Outline of the Messages
for the International Thanksgiving Blending Conference
November 26-29, 2026

GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE OVERCOMING LIFE
AS PORTRAYED IN SONG OF SONGS

Message One

The First Stage of Song of Songs — Drawn to Pursue Christ for Satisfaction

Scripture Reading: S. S. 1:1 — 2:7; John 14:21, 23; 21:15-17

S. S. 1:1—2:7—The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's. [2]Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine. [3]Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; Your name is like ointment poured forth; Therefore the virgins love you. [4]Draw me; we will run after you— The king has brought me into his chambers—We will be glad and rejoice in you; We will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you. [5]I am black but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, Like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon. [6]Do not look at me, because I am black, Because the sun has scorched me. My mother's sons were angry with me; They made me keeper of the vineyards, *But* my own vineyard I have not kept. [7]Tell me, 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 is veiled Beside the flocks of your companions? [8]If you yourself do not know, You fairest among women, Go forth on the footsteps of the flock, And pasture your young goats By the shepherds' tents. [9]I compare you, my love, To a mare among Pharaoh's chariots. [10]Your cheeks are lovely with plaits of ornaments, Your neck with strings of jewels. [11]We will make you plaits of gold With studs of silver. [12]While the king was at his table, My spikenard gave forth its fragrance. [13]My beloved is to me a bundle of myrrh [That] lies at night between my breasts. [14]My beloved is to me a cluster of henna flowers In the vineyards of En-gedi. [15]Oh, you are beautiful, my love! Oh, you are beautiful! Your eyes are *like* doves. [16]Oh, you are beautiful, my beloved; indeed, pleasant! Indeed, our couch is green. [17]The beams of our house are cedars; Our rafters are cypresses.

[1]I am a rose of Sharon, A lily of the valleys. [2]As a lily among thorns, So is my love among the daughters. [3]As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, So is my beloved among the sons: In his shade I delighted and sat down, And his fruit was sweet to my taste. [4]He brought me into the banqueting house, And his banner over me was love. [5]Sustain me with raisin cakes, Refresh me with apples, For I am sick with love. [6]His left hand is under my head, And his right hand embraces me. [7]I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles or by the hinds of the fields, Not to rouse up or awaken *my* love Until she pleases.

John 14:21—He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.

John 14:23—Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

John 21:15-17—Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs. [16]He said to him again a second time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep. [17]He said to him the third time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

I. "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's" is a description of the spiritual history of a lover of Christ in poetic expressions, words, and phrases; it is a marvelous and vivid portrait in poetic form of the living of a Christ-seeker, unveiling the progressive experience of an individual believer's loving fellowship with Christ for the preparation of His bride—S. S. 1:1; Rev. 19:7; cf. 1 Kings 4:32:

S. S. 1:1—The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.

Rev. 19:7—Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

cf. 1 Kings 4:32—And he spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered a thousand and five.

A. Song of Songs is in contrast with Ecclesiastes, which shows that all the positive and negative experiences "under the sun" are "vanity of vanities"—1:2-3.
Eccl. 1:2-3—Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; Vanity of vanities; all is vanity. [3]What advantage does a man have in all his work Which he does under the sun?

B. Song of Songs stresses that Christ is the song of songs, the satisfaction of satisfactions to human life, which is versus the vanity of vanities of all things "under the sun."

C. No matter how good, excellent, marvelous, and wonderful a thing may be, as long as it is of the old creation, it is part of the vanity of vanities "under the sun" and "a chasing after wind" (Eccl. 1:14); Solomon's conclusion in Ecclesiastes is that the realm of the human life is like a dirge to a fallen man whose end is misery.
Eccl. 1:14—I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and indeed, all is vanity and a chasing after wind.

D. Only the new creation, which is in the heavens and not "under the sun," is not vanity but is reality; "a new creation is what matters"—Gal. 6:15:
Gal. 6:15—For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation *is what matters*.

1. The old creation does not have the divine life and nature, but the new creation, constituted of the believers, who are born again of God, does—2 Cor. 5:17; John 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4.

2 Cor. 5:17—So then if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.

John 3:15—That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.

2 Pet. 1:4—Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

2. Thus, Paul charges us to "seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1) and to "set your mind on the things which are above, not on the things which are on the earth" (v. 2).
Col. 3:1—If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

Col. 3:2—Set your mind on the things which are above, not on the things which are on the earth.

E. God created man in His image and formed in him a spirit that man may receive and contain Him (Gen. 1:26; 2:7); in addition, Ecclesiastes tells us that God put "eternity" in man's heart, which is "a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy" (3:11—Amplified Bible):
Gen. 1:26—And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

Gen. 2:7—Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Eccl. 3:11—He has made everything beautiful in its own time; also He has put eternity in their heart, yet so that man does not find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

1. According to our own experience, we know that whenever we have a success in our human life, we sense an emptiness within us; this indicates that within man there is an aspiration for eternal things.
2. God has put such an aspiration, such a seeking, in man's heart so that man may seek God—cf. Acts 17:26-27.
cf. Acts 17:26-27—And He made from one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, determining beforehand *their* appointed seasons and the boundaries of their dwelling, [27]That they might seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find *Him,* even though He is not far from each one of us;

3. All the enjoyment of any success in human life will end; there is a "last day" to every kind of material thing of the physical life—John 7:37.

John 7:37—Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

4. Temporal things can never satisfy man; only the eternal God, who is Christ as the song of songs, can satisfy the deep sense of purpose in man's heart—2 Cor. 4:18.
   2 Cor. 4:18—Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

II. All the spiritual principles in our pursuit of Christ are contained in the first stage of the seeker's overcoming life in Song of Songs; the lessons that follow are not new; rather, they are old lessons repeated in a deeper way—1:2—2:7:

S. S. 1:2—2:7—Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine. [3]Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; Your name is like ointment poured forth; Therefore the virgins love you. [4]Draw me; we will run after you— The king has brought me into his chambers—We will be glad and rejoice in you; We will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you. [5]I am black but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, Like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon. [6]Do not look at me, because I am black, Because the sun has scorched me. My mother's sons were angry with me; They made me keeper of the vineyards, *But* my own vineyard I have not kept. [7]Tell me, 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 is veiled Beside the flocks of your companions? [8]If you yourself do not know, You fairest among women, Go forth on the footsteps of the flock, And pasture your young goats By the shepherds' tents. [9]I compare you, my love, To a mare among Pharaoh's chariots. [10]Your cheeks are lovely with plaits of ornaments, Your neck with strings of jewels. [11]We will make you plaits of gold With studs of silver. [12]While the king was at his table, My spikenard gave forth its fragrance. [13]My beloved is to me a bundle of myrrh *That* lies at night between my breasts. [14]My beloved is to me a cluster of henna flowers In the vineyards of En-gedi. [15]Oh, you are beautiful, my love! Oh, you are beautiful! Your eyes are *like* doves. [16]Oh, you are beautiful, my beloved; indeed, pleasant! Indeed, our couch is green. [17]The beams of our house are cedars; Our rafters are cypresses.

[1]I am a rose of Sharon, A lily of the valleys. [2]As a lily among thorns, So is my love among the daughters. [3]As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, So is my beloved among the sons: In his shade I delighted and sat down, And his fruit was sweet to my taste. [4]He brought me into the banqueting house, And his banner over me was love. [5]Sustain me with raisin cakes, Refresh me with apples, For I am sick with love. [6]His left hand is under my head, And his right hand embraces me. [7]I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles or by the hinds of the fields, Not to rouse up or awaken *my* love Until she pleases.

A. Regeneration brings the gene of God into us; all the experiences of our whole Christian life are in this gene—1 John 3:9; Mark 4:26.

1 John 3:9—Everyone who has been begotten of God does not practice sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God.

Mark 4:26—And He said, So is the kingdom of God: as if a man cast seed on the earth,

B. In principle, all the spiritual high points in Song of Songs are ours already because they are in the gene of God, the seed of God, the life of God, which has been dispensed into us and will grow in us—Rom. 8:10; Col. 2:19.
Rom. 8:10—But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

Col. 2:19—And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

III. Life is a person, Christ Himself, and there is no other way to enjoy this person but by loving Him—Mark 12:30; 1 Cor. 2:9:

Mark 12:30—And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."

1 Cor. 2:9—But as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and *which* have not come up in man's heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

A. If we love the Lord to the uttermost, enjoying Him as the tree of life throughout the day, right away the church, regardless of its condition, becomes paradise to us—Rev. 2:4, 7; 2 Cor. 12:4 and footnote 1; Luke 23:42-43.
Rev. 2:4—But I have *one thing* against you, that you have left your first love.

Rev. 2:7—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

2 Cor. 12:4—That he was caught away into Paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not allowed for a man to speak.

Luke 23:42-43—And he said, Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom. [43]And He said to him, Truly I say to you, Today you shall be with Me in Paradise.

B. Since the Lord as our life is a person, we must contact Him; we need the present presence, the present person, of Christ all the time, no matter how much we have experienced Him and enjoyed Him in the past; our Lord Jesus is the "now-dispensing Christ"—John 8:12; Phil. 3:13-14.
John 8:12—Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Phil. 3:13-14—Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing *I do:* Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, [14]I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called *me* upward.

C. John 14:21 and 23 show the Son manifesting Himself to His lover and the Father coming with Him to make an abode with the Son's lover:
John 14:21—He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.

