His personality was part warrior. *The Lord is a warrior (Exodus 15:3)*, and she needed to take the offensive at times, not just in the Spirit, through prayer, but in asking and believing for opportunities to speak for Him.

What About Solomon's Vineyards?

*Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon;
he entrusted it to caretakers; each one was to
bring a thousand shekels of silver for its fruit
(8:11).*

The Lord has a vineyard; it's the fields of the earth. He has given us assignments of where and how to work for Him. Even as the parable of the talents shows, He expects us to work for Him, and bring a return. He has invested in us many gifts. Paul said to the Corinthian church, *That in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge...so that you are not lacking in any gift... (1 Corinthians 1:5,7a).*

What is keeping us from serving Him? Now that we have experienced His love and rest, we must launch out. We must do something new for Him that will require more of His power.

I'm saying this to myself too. I needed to take a computer class after I first wrote this book. Then I needed to learn how to edit and rearrange everything after my friends had helped me. Without His leading and power, this would be a waste of time, money and effort. There are things I am much more comfortable doing, but which don't require as much of His help.

*My very own vineyard is at my disposal;
the thousand shekels are for you, Solomon,
and two hundred are for those
who take care of its fruit (8:12).*

The maiden is now able to take care of her own vineyard. In chapter one, verse six, she was ordered by her brothers to care for multiple vineyards, but now she has come to a place of rest in His love, so she knows exactly what her responsibility is. She delights in taking care of her own vineyard and bringing

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the thousand shekels which Solomon had desired from his caretakers.

She delights in giving to the owner of the vineyard, yet she knows that those who help her in her vineyard are worthy of their pay. In all labor there is profit,... (Proverbs 14:23). Maybe some had volunteered their help for a while, but there comes a time when they must be paid. Her vineyard had expanded and she needed help. The fruit was plentiful and she wanted to give more fruit to her Master and pay to her helpers.

Prayer for His Quick Return

*O you who sit in the gardens,
my companions are listening for your voice –
let me hear it! (8:13)*

Here our Beloved is speaking to us. It is enjoyable to sit in the gardens, relaxing and enjoying the fruit, but our Beloved, and the other members of the Trinity, are listening for our voices of intercession. Are we praying that the other nations in the 10/40 window will be exposed to the gospel and thereby hasten His coming? In the book of Matthew, Jesus said, *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come (Matthew 24:14).*

The apostle Peter said we could hasten the coming of the Lord. *What sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,...(2 Peter 3:11b,12a).* We can hasten His coming by holy conduct and godliness, and sharing Him with the nations.

Let us stir ourselves to pray and/or go to the nations. How He wants to hear our voices!

After your strong prayer for a nation, you may be called to go and see the fruit, and even to gather other fruit. In many countries of the world, the number of believers is expanding. Little house churches are popping up everywhere because of the *Jesus* film and other teachings on video. People are hungry

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for a change because things in the natural look so bleak. Jesus and His blood are the only answer. The whole earth is His vineyard and He has promised to anoint us, and that signs and wonders would follow. Sometimes it takes going “out on a limb” and spiritual warfare is required.

*Hurry, my beloved, and be like a gazelle
or a young stag on the mountain of spices
(8:14).*

This is our cry. Yes, we love working for Him and seeing His power change lives, but our greatest joy is in having fellowship with Him.

How we look forward to that marriage feast where we shall dine with people from every tribe and nation, and sing His praises together in a common language we can all understand.

Our goal is to see His face, to fall down and worship Him and hear Him say, Well done, good and faithful slave... Enter into the joy of your master (Matthew 25:23).

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