John 14:23—Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

1. We need to love the Lord Jesus and say, "Lord Jesus, I love You"; as we love Him, He will manifest Himself to us, which means that we have the presence of the One whom we love in our fellowship with Him.
2. If we love Jesus, Jesus loves us and the Father loves us also; when the Son manifests Himself to us, makes Himself real to us, the Father comes with Him to make an abode with us for our enjoyment—cf. 1 Cor. 2:9-12.
cf. 1 Cor. 2:9-12—But as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and *which* have not come up in man's heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him." [10]But to us God has revealed *them* through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. [11]For who among men knows the things of man, except the spirit of man which is in him? In the same way, the things of God also no one has known except the Spirit of God. [12]But we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is from God, that we may know the things which have been graciously given to us by God;

D. The beginning of love in everyone toward the Lord is a vision of His person; we cannot go on without new knowledge of the Lord and a new vision of Him—Acts 26:14-19; 2 Cor. 4:6-7; Phil. 3:8-10a, 13; cf. Deut. 4:25.
Acts 26:14-19—And when we all fell to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? *It is* hard for you to kick against the goads. [15]And I said, Who are You, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom you persecute. [16]But rise up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this *purpose,* to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you; [17]Delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles, to whom I send you, [18]To open their eyes, to turn *them* from darkness to light and *from* the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me. [19]Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

2 Cor. 4:6-7—Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. [7]But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.

Phil. 3:8-10—But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count *them* as refuse that I may gain Christ [9]And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God *and* based on faith, [10]To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Phil. 3:13—Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing *I do:* Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,

cf. Deut. 4:25—When you have brought forth children and grandchildren and have languished in the land, and you have spoiled yourselves by making an idol, the form of anything, and have done that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah your God so as to anger Him;

IV. Our relationship with the Lord must be personal—"draw <u>me</u>" is personal (S. S. 1:4); because we are drawn by the Lord personally, others will be drawn to the Lord through us (Jer. 31:3; cf. 2 Cor. 11:2):

S. S. 1:4—Draw me; we will run after you— The king has brought me into his chambers—We will be glad and rejoice in you; We will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you.

Jer. 31:3—Jehovah appeared to me from afar, *saying,* Indeed I have loved you with an eternal love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.

cf. 2 Cor. 11:2—For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present *you as* a pure virgin to Christ.

A. We need to follow the patterns of those who have had a personal relationship with the Lord:
   1. We need to follow the pattern of Abraham, who was the friend of God for the desire of God—2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23; Gen. 18:1-33.
      2 Chron. 20:7—Did You not, O our God, dispossess the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it forever to the seed of Abraham Your friend?

      Isa. 41:8—But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, The seed of Abraham My friend;

James 2:23—And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness"; and he was called the friend of God.

Gen. 18:1-33—And Jehovah appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of *his* tent in the heat of the day. [2]And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and there were three men standing opposite him. And when he saw *them,* he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them. And he bowed down to the earth [3]And said, My Lord, if I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass on from Your servant. [4]Please let a little water be fetched, and do wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. [5]And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may sustain yourselves. After that you may pass on, since you have come to your servant. So they said, Do as you have said. [6]And Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, Quickly prepare three measures of fine flour, knead *it,* and make cakes. [7]And Abraham ran to the herd and took a calf, tender and good, and gave *it* to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it. [8]And he took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set *them* before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. [9]And they said to him, Where is Sarah your wife? And he said, There, in the tent. [10]And He said, I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and then Sarah your wife shall have a son. And Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, which was behind Him. [11]Now Abraham and Sarah were old *and* advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah according to the manner of women. [12]And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? [13]And Jehovah said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I indeed bear a child when I am old? [14]Is anything too marvelous for Jehovah? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. [15]Then Sarah denied *it,* saying, I did not laugh; for she was afraid. And He said, No, but you did laugh. [16]And the men rose up from there and looked down upon Sodom. And Abraham walked with them to send them away. [17]And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, [18]Since Abraham will indeed become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him? [19]For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Jehovah by doing righteousness and justice, that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken concerning him. [20]And Jehovah said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, how great it is; and their sin, how very heavy it is! [21]I shall go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know. [22]And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah. [23]And Abraham came near and said, Will You indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked? [24]Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed destroy and not spare the place for

the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? [25]Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put to death the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked. Far be it from You! Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justly? [26]And Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place for their sake. [27]And Abraham answered and said, Now behold, I have taken *it* upon myself to speak to the Lord, though I am but dust and ashes. [28]Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five? And He said, I will not destroy *it* if I find forty-five there. [29]And he spoke to Him yet again and said, Suppose forty are found there? And He said, I will not do *it,* because of the forty. [30]And he said, Oh may the Lord not be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there? And He said, I will not do *it* if I find thirty there. [31]And he said, Now behold, I have taken *it* upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there? And He said, I will not destroy *it,* because of the twenty. [32]And he said, Oh let the Lord not be angry if I speak yet once more. Suppose ten are found there? And He said, I will not destroy *it,* because of the ten. [33]And Jehovah went away as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

2. We need to follow the pattern of Moses, who had God's presence to a full extent and was a companion of God for the interests of God—Exo. 33:11-14.
Exo. 33:11-14—And Jehovah would speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion. And Moses would return to the camp, but his attendant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart out of the tent. [12]And Moses said to Jehovah, See, You say to me, Bring up this people; but You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, I know you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight. [13]Now therefore if I have found favor in Your sight, please let me know now Your ways, that I may know You, so that I may continue to find favor in Your sight. Consider also that this nation is Your people. [14]And He said, My presence shall go *with you,* and I will give you rest.

3. We need to follow the pattern of David and Asaph, who sought the shining face of God in and for the house of God—Psa. 27:4, 8; 80:3, 7, 14-19.
Psa. 27:4—One thing I have asked from Jehovah; That do I seek: To dwell in the house of Jehovah All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of Jehovah, And to inquire in His temple.

Psa. 27:8—*When You say,* Seek My face, To You my heart says, Your face, O Jehovah, will I seek.

Psa. 80:3—O God, restore us; And cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved.

Psa. 80:7—O God of hosts, restore us; And cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved.

Psa. 80:14-19—O God of hosts, turn, we beseech You; Look down from heaven and see, And visit this vine, [15]Even the stock which Your right hand has planted And the son whom You have strengthened for Yourself. [16]It is burned with fire; it is cut down; They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance. [17]Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You have strengthened for Yourself; [18]Then we will not turn back from You. Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. [19]O Jehovah God of hosts, restore us; Cause Your face to shine, and we will be saved.

4. We need to follow the pattern of the Lord Jesus, who lived in the presence of God without ceasing; every moment He saw His Father's face—Acts 10:38c; John 8:29; 16:32.
Acts 10:38—Jesus, the One from Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all those who were being oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

John 8:29—And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.

John 16:32—Behold, an hour is coming, and has come, that you will be scattered each to his own place and will leave Me alone; yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

5. We need to follow the pattern of Peter, whose love for the Lord was restored for him to shepherd the Lord's sheep and follow the Lord unto martyrdom without any confidence in his natural strength—21:15-19; Mark 16:7.
John 21:15-19—Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs. [16]He said to him again a second time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep. [17]He said to him the third time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep. [18]Truly, truly, I say to you, When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish *to go.* [19]Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to him, Follow Me.

Mark 16:7—But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him, even as He told you.

6. We need to follow the pattern of Paul, who was constrained by the love of Christ to live in the person of Christ as an ambassador of Christ to be well pleasing to Christ—2 Cor. 2:10; 5:9, 14-15, 20.

2 Cor. 2:10—But whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive;* for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *it is* for your sake in the person of Christ;

2 Cor. 5:9—Therefore also we are determined, whether at home or abroad, to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Him.

2 Cor. 5:14-15—For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; [15]And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.

2 Cor. 5:20—On behalf of Christ then we are ambassadors, as God entreats *you* through us; we beseech *you* on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God.

B. The Lord's loving seeker desiring to have the most personal contact with the Lord is expressed by the word *kiss;* a kiss is an expression of a personal relationship with the Lord because no one can kiss two people at the same time—S. S. 1:2.
S. S. 1:2—Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine.

V. Our relationship with the Lord must be affectionate—"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!"—"kiss me" is affectionate—v. 2:

S. S. 1:2—Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine.

A. Psalm 2:12 says, "Kiss the Son /…Blessed are all those who take refuge in Him":
Psa. 2:12—Kiss the Son Lest He be angry and you perish from the way; For His anger may suddenly be kindled. Blessed are all those who take refuge in Him.

1. To take refuge in the Son is to believe into the Son, Christ (John 3:16, 36), taking Him as our refuge, protection, and hiding place (Psa. 18:1-2; 31:19-20; 34:8; 57:1; 71:1; 91:1-2, 4, 9; 118:8-9; 144:2; Prov. 30:5).
John 3:16—For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.

John 3:36—He who believes into the Son has eternal life; but he who disobeys the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him.

Psa. 18:1-2—I love You, O Jehovah, my strength. [2]Jehovah is my crag and my fortress and my Deliverer; My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my high retreat.

Psa. 31:19-20—How great is Your goodness, Which You have stored up for those who fear You, Which You have accomplished in the sight of the sons of men For those who take refuge in You! [20]You hide them in the hiding place of Your presence Apart from the conspiracies of men; You lay them away secretly in a shelter Apart from the contention of tongues.

Psa. 34:8—Taste and see that Jehovah is good; Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him.

Psa. 57:1—Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me; For my soul takes refuge in You; Indeed in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge, Until the destruction passes by.

Psa. 71:1—In You, O Jehovah, do I take refuge; Never let me be put to shame.

Psa. 91:1-2—He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. [2]I say of Jehovah, My refuge and My fortress, My God in whom I trust!

Psa. 91:4—With His pinions He will cover You, And under His wings You will take refuge; His truth is a shield and a buckler.

Psa. 91:9—For You have made Jehovah, *who is* my refuge, *Even* the Most High, Your habitation;

Psa. 118:8-9—It is better to take refuge in Jehovah Than to trust in man. [9]It is better to take refuge in Jehovah Than to trust in princes.

Psa. 144:2—My *Lord of* lovingkindness and my fortress, My high retreat and my Deliverer, My shield and He in whom I take refuge, Who subdues my people under me.

Prov. 30:5—Every word of God is tried; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.

2. To kiss the Son is to love the Son and thereby to enjoy Him—John 14:21, 23; cf. Psa. 91:14.
John 14:21—He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.

   John 14:23—Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

   cf. Psa. 91:14—Because He has set His love upon Me, I will rescue Him; I will set Him on high, because He has known My name.

3. To believe in the Lord is to receive Him (John 1:12); to love the Lord is to enjoy the Lord whom we have received—these are two requirements for us to participate in the Lord (1 Cor. 2:9; cf. 16:22).
John 1:12—But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,

1 Cor. 2:9—But as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and *which* have not come up in man's heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

cf. 1 Cor. 16:22—If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed! The Lord comes!

B. When we have an affectionate relationship with the Lord, He becomes unsearchably rich to us in many aspects for our enjoyment—Eph. 3:8; 2:7; Rom. 10:12-13:

Eph. 3:8—To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel

Eph. 2:7—That He might display in the ages to come the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Rom. 10:12-13—For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord *is Lord* of all *and* rich to all who call upon Him; [13]For "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

1. The Lord who indwells us is our Father, and grace is our mother—8:15-16; Gal. 4:24-26; Isa. 66:12-13.

Rom. 8:15-16—For you have not received a spirit of slavery *bringing you* into fear again, but you have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father! [16]The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

Gal. 4:24-26—These things are spoken allegorically, for these women are two covenants, one from Mount Sinai, bringing forth *children* unto slavery, which is Hagar. [25]Now this Hagar is Sinai the mountain in Arabia and corresponds to the Jerusalem which now is, for she is in slavery with her children. [26]But the Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother;

Isa. 66:12-13—For thus says Jehovah, I now am extending to her Peace like a river, And the glory of the nations Like an overflowing stream; And you will nurse, you will be carried on the hip, And you will be bounced on the knees. [13]As one whom his mother comforts, So will I comfort you; And you will be comforted in Jerusalem.

2. The Lord who indwells us is our Husband—Matt. 9:15; 2 Cor. 11:2.

Matt. 9:15—And Jesus said to them, The sons of the bridechamber cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

2 Cor. 11:2—For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present *you as* a pure virgin to Christ.

3. The Lord who indwells us is our Brother—John 20:17; Rom. 8:29.

John 20:17—Jesus said to her, Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.

Rom. 8:29—Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;

4. The Lord who indwells us is our Friend—Matt. 11:19; John 15:12-17.
Matt. 11:19—The Son of Man came eating and drinking; and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners. Yet wisdom is justified by her works.

John 15:12-17—This is My commandment, that you love one another even as I have loved you. [13]No one has greater love than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. [14]You are My friends if you do what I command you. [15]No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all the things which I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. [16]You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you. [17]These things I command you that you may love one another.

5. The Lord who indwells us is our Counselor—Isa. 9:6.
Isa. 9:6—For a child is born to us, A Son is given to us; And the government Is upon His shoulder; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

6. The Lord who indwells us is our Advocate—1 John 2:1.
1 John 2:1—My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous;

7. The Lord who indwells us is our Comforter—John 14:16; 15:26.
John 14:16—And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever,

John 15:26—But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of reality, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify concerning Me;

8. The Lord who indwells us is our Shepherd—Psa. 23:1; 1 Pet. 2:25.
Psa. 23:1—Jehovah is my Shepherd; I will lack nothing.

1 Pet. 2:25—For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

VI. Our relationship with the Lord must be private—"The king has brought me into his chambers" (S. S. 1:4b); the king's inner chambers signify our regenerated spirit as Christ's inner chambers (2 Tim. 4:22; Eph. 3:16; 2:22):

S. S. 1:4—Draw me; we will run after you— The king has brought me into his chambers—We will be glad and rejoice in you; We will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you.

2 Tim. 4:22—The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

Eph. 3:16—That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,

Eph. 2:22—In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

A. We need to contact the Lord privately in a secret, definite, and prevailing way, opening our entire being to Him for His enlightening and infusing—Matt. 6:6.
Matt. 6:6—But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

B. The highest profession on earth is to spend time being infused with God so that we can glow with God and shine forth God—Exo. 33:11; 2 Cor. 3:16, 18; 4:1; cf. Matt. 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:28.
Exo. 33:11—And Jehovah would speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion. And Moses would return to the camp, but his attendant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart out of the tent.

2 Cor. 3:16—But whenever *their heart* turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

2 Cor. 3:18—But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

2 Cor. 4:1—Therefore having this ministry as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart;

cf. Matt. 14:23—And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone.

cf. Mark 1:35—And rising very early in the morning, *while it was still* night, He went out and went away to a deserted place, and there He prayed.

cf. Luke 5:16—But He Himself *often* withdrew in the wilderness and prayed.

cf. Luke 6:12—And in these days He went out to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

cf. Luke 9:28—And about eight days after these words, He took with *Him* Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray.

C. We need to experience and enjoy Christ as our hiding place, our dwelling place, and our secret of sufficiency—Psa. 31:20; 27:5; 90:1; 91:1; Phil. 4:13.
Psa. 31:20—You hide them in the hiding place of Your presence Apart from the conspiracies of men; You lay them away secretly in a shelter Apart from the contention of tongues.

Psa. 27:5—For He will conceal me in His shelter In the day of trouble; He will hide me in the hiding place of His tent; He will raise me up upon a rock.

Psa. 90:1—O Lord, You have been our dwelling place In all generations.

Psa. 91:1—He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

Phil. 4:13—I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.

VII. Our relationship with the Lord must be spiritual (S. S. 1:4b); Christ as the life-giving Spirit dwells in our human spirit (the king's inner chambers), and these two spirits are mingled together as one spirit (John 4:24; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17):

S. S. 1:4—Draw me; we will run after you— The king has brought me into his chambers—We will be glad and rejoice in you; We will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you.

John 4:24—God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

Rom. 8:16—The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

1 Cor. 6:17—But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

A. Christ visits us spiritually because He is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit; our spirit is the Holy of Holies, the chambers of the pneumatic Christ as the Lord of lords and the King of kings—15:45b; Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22.
1 Cor. 15:45—So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam *became* a life-giving Spirit.

Rom. 8:16—The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

2 Tim. 4:22—The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

B. In order to contact Christ and enjoy Christ for the Body of Christ, we must exercise our mingled spirit—1 Cor. 2:15 and footnote 1; Eph. 1:17; 2:22; 3:5, 16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18.
1 Cor. 2:15—But the spiritual man discerns all things, but he himself is discerned by no one.

Eph. 1:17—That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

Eph. 2:22—In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

Eph. 3:5—Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,

Eph. 3:16—That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,

Eph. 4:23—And *that* you be renewed in the spirit of your mind

Eph. 5:18—And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit,

Eph. 6:18—By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

VIII. Our personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual relationship with the Lord causes us to love Him for His purpose, leading us into the church life as "the banqueting house" (S. S. 1:7-8; 2:4) where we can be transformed by the transforming Spirit and perfected by the perfecting ones in the church life (Eph. 4:11-12); these perfecters (or, "transformers") coordinate with the transforming Spirit to perfect us by ministering the Triune God into us for our transformation by the Triune God's attributes being wrought into us to become our virtues (S. S. 1:10b-11) for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem (1 Cor. 3:12a; Rev. 21:18-21) for the accomplishment of God's eternal economy.

S. S. 1:7-8—Tell me, 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 is veiled Beside the flocks of your companions? [8]If you yourself do not know, You fairest among women, Go forth on the footsteps of the flock, And pasture your young goats By the shepherds' tents.

S. S. 2:4—He brought me into the banqueting house, And his banner over me was love.

Eph. 4:11-12—And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, [12]For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

S. S. 1:10-11—Your cheeks are lovely with plaits of ornaments, Your neck with strings of jewels. [11]We will make you plaits of gold With studs of silver.

1 Cor. 3:12—But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble,

Rev. 21:18-21—And the building work of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. [19]The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone: the first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalced-

ony; the fourth, emerald; [20]The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone: the first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; [21]And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was, respectively, of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

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Message Two

The Second Stage of Song of Songs — Called to Be Delivered from the Self through the Oneness with the Cross

Scripture Reading: S. S. 2:8 — 3:5; Matt. 3:13-17; 21:32; 16:24

S. S. 2:8—3:5—The voice of my beloved! Now he comes, Leaping upon the mountains, Skipping upon the hills. [9]My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. Now he stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, He is glancing through the lattice. [10]My beloved responds and says to me, Rise up, my love, My beauty, and come [away;] [11]For now the winter is past; The rain is over [and] gone. [12]Flowers appear on the earth; The time of singing has come, And the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. [13]The fig tree has ripened its figs, And the vines are in blossom—they give forth their fragrance. Rise up, my love, My beauty, and come [away.] [14]My dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the covert of the precipice, Let me see your countenance, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your countenance is lovely. [15]Catch the foxes for us, The little foxes, That ruin the vineyards While our vineyards are in blossom. [16]My beloved is mine, and I am his; He pastures [his flock] among the lilies. [17]Until the day dawns and the shadows flee away, Turn, my beloved, [and] be like a gazelle or a young hart On the mountains of Bether.

[1]On my bed night after night I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him, but found him not. [2]I will rise now and go about in the city; In the streets and in the squares I will seek him whom my soul loves. I sought him, but found him not. [3]The watchmen who go about in the city found me—Have you seen him whom my soul loves? [4]Scarcely had I passed them When I found him whom my soul loves; I held him and would not let go Until I had brought him into my mother's house And into the chamber of her who conceived me. [5]I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles or by the hinds of the fields, Not to rouse up or awaken *my* love Until she pleases.

Matt. 3:13-17—Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him. [14]But John tried to prevent Him, saying, *It is* I *who* have need of being baptized by You, and You come to me? [15]But Jesus answered and said to him, Permit it for now, for it is fitting for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness. Then he permitted Him. [16]And having been baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon Him. [17]And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight.

Matt. 21:32—For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him. And you, when you saw *it,* did not later regret *it* to believe him.

Matt. 16:24—Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

I. We must see that Song of Songs guides us into an understanding and a knowing of Christ as our resurrected, ascended, enthroned, and coming King, typified by Solomon:

A. The first stage of the seeking lover's pursuit reveals how much the King meant to her; but in the second stage of her pursuit, the King is the center, and it is the time for the King to appreciate her, look upon her, and desire her—2:14.

S. S. 2:14—My dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the covert of the precipice, Let me see your countenance, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your countenance is lovely.

B. In the first stage of our pursuing Christ, it was Christ for me; now it is me for Christ; Psalm 45 reveals that if we have an affectionate love for the Lord Jesus as our King, our tongue will be the pen of a ready writer, ready to write our love for Him and our praise to Him with our experience and enjoyment of Him in all that He is—v. 1; Matt. 12:34b; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6; Isa. 6:5-7.

Psa. 45:1—My heart overflows with a good matter; I speak what I have composed concerning the King. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

Matt. 12:34—Offspring of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

2 Cor. 3:3—Since you are being manifested that you are a letter of Christ ministered by us, inscribed not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tablets of stone but in tablets of hearts of flesh.

2 Cor. 3:6—Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, *ministers* not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Isa. 6:5-7—Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! For I am a man of unclean lips, And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts. [6]Then one of the seraphim flew to me with an ember in his hand, *which* he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. [7]And he touched my mouth *with it* and said, Now that this has touched your lips, Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged.

II. In Song of Songs 2:8—3:5 the lover of Christ is called by Him to be delivered from the self through her oneness with the cross; three critical words help us to interpret this section—*cross, self,* and *introspection*.

S. S. 2:8—3:5—The voice of my beloved! Now he comes, Leaping upon the mountains, Skipping upon the hills. [9]My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. Now he stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, He is glancing through the lattice. [10]My beloved responds and says to me, Rise up, my love, My beauty, and come [away;] [11]For now the winter is past; The rain is over [and] gone. [12]Flowers appear on the earth; The time of singing has come, And the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. [13]The fig tree has ripened its figs, And the vines are in blossom—they give forth their fragrance. Rise up, my love, My beauty, and come [away.] [14]My dove, in the

clefts of the rock, In the covert of the precipice, Let me see your countenance, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your countenance is lovely. [15]Catch the foxes for us, The little foxes, That ruin the vineyards While our vineyards are in blossom. [16]My beloved is mine, and I am his; He pastures [his flock] among the lilies. [17]Until the day dawns and the shadows flee away, Turn, my beloved, [and] be like a gazelle or a young hart On the mountains of Bether.

[1]On my bed night after night I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him, but found him not. [2]I will rise now and go about in the city; In the streets and in the squares I will seek him whom my soul loves. I sought him, but found him not. [3]The watchmen who go about in the city found me—Have you seen him whom my soul loves? [4]Scarcely had I passed them When I found him whom my soul loves; I held him and would not let go Until I had brought him into my mother's house And into the chamber of her who conceived me. [5]I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, By the gazelles or by the hinds of the fields, Not to rouse up or awaken *my* love Until she pleases.

III. "The voice of my beloved! Now He comes, / Leaping upon the mountains, / Skipping upon the hills. / My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. / Now he stands behind our wall; / He is looking through the windows, / He is glancing through the lattice"—2:8-9:

A. After the Lord's seeker has some success in pursuing Christ for her satis-faction, she falls into introspection, which becomes a seclusion as a wall that keeps her away from the presence of Christ—v. 9.
S. S. 2:9—My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. Now he stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, He is glancing through the lattice.

B. Introspection is to examine the self by looking into and analyzing the self; the self is constituted with introspection—cf. 1 Cor. 4:3-4.
cf. 1 Cor. 4:3-4—But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you or by man's day; rather I do not even examine myself. [4]For I am conscious of nothing against myself; but I am not justified in this, but He who examines me is the Lord.

C. We must look away unto Jesus; our self is not worthy to look at—Heb. 12:1-2a; John 3:14-15; 12:31-32; Num. 21:4-9.
Heb. 12:1-2—Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles *us* and run with endurance the race which is set before us, [2]Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

John 3:14-15—And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, [15]That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.

John 12:31-32—Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out. [32]And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.

Num. 21:4-9—Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient on the way. [5]And the people spoke against God and against Moses, Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and there is no water; and our soul loathes this light bread. [6]Then Jehovah sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. [7]And the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned, because we have spoken against Jehovah and against you; pray to Jehovah, that He may take away the serpents from us. So Moses prayed for the people. [8]Then Jehovah said to Moses, Make a fiery *serpent,* and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live. [9]And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the pole; and if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

D. His leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills like a gazelle or a young hart signify Christ's power of resurrection to overcome all difficulties and barriers; as the power of resurrection, He is the mountain-leaping and hill-skipping Christ—S. S. 2:8-9.
S. S. 2:8-9—The voice of my beloved! Now he comes, Leaping upon the mountains, Skipping upon the hills. [9]My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. Now he stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, He is glancing through the lattice.

E. The Lord's seeker is disappointed by her introspection, but the Lord is calling her into the springtime—vv. 10-11; cf. Heb. 3:7-8; John 8:58.
S. S. 2:10-11—My beloved responds and says to me, Rise up, my love, My beauty, and come *away;* [11]For now the winter is past; The rain is over *and* gone.

cf. Heb. 3:7-8—Therefore, even as the Holy Spirit says, "Today if you hear His voice, [8]Do not harden your hearts as in the provocation, in the day of trial in the wilderness,

John 8:58—Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Before Abraham came into being, I am.

F. When she looks into herself, it is the wintertime of dormancy; when she looks away to the resurrected Christ, she enters into the stage of spring, the stage of resurrection—S. S. 2:10-13.
S. S. 2:10-13—My beloved responds and says to me, Rise up, my love, My beauty, and come *away;* [11]For now the winter is past; The rain is over *and* gone. [12]Flowers appear on the earth; The time of singing has come, And the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. [13]The fig tree has ripened its figs, And the vines are in

blossom—they give forth their fragrance. Rise up, my love, My beauty, and come *away.*

G. The secret to victory is never to look at ourselves apart from Christ and never to consider the self that is outside of Christ—Heb. 12:1-2a.
Heb. 12:1-2—Therefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, put away every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles *us* and run with endurance the race which is set before us, [2]Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

IV. "My dove, in the clefts of the rock, / In the covert of the precipice, / Let me see your countenance, / Let me hear your voice; / For your voice is sweet, / And your countenance is lovely"—S. S. 2:14:

A. We are delivered from the self through our oneness with the cross by Christ's resurrection power through His fellowship—v. 14:
S. S. 2:14—My dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the covert of the precipice, Let me see your countenance, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your countenance is lovely.

1. Christ wants His seeker, His dove, to remain in a crucified condition continually, that is, to remain in Him as the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the precipice—v. 14; Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 4:10-11.
S. S. 2:14—My dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the covert of the precipice, Let me see your countenance, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your countenance is lovely.

Gal. 2:20—I am crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *who* live, but *it is* Christ *who* lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the *faith* of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

1 Cor. 15:31—I protest by the boasting in you, brothers, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

2 Cor. 4:10-11—Always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. [11]For we who are alive are always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

2. However, to remain in the cross is a difficult matter, like entering into the clefts of the rock and the covert of the precipice high in the mountains by a rugged road.
3. Our being crucified is not by our natural life or strength but by the power of resurrection, by the presence of the mountain-leaping and hill-skipping Christ, "the hind of the dawn"—Psa. 22 title; Prov. 4:18.
Prov. 4:18—But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, Which shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

4. In order to empower and encourage His lover to rise up and come away from her low situation in her introspection of the self, Christ empowers her by showing her the power of His resurrection (S. S. 2:8-9), and He encourages her by the flourishing riches of His resurrection (vv. 10-13).
S. S. 2:8-9—The voice of my beloved! Now he comes, Leaping upon the mountains, Skipping upon the hills. [9]My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. Now he stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, He is glancing through the lattice.

S. S. 2:10-13—My beloved responds and says to me, Rise up, my love, My beauty, and come *away;* [11]For now the winter is past; The rain is over *and* gone. [12]Flowers appear on the earth; The time of singing has come, And the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. [13]The fig tree has ripened its figs, And the vines are in blossom—they give forth their fragrance. Rise up, my love, My beauty, and come *away.*

5. It is by the power of Christ's resurrection, not by our natural life, that we, the lovers of Christ, determine to take the cross by denying our self; it is also by the power of Christ's resurrection that we are enabled to be conformed to His death by being one with His cross—Matt. 16:24; Phil. 3:10; Rom. 8:13.
Matt. 16:24—Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

Phil. 3:10—To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Rom. 8:13—For if you live according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live.

6. The reality of resurrection is the pneumatic Christ (John 11:25), who as the consummated Spirit indwells and is mingled with our regenerated spirit (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17).
John 11:25—Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;

Rom. 8:16—The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

1 Cor. 6:17—But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

B. It is in such a mingled spirit that we participate in and experience the resurrection of Christ, which enables us to be one with the cross to be delivered from the self and to be transformed into a new man in God's new creation for the fulfillment of God's economy in the building up of the organic Body of Christ.

V. We must die daily, take up our cross daily, being conformed to Christ's death by the Spirit as the power and riches of His resurrection for the sake of His Body—15:31, 36; Luke 9:23; Phil. 3:10; cf. Hosea 6:1-3:

1 Cor. 15:31—I protest by the boasting in you, brothers, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

1 Cor. 15:36—Foolish man, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies;

Luke 9:23—And He said to *them* all, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

Phil. 3:10—To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

cf. Hosea 6:1-3—Come and let us return to Jehovah; For He has torn *us,* but He will heal us, And He has stricken *us,* but He will bind us up. [2]He will enliven us after two days; On the third day He will raise us up, And we will live in His presence. [3]Therefore let us know, let us pursue knowing Jehovah: His going forth is as sure as the dawn, And He will come to us as the rain, As the late rain which waters the earth.

A. We must take the way of righteousness by entering into the vision and ministry of the age, recognizing that we are good for nothing but death and burial so that we may enjoy the open heavens, the descending Spirit of God, and the speaking of the Father—Matt. 3:13-17; 21:32; cf. Ezek. 3:1-3.
Matt. 3:13-17—Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him. [14]But John tried to prevent Him, saying, *It is* I *who* have need of being baptized by You, and You come to me? [15]But Jesus answered and said to him, Permit it for now, for it is fitting for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness. Then he permitted Him. [16]And having been baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon Him. [17]And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight.

Matt. 21:32—For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him. And you, when you saw *it,* did not later regret *it* to believe him.

cf. Ezek. 3:1-3—Then He said to me, Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel. [2]So I opened my mouth, and He gave me that scroll to eat. [3]And He said to me, Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your inward parts with this scroll that I am giving you. And I ate *it,* and it was like honey in my mouth in *its* sweetness.

B. We must enjoy the precious death of Christ with its sweet effectiveness and the precious resurrection of Christ with its repelling power in Christ as the compound Spirit for the church life—Exo. 30:23-25; Rom. 14:17-18; cf. Phil. 1:19-21; 2:13; 3:10; 4:11-13.
Exo. 30:23-25—You also take the finest spices: of flowing myrrh five hundred *shekels,* and of fragrant cinnamon half as much, two hundred fifty *shekels,* and of fragrant calamus two hundred fifty *shekels,* [24]And of cassia five hundred

shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. [25]And you shall make it a holy anointing oil, a fragrant ointment compounded according to the work of a compounder; it shall be a holy anointing oil.

Rom. 14:17-18—For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. [18]For he who serves Christ in this is well pleasing to God and approved by men.

cf. Phil. 1:19-21—For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and *the* bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, [20]According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. [21]For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

cf. Phil. 2:13—For it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for *His* good pleasure.

cf. Phil. 3:10—To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

cf. Phil. 4:11-13—Not that I speak according to lack, for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content. [12]I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack. [13]I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.

C. We must take up the cross, which means to take up the will of God; the cross is God's will, and God's will is our food—Matt. 26:39; Heb. 10:5-10; John 4:34:
Matt. 26:39—And going forward a little, He fell on His face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You *will.*

Heb. 10:5-10—Therefore, coming into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. [6]In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You did not delight. [7]Then I said, Behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written concerning Me) to do Your will, O God." [8]Saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You did not desire nor delight in" (which are offered according to the law), [9]He then has said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first that He may establish the second, [10]By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

John 4:34—Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.

1. The one church is God's will, and every brother and sister in the church is God's will; thus, to bear the cross is to bear the church and to bear all the saints so that we would have the genuine oneness—Eph. 4:1-3; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2.
Eph. 4:1-3—I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, [2]With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love, [3]Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

1 Cor. 1:10—Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.

Phil. 2:2—Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,

2. The oneness in the divine glory is realized when the self is fully denied, and we are Body-centered, not self-centered—John 17:21-23; 1 Cor. 12:24-25.
John 17:21-23—That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me. [22]And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one; [23]I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

1 Cor. 12:24-25—But our comely *members* have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the *member* that lacked, [25]That there would be no division in the body, but *that* the members would have the same care for one another.

3. The cross is the will of God in our outward environment and the killing of Jesus in our inward being, which work together to kill our natural man and remodel us with the God of resurrection—2 Cor. 4:10-12; 12:7-10; 13:3-4.
2 Cor. 4:10-12—Always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. [11]For we who are alive are always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. [12]So then death operates in us, but life in you.

2 Cor. 12:7-10—And because of the transcendence of the revelations, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, that he might buffet me, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up. [8]Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. [9]And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might

tabernacle over me. [10]Therefore I am well pleased in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions and distresses, on behalf of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am powerful.

2 Cor. 13:3-4—Since you seek a proof of the Christ who is speaking in me, who is not weak unto you but is powerful in you. [4]For indeed He was crucified out of weakness, but He lives by the power of God. For indeed we are weak in Him, but we will live together with Him by the power of God *directed* toward you.

4. To take up the cross for the Body is to let the peace of Christ arbitrate in our hearts, to take the forgiving Lord as our life, to receive the Lord's believers, and to turn away from those who cause divisions and spread death—Col. 3:12-15; Prov. 25:15, 20, 26; Rom. 15:7; 16:17; Num. 6:6-7; Lev. 5:2.
Col. 3:12-15—Put on therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, inward parts of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering; [13]Bearing one another and forgiving one another, if anyone should have a complaint against anyone; even as the Lord forgave you, so also *should* you *forgive.* [14]And over all these things *put on* love, which is the uniting bond of perfectness. [15]And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in one Body; and be thankful.

Prov. 25:15—By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded, And a soft tongue can break the bone.

Prov. 25:20—He who sings songs to a troubled heart Is *like* one who takes off a garment on a cold day, Or *like* vinegar on soda.

Prov. 25:26—*Like* a muddied fountain and a polluted spring Is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked man.

Rom. 15:7—Therefore receive one another, as Christ also received you to the glory of God.

Rom. 16:17—Now I exhort you, brothers, to mark those who make divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them.

Num. 6:6-7—All the days that he separates himself to Jehovah he shall not come near a dead person. [7]He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is upon his head.

Lev. 5:2—Or if anyone touches any unclean thing, whether the carcass of an unclean animal or the carcass of unclean cattle or the carcass of unclean swarming things, and it escapes his *notice,* and he is unclean, then he will be guilty.

D. We must enjoy the crucified and resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit to be the solution to all the problems in the church life—1 Cor. 1:9; 2:2; 15:45b, 58.
1 Cor. 1:9—God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor. 2:2—For I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified.

1 Cor. 15:45—So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam *became* a life-giving Spirit.

1 Cor. 15:58—Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

E. We must eat the crucified and resurrected Christ as the tree of life, taking Him as our daily "antibiotic"—Rev. 2:7; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; John 6:57.
Rev. 2:7—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

1 Pet. 2:24—Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.

1 Pet. 3:18—For Christ also has suffered once for sins, the Righteous on behalf of the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God, on the one hand being put to death in the flesh, but on the other, made alive in the Spirit;

John 6:57—As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

F. We must enjoy the crucified, limited Jesus as the land of wheat and the resurrected, unlimited Christ as the land of barley—Deut. 8:8; John 12:24; 6:9.
Deut. 8:8—A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees with oil and of honey;

John 12:24—Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

John 6:9—There is a little boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what are these for so many?

G. We must enjoy the crucified Christ as our spiritual rock by drinking of Him and flowing Him out as the water of life in resurrection to save us from the iniquity of the sanctuary—1 Cor. 10:4; John 19:34; Exo. 17:6; Num. 20:8; 18:1; Jer. 2:13; John 7:37-39; Ezek. 47:1; Rev. 22:1.
1 Cor. 10:4—And all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed *them,* and the rock was Christ.

John 19:34—But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.

Exo. 17:6—I will be standing before you there upon the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it so that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Num. 20:8—Take the rod, and gather the assembly, you and Aaron your brother, and speak to the rock before their eyes, so that it yields its water. Thus you shall bring forth water for them out of the rock and give the assembly and their livestock something to drink.

Num. 18:1—Then Jehovah said to Aaron, You and your sons and your father's household with you shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary; and you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood.

Jer. 2:13—For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew out for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns, Which hold no water.

John 7:37-39—Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. [38]He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. [39]But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for *the* Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

Ezek. 47:1—Then He brought me back to the entrance of the house, and there was water flowing out from under the threshold of the house to the east (for the house faced east); and the water flowed down below the south side of the house, on the south of the altar.

Rev. 22:1—And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

H. We must take the crucified and resurrected Christ as our dwelling place, our hiding place, the secret place of the Most High—S. S. 2:14; Psa. 90:1; 91:1; 31:20; 83:3; Isa. 32:2; Exo. 33:22; cf. Matt. 6:6; John 14:23.
S. S. 2:14—My dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the covert of the precipice, Let me see your countenance, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your countenance is lovely.

Psa. 90:1—O Lord, You have been our dwelling place In all generations.

Psa. 91:1—He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

Psa. 31:20—You hide them in the hiding place of Your presence Apart from the conspiracies of men; You lay them away secretly in a shelter Apart from the contention of tongues.

Psa. 83:3—They devise crafty counsel against Your people, And conspire against Your hidden ones.

Isa. 32:2—And a man will be like a refuge from the wind And a covering from the tempest, Like streams of water in a dry place, Like the shadow of a massive rock in a wasted land.

Exo. 33:22—And while My glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with My hand until I have passed by.

cf. Matt. 6:6—But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

cf. John 14:23—Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

I. We need to live a pure and simple life of trusting in God in the midst of an intermixed and complicated situation—S. S. 2:2; 1 Kings 7:17-20; Matt. 6:28.
S. S. 2:2—As a lily among thorns, So is my love among the daughters.

1 Kings 7:17-20—There were nets of checker work with wreaths of chain work for the capitals that were at the top of the pillars, seven for the one capital, and seven for the second capital. [18]So he made the pillars; and there were two rows *of pomegranates* around the one network, to cover the capitals that were at the top of the pillars. And he did the same for the second capital. [19]And the capitals that were at the top of the pillars in the portico were of lily work, four cubits *in diameter.* [20]So then the capitals that were on the two pillars were above *and* close to the bulge that was beside the network. And there were two hundred pomegranates, in rows around both capitals.

Matt. 6:28—And why are you anxious concerning clothing? Consider well the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not toil, neither do they spin *thread.*

J. We must continually exercise our spirit to deny the self, which is both the embodiment of Satan and the soul declaring independence from God—Rom. 1:9; Matt. 16:22-24.
Rom. 1:9—For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,

Matt. 16:22-24—And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, *God* be merciful to You, Lord! This shall by no means happen to You! [23]But He turned and said to Peter, Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men.

[24]Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

K. We must follow the pattern of the Lord Jesus, who lived a crucified life to express the divine life, living out the divine attributes as His human virtues; to follow Him as our model intrinsically is to bear in our body the brands of Jesus by the grace of Christ—John 5:30; 1 Pet. 2:21; Gal. 6:17-18.
John 5:30—I can do nothing from Myself; as I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.

1 Pet. 2:21—For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;

Gal. 6:17-18—Henceforth let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the brands of Jesus. [18]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

L. We must serve by the Spirit of God for the glory of God and have no confidence in ourselves—Phil. 3:3; 1 Thes. 3:13; 2 Cor. 4:5; 1 Cor. 10:31; cf. Prov. 25:28; 28:25-26; 29:23.
Phil. 3:3—For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,

1 Thes. 3:13—So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

2 Cor. 4:5—For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

1 Cor. 10:31—Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

cf. Prov. 25:28—*Like* a city that is broken down, without walls, Is a man whose spirit is without restraint.

cf. Prov. 28:25-26—A greedy person stirs up contention, But he who trusts in Jehovah will prosper. [26]He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely will be delivered.

cf. Prov. 29:23—A man's pride will bring him low, But he who is of a lowly spirit will obtain honor.

M. We must see a vision of the crucified Christ and apply the cross of Christ to our bitter situations and our bitter being to enjoy the resurrected Christ as our Healer and healing power—Exo. 15:22-27; 1 Pet. 2:24; Rev. 2:7; Matt. 9:12.
Exo. 15:22-27—Then Moses moved Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. [23]And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; therefore its name was called Marah. [24]And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? [25]And

he cried out to Jehovah, and Jehovah showed him a tree; and he cast it into the waters, and the waters became sweet. There He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He tested them. [26]And He said, If you will listen carefully to the voice of Jehovah your God and do what is right in His eyes and give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I am Jehovah who heals you. [27]And they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; and they encamped there by the waters.

1 Pet. 2:24—Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.

Rev. 2:7—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

Matt. 9:12—Now when He heard *this,* He said, Those who are strong have no need of a physician, but those who are ill.

N. We must "switch on" the law of the killing and resurrecting Spirit of life, keeping ourselves in constant contact and touch with the Lord, to remain in the divine dispensing for the divine economy—Rom. 8:2, 10, 6, 11, 13.
Rom. 8:2—For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Rom. 8:10—But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

Rom. 8:6—For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Rom. 8:11—And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

Rom. 8:13—For if you live according to the flesh, you must die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live.

VI. The issue of our being delivered from the self through our oneness with the cross is that we experience the flourishing of resurrection life, we experience and enjoy Christ, we grow in the divine life, we are beautified through transformation, and we become conscious of the Body of Christ and live in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body—Phil. 3:10; Col. 2:19; Rom. 12:4-5, 15; 1 Cor. 12:12-27.

Phil. 3:10—To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Col. 2:19—And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

Rom. 12:4-5—For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, [5]So we who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Rom. 12:15—Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.

1 Cor. 12:12-27—For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ. [13]For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit. [14]For the body is not one member but many. [15]If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, *it is* not *that* because of this it is not of the body. [16]And if the ear should say, Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, *it is* not *that* because of this it is not of the body. [17]If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were the hearing, where would the smelling be? [18]But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, even as He willed. [19]And if all were one member, where would the body be? [20]But now the members are many, but the body one. [21]And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. [22]But much rather the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. [23]And those *members* of the body which we consider to be less honorable, these we clothe with more abundant honor; and our uncomely *members come to* have more abundant comeliness, [24]But our comely *members* have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the *member* that lacked, [25]That there would be no division in the body, but *that* the members would have the same care for one another. [26]And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it;* or one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with *it.* [27]Now you are the Body of Christ, and members individually.

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Message Three

The Third Stage of Song of Songs — Called to Live in Ascension as the New Creation in Resurrection

Scripture Reading: S. S. 3:6 — 5:1

S. S. 3:6—5:1—Who is she who comes up from the wilderness Like pillars of smoke, Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, With all the fragrant powders of the merchant? [7]There is Solomon's bed; Sixty mighty men surround it, Of the mighty men of Israel. [8]All of them wield the sword *and* are expert in war; Each man has his sword at his thigh Because of the night alarms. [9]King Solomon made himself a palanquin Of the wood of Lebanon. [10]Its posts he made of silver; Its bottom, of gold; Its seat, of purple; Its midst was inlaid *with* love From the daughters of Jerusalem. [11]Go forth, O daughters of Zion, And look at King Solomon with the crown With which his mother crowned him On the day of his espousals, Yes, on the day of the gladness of his heart.

[1]Oh, you are beautiful, my love! Oh, you are beautiful! Your eyes are *like* doves behind your veil; Your hair is like a flock of goats That repose on Mount Gilead. [2]Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes That have come up from the washing, All of which have borne twins, And none of them is bereaved of her young. [3]Your lips are like a scarlet thread, And your mouth is lovely; Your cheeks are like a piece of pomegranate Behind your veil. [4]Your neck is like the tower of David, Built for an armory: A thousand bucklers hang on it, All the shields of the mighty men. [5]Your two breasts are like two fawns, Twins of a gazelle, That feed among the lilies. [6]Until the day dawns and the shadows flee away, I, for my part, will go to the mountain of myrrh And to the hill of frankincense. [7]You are altogether beautiful, my love, And there is no blemish in you. [8]*Come* with me from Lebanon, *my* bride; With me from Lebanon come. Look from the top of Amana, From the top of Senir and Hermon, From the lions' dens, From the leopards' mountains. [9]You have ravished my heart, my sister, *my* bride; You have ravished my heart with one *glance* of your eyes, With one strand of your necklace. [10]How beautiful is your love, my sister, *my* bride! How much better is your love than wine, And the fragrance of your ointments Than all spices! [11]Your lips drip fresh honey, *my* bride; Honey and milk are under your tongue; And the fragrance of your garments Is like the fragrance of Lebanon. [12]A garden enclosed is my sister, *my* bride, A spring shut up, a fountain sealed. [13]Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates With choicest fruit; Henna with spikenard, [14]Spikenard and saffron; Calamus and cinnamon, With all the trees of frankincense; Myrrh and aloes, With all the chief spices. [15]A fountain in gardens, A well of living water, And streams from Lebanon. [16]Awake, O north wind; And come, O south wind! Blow upon my garden: Let its spices flow forth; Let my beloved come into his garden And eat his choicest fruit.

[1]I have come into my garden, my sister, *my* bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends; Drink, and drink deeply, O beloved ones!

I. In the third stage of her experience, the lover of Christ is called to live in ascension to be the beautified lover of Christ as the new creation in resurrection—S. S. 3:6—5:1.

S. S. 3:6—5:1—Who is she who comes up from the wilderness Like pillars of smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, With all the fragrant powders of the
merchant? 7There is Solomon's bed; Sixty mighty men surround it, Of the mighty
men of Israel. 8All of them wield the sword *and* are expert in war; Each man has his
sword at his thigh Because of the night alarms. 9King Solomon made himself a
palanquin Of the wood of Lebanon. 10Its posts he made of silver; Its bottom, of gold;
Its seat, of purple; Its midst was inlaid *with* love From the daughters of Jerusalem.
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your veil; Your hair is like a flock of goats That repose on Mount Gilead. 2Your teeth
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your veil. 4Your neck is like the tower of David, Built for an armory: A thousand
bucklers hang on it, All the shields of the mighty men. 5Your two breasts are like two
fawns, Twins of a gazelle, That feed among the lilies. 6Until the day dawns and the
shadows flee away, I, for my part, will go to the mountain of myrrh And to the hill of
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8*Come* with me from Lebanon, *my* bride; With me from Lebanon come. Look from the
top of Amana, From the top of Senir and Hermon, From the lions' dens, From the
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garments Is like the fragrance of Lebanon. 12A garden enclosed is my sister, *my* bride,
A spring shut up, a fountain sealed. 13Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates
With choicest fruit; Henna with spikenard, 14Spikenard and saffron; Calamus and
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spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my
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II. "Come with me from Lebanon, my bride; / With me from Lebanon come. / Look from the top of Amana, / From the top of Senir and Hermon, / From the lions' dens, / From the leopards' mountains"—4:8:

A. Christ calls His lover to live with Him in His ascension, as He had called her to remain in His cross—2:14:

S. S. 2:14—My dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the covert of the precipice, Let me see your countenance, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your countenance is lovely.

1. Christ asks His lover as His bride to look with Him from His ascension (Lebanon), the highest place of the truth (Amana) and of Christ's victory in His fighting (Senir, meaning "soft armor," and Hermon, meaning "destruction"), and from the heavenly places of the enemies (the lions' dens and the leopards' mountains).
2. When the lover of Christ is living in ascension, she and Christ are living in one condition, the condition of ascension, to be a couple; they are the same in life and nature, perfectly matching each other.

B. To live in ascension is to live continually in our spirit; when we live in our spirit, we are joined to the ascended Christ in the heavens—Eph. 2:22; Gen. 28:12-17; John 1:51; Rev. 4:1-2; Heb. 4:12, 16.

Eph. 2:22—In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

Gen. 28:12-17—And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. [13]And there was Jehovah, standing above it; and He said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie, I will give to you and to your seed. [14]And your seed will be as the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and in your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed. [15]And, behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will cause you to return to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you. [16]And Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I did not know *it.* [17]And he was afraid and said, How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

John 1:51—And He said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, You shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

Rev. 4:1-2—After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up here, and I will show you the things that must take place after these things. [2]Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne *there was* One sitting;

Heb. 4:12—For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Heb. 4:16—Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

C. We must learn to hide ourselves in the secret place of the Most High, in the ascended Christ, taking Him as our dwelling place—Psa. 91:1, 14-16; cf. S. S. 2:14:

Psa. 91:1—He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

Psa. 91:14-16—Because He has set His love upon Me, I will rescue Him; I will set Him on high, because He has known My name. [15]He will call upon Me, and I will answer Him. I will be with Him in distress; I will deliver Him and honor Him. [16]With an extension of *His* days I will satisfy Him, And I will show Him My salvation.

cf. S. S. 2:14—My dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the covert of the precipice, Let me see your countenance, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your countenance is lovely.

1. To take God as our eternal dwelling place is the highest and fullest experience of God—Psa. 90:1-2.

   Psa. 90:1-2—O Lord, You have been our dwelling place In all generations. [2]Before the mountains were brought forth, And *before* You gave birth to the earth and the world, Indeed from eternity to eternity, You are God.

2. If we take God as our dwelling place, we will realize that the span of our life on earth is brief and is full of sins and afflictions—vv. 3-12.

   Psa. 90:3-12—You return man to dust And say, Return, you sons of men. [4]For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it passes by And *like* a watch in the night. [5]You sweep them away as with a rain flood; they are *as in* a sleep: In the morning *they are* like grass that comes up anew. [6]In the morning it flourishes and comes up anew; In the evening it is cut down, and it dries up. [7]For we have been consumed by Your anger, And by Your wrath we have been troubled. [8]You have set our iniquities before You, Our secret *sins* in the light of Your countenance. [9]For all our days have passed away in Your overflowing wrath; We bring our years to an end like a sigh. [10]The days of our years are seventy years, Or, if because of strength, eighty years; But their pride is labor and sorrow, For it is soon gone, and we fly away. [11]Who knows the power of Your anger, And Your overflowing wrath according to the fear that is due You? [12]Teach us then to number our days That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

3. We need to dwell in God, living in Him every minute, for outside of Him there are sins and afflictions—v. 8; John 16:33.

   Psa. 90:8—You have set our iniquities before You, Our secret *sins* in the light of Your countenance.

   John 16:33—These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have affliction, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

4. We dwell in God by dwelling in our spirit, the dwelling place of God; in our spirit and in the church, we can behold His beauty and be infused with His beauty to become the beautified new creation—Eph. 2:22; Rom. 8:6; Psa. 27:4; Isa. 60:7b, 19b; 62:3; S. S. 3:11; Prov. 12:4a.
Eph. 2:22—In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

Rom. 8:6—For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Psa. 27:4—One thing I have asked from Jehovah; That do I seek: To dwell in the house of Jehovah All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of Jehovah, And to inquire in His temple.

Isa. 60:7—All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered together to you; The rams of Nebaioth will minister to you; They will go up acceptably upon My altar, And I will beautify the house of My beauty.

Isa. 60:19—You will no longer have the sun for *your* light by day, Nor for brightness will the moon give you light; But Jehovah will be an eternal light to you, And your God your beauty.

Isa. 62:3—You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of Jehovah, And a royal turban in the palm of your God.

S. S. 3:11—Go forth, O daughters of Zion, And look at King Solomon with the crown With which his mother crowned him On the day of his espousals, Yes, on the day of the gladness of his heart.

Prov. 12:4—A worthy woman is the crown of her husband, But she who brings shame is like rottenness in his bones.

III. "King Solomon made himself a palanquin / Of the wood of Lebanon. / Its posts he made of silver; / Its bottom, of gold; / Its seat, of purple; / Its midst was inlaid with love / From the daughters of Jerusalem"—S. S. 3:9-10:

A. By the Spirit's transforming work in us, we become the moving vessel of Christ, the carriage of Christ, the "car" of Christ, for the move of Christ in and for the Body of Christ—cf. 2 Cor. 2:12-17.
cf. 2 Cor. 2:12-17—Furthermore, when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and a door was open to me in the Lord, [13]I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia. [14]But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ and manifests the savor of the knowledge of Him through us in every place. [15]For we are a fragrance of Christ to God in those who are being saved and in those who are perishing: [16]To some a savor out of death unto death, and to the others a savor out of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? [17]For we are not like the many, adulterating the word of God for profit; but as out of sincerity, but as out of God, before God we speak in Christ.

B. We are rebuilt with the Divine Trinity so that our external structure is the resurrected and ascended humanity of Jesus, and our interior decoration is our love for the Lord—S. S. 3:9-10:
S. S. 3:9-10—King Solomon made himself a palanquin Of the wood of Lebanon. [10]Its posts he made of silver; Its bottom, of gold; Its seat, of purple; Its midst was inlaid *with* love From the daughters of Jerusalem.

1. It is Christ as our King Solomon who makes us a palanquin for Himself; our responsibility is simply to offer our love to Him and offer ourselves willingly to Him—John 21:15-17; Psa. 110:3.
John 21:15-17—Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs. [16]He said to him again a second time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep. [17]He said to him the third time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

   Psa. 110:3—Your people will offer themselves willingly In the day of Your warfare, In the splendor of *their* consecration. Your young men will be to You Like the dew from the womb of the dawn.

2. Our inner being should be "inlaid with love" (S. S. 3:10); loving the Lord will keep us in the realm of having Christ as our humanity, safeguarding our humanity in the constraint of His affection—2 Cor. 5:14.
S. S. 3:10—Its posts he made of silver; Its bottom, of gold; Its seat, of purple; Its midst was inlaid *with* love From the daughters of Jerusalem.

   2 Cor. 5:14—For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;

C. Through our loving the Lord in a personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual way, our natural being is torn down, and we are being remodeled with Christ the Son's redeeming death (posts made of silver), with God the Father's divine nature (base), and with the life-giving Spirit ruling within us (seat of purple) as we take Christ as our King in the rulership of the Spirit—S. S. 3:10; cf. Rom. 8:28-29; 2 Cor. 4:16-18.
S. S. 3:10—Its posts he made of silver; Its bottom, of gold; Its seat, of purple; Its midst was inlaid *with* love From the daughters of Jerusalem.

cf. Rom. 8:28-29—And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. [29]Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;

cf. 2 Cor. 4:16-18—Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner *man* is being renewed day by day. [17]For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory, [18]Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

IV. Through our living in ascension as the new creation in resurrection, we become Christ's private garden for His satisfaction—S. S. 4:10-15:

S. S. 4:10-15—How beautiful is your love, my sister, *my* bride! How much better is your love than wine, And the fragrance of your ointments Than all spices! [11]Your lips drip fresh honey, *my* bride; Honey and milk are under your tongue; And the fragrance of your garments Is like the fragrance of Lebanon. [12]A garden enclosed is my sister, *my* bride, A spring shut up, a fountain sealed. [13]Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates With choicest fruit; Henna with spikenard, [14]Spikenard and saffron; Calamus and cinnamon, With all the trees of frankincense; Myrrh and aloes, With all the chief spices. [15]A fountain in gardens, A well of living water, And streams from Lebanon.

A. "How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride! / How much better is your love than wine, / And the fragrance of your ointments / Than all spices!"—v. 10:

1. The seeker says that the Lord's love is *better* than wine, but the Lord says that the seeker's love is *much better* than wine; although we treasure the Lord's love, we cannot comprehend how precious His love is toward us; this shows that even in loving us, He takes the preeminence—cf. 1:2; Rom. 8:37; 2 Cor. 5:14.
   cf. S. S. 1:2—Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine.

   cf. Rom. 8:37—But in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us.

   cf. 2 Cor. 5:14—For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;

2. Through loving the Lord, the seeker is saturated with the Spirit, molded by the Spirit in submission to the Spirit, to both emanate and become a fragrance of Christ—S. S. 4:10b, 11b; John 12:3; 2 Cor. 2:15.
   S. S. 4:10—How beautiful is your love, my sister, *my* bride! How much better is your love than wine, And the fragrance of your ointments Than all spices!

   S. S. 4:11—Your lips drip fresh honey, *my* bride; Honey and milk are under your tongue; And the fragrance of your garments Is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

John 12:3—Then Mary took a pound of ointment, of very valuable pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment.

2 Cor. 2:15—For we are a fragrance of Christ to God in those who are being saved and in those who are perishing:

B. "Your lips drip fresh honey, my bride; / Honey and milk are under your tongue"—S. S. 4:11a:

1. Milk and honey, which are the mingling of both the animal life and the vegetable life, are two aspects of the life of Christ—the redeeming aspect and the generating aspect—Deut. 8:8; 32:13-14; John 1:29; 12:24; Matt. 26:26-28.
Deut. 8:8—A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees with oil and of honey;

Deut. 32:13-14—He made him ride on the high places of the earth, And he ate the produce of the field; And He made him suck honey out of a crag, And oil out of flint rock: [14]Curd of cows and milk of sheep, With fat of lambs, And rams, the offspring of Bashan, and goats, With the choicest wheat; And the blood of the grape you drank as fermenting wine.

John 1:29—The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 12:24—Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Matt. 26:26-28—And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed *it,* and He broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples and said, Take, eat; this is My body. [27]And He took a cup and gave thanks, and He gave *it* to them, saying, Drink of it, all *of you,* [28]For this is My blood of the covenant, which is being poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

2. Especially when we are weak in spirit and come to the Lord to experience and apply Him, we sense that He is the milk and the honey, the richness and the sweetness of the life of Christ—2 Cor. 12:9-10.
2 Cor. 12:9-10—And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me. [10]Therefore I am well pleased in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions and distresses, on behalf of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am powerful.

3. Honey restores the stricken ones, and milk feeds the new ones; the seeker has stored so many riches within her that food seems to be under her tongue, and she can dispense to the needy ones at any time—Isa. 50:4; Eph. 4:29; Psa. 45:1-2.

Isa. 50:4—The Lord Jehovah has given me The tongue of the instructed, That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens *me* morning by morning; He awakens my ear To hear as an instructed one.

Eph. 4:29—Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Psa. 45:1-2—My heart overflows with a good matter; I speak what I have composed concerning the King. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer. [2]You are fairer than the sons of men; Grace is poured upon Your lips; Therefore God has blessed You forever.

4. This sweetness is not produced overnight but comes from a long period of gathering, inward activity, and careful storage—cf. Exo. 29:30; Psa. 92:13-14.
cf. Exo. 29:30—One of his sons, who is the priest in his place, shall put them on for seven days when he comes into the Tent of Meeting to minister in the sanctuary.)

cf. Psa. 92:13-14—Planted in the house of Jehovah, They will flourish in the courts of our God. [14]They will still bring forth fruit in old age; They will be full of sap and green;

V. "A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride, / A spring shut up, a fountain sealed… / A fountain in gardens, / A well of living water, / And streams from Lebanon"—S. S. 4:12, 15:

A. At this point in her spiritual progress, the Lord's loving seeker has become a garden for Christ's private satisfaction; she is not an open garden but an enclosed garden, a sealed garden; all that she has is ultimately for her Beloved's delight and for no one else:

1. If believers would close up a little more and seal up tighter, their work would become more prevailing; may the Lord grant us grace and do a deeper work in us through the cross so that we may strike deep roots and live a hidden life "in secret" in order to fulfill God's require-ments and satisfy His heart—Matt. 6:6; 13:20-21.
Matt. 6:6—But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

Matt. 13:20-21—And the one sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; [21]Yet he does not have root in himself but lasts only for a time, and when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he is stumbled.

2. The Christian life for the church life is a life in the depths, a life that can "take root downward and bear fruit upward"—Isa. 37:31.
Isa. 37:31—And the remnant of those who have escaped of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward.

B. "Jehovah God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there He put the man whom He had formed" (Gen. 2:8); according to the Bible, a garden is God's very first thought; *Eden* means "pleasure," showing that God wants to please and satisfy man and to make him happy.

C. The church life is God's garden, God's farm, so that we may grow with the growth of God and be transformed with the riches of God to become God's building—v. 8; Col. 1:10; 2:19; 1 Cor. 3:9; Rev. 22:1-2; cf. Exo. 25:31-32.
Gen. 2:8—And Jehovah God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there He put the man whom He had formed.

Col. 1:10—To walk worthily of the Lord to please *Him* in all things, bearing fruit in every good work and growing by the full knowledge of God,

Col. 2:19—And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

1 Cor. 3:9—For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.

Rev. 22:1-2—And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street. [2]And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

cf. Exo. 25:31-32—And you shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand *with* its base and its shaft shall be made of beaten work; its cups, its calyxes, and its blossom buds shall be of *one piece with* it. [32]And there shall be six branches going out of its sides; three branches of the lampstand out of one of its sides, and three branches of the lampstand out of its other side;

D. God put man in the garden "to work it and to keep it"—Gen. 2:15:
Gen. 2:15—And Jehovah God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and to keep it.

1. Man's working the ground is that life, especially the tree of life, might grow for the fulfillment of the first aspect of God's purpose—for man to express God in His image; to work the ground is to deal with our heart to make it the good ground in which Christ can grow—1:26a; Matt. 13:3-23.
Gen. 1:26—And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

Matt. 13:3-23—And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went out to sow. [4]And as he sowed, some *seeds* fell beside the way, and the birds came and devoured them. [5]And others fell on the rocky

places, where they did not have much earth, and immediately they sprang up because they had no depth of earth. [6]But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered. [7]And others fell on the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them. [8]But others fell on the good earth and yielded fruit, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold. [9]He who has ears to hear, let him hear. [10]And the disciples came and said to Him, Why do You speak in parables to them? [11]And He answered and said to them, Because to you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but to them it has not been given. [12]For whoever has, it shall be given to him, and he will abound; but whoever does not have, even that which he has shall be taken away from him. [13]For this reason I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. [14]And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, "In hearing you shall hear and by no means understand, and seeing you shall see and by no means perceive. [15]For the heart of this people has become fat, and with their ears they have heard heavily, and their eyes they have closed, lest they perceive with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and they turn around, and I will heal them." [16]But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. [17]For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to perceive the things that you see, and have not perceived *them,* and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard *them.* [18]You therefore hear the parable of the one who sowed. [19]When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand, the evil one comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown beside the way. [20]And the one sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; [21]Yet he does not have root in himself but lasts only for a time, and when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he is stumbled. [22]And the one sown in the thorns, this is he who hears the word, and the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches utterly choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [23]But the one sown on the good earth, this is he who hears the word and understands, who by all means bears fruit and produces, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold.

2. Man's keeping the ground is to protect the garden from God's enemy for the fulfillment of the second aspect of God's purpose—for man to deal with Satan by God's authority; to keep the ground is to leave no opening for Satan as the tree of knowledge, the tree of death—Gen. 1:26b; 2 Cor. 5:4; 11:3; 1 Cor. 15:26; cf. Lev. 5:2.

   Gen. 1:26—And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

2 Cor. 5:4—For also, we who are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened, in that we do not desire to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

2 Cor. 11:3—But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.

1 Cor. 15:26—Death, the last enemy, is being abolished.

cf. Lev. 5:2—Or if anyone touches any unclean thing, whether the carcass of an unclean animal or the carcass of unclean cattle or the carcass of unclean swarming things, and it escapes his *notice,* and he is unclean, then he will be guilty.

E. We enjoy Christ for the enjoyment and satisfaction of Christ; the Lord is everything to us so that He can enjoy everything out of us—S. S. 1:12-14; 4:12-14; 5:1.

S. S. 1:12-14—While the king was at his table, My spikenard gave forth its fragrance. [13]My beloved is to me a bundle of myrrh *That* lies at night between my breasts. [14]My beloved is to me a cluster of henna flowers In the vineyards of En-gedi.

S. S. 4:12-14—A garden enclosed is my sister, *my* bride, A spring shut up, a fountain sealed. [13]Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates With choicest fruit; Henna with spikenard, [14]Spikenard and saffron; Calamus and cinnamon, With all the trees of frankincense; Myrrh and aloes, With all the chief spices.

S. S. 5:1—I have come into my garden, my sister, *my* bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends; Drink, and drink deeply, O beloved ones!

F. In this garden are a fountain and a well of living water; God the Father is the fountain, God the Son is the well, and God the Spirit is the flowing streams so that we may enjoy the flowing Triune God for us to become the New Jerusalem—4:15; John 4:14b.

S. S. 4:15—A fountain in gardens, A well of living water, And streams from Lebanon.

John 4:14—But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.

G. "Awake, O north wind; / And come, O south wind! / Blow upon my garden: / Let its spices flow forth"—S. S. 4:16a:

1. The north wind (cold, harsh, bitter, and difficult) and south wind (warm, gentle, refreshing, and pleasant) are two different environments that the Lord uses to train the believers to enjoy Him as their secret of sufficiency—Phil. 4:11-13, 5-7; 1:20.

Phil. 4:11-13—Not that I speak according to lack, for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content. [12]I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack. [13]I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.

Phil. 4:5-7—Let your forbearance be known to all men. The Lord is near. [6]In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; [7]And the peace of God, which surpasses every *man's* understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Phil. 1:20—According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.

2. The Lord's seeker realizes that all problems come from within and not from without; she knows that as long as she is filled with the Spirit as the presence of the Triune God, she can happily live and express Christ in any environment.

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Message Four

The Fourth Stage of Song of Songs—Called More Strongly to Live within the Veil through the Cross after Resurrection

Scripture Reading: S. S. 6:4a, 13

S. S. 6:4—You are as beautiful, my love, as Tirzah, As lovely as Jerusalem, As terrible as an army with banners.

S. S. 6:13—Return, return, O Shulammite; Return, return, that we may gaze at you. Why should you gaze at the Shulammite, As upon the dance of two camps?

I. Through her living in Christ's ascension as the new creation in resurrection, the lover of Christ becomes mature in the riches of the life of Christ so that she becomes not only a garden to Christ (S. S. 4:12—5:1; 6:2) but also the sanctuary of God, signified by Tirzah, and its safeguard, signified by Jerusalem (v. 4a):

S. S. 4:12—5:1—A garden enclosed is my sister, [my] bride, A spring shut up, a fountain sealed. [13]Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates With choicest fruit; Henna with spikenard, [14]Spikenard and saffron; Calamus and cinnamon, With all the trees of frankincense; Myrrh and aloes, With all the chief spices. [15]A fountain in gardens, A well of living water, And streams from Lebanon. [16]Awake, O north wind; And come, O south wind! Blow upon my garden: Let its spices flow forth; Let my beloved come into his garden And eat his choicest fruit.

[1]I have come into my garden, my sister, *my* bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends; Drink, and drink deeply, O beloved ones!

S. S. 6:2—My beloved has gone down to his garden, To the beds of spices, To feed in the gardens And gather lilies.

S. S. 6:4—You are as beautiful, my love, as Tirzah, As lovely as Jerusalem, As terrible as an army with banners.

A. The king praises his loving seeker for her beauty by declaring, "You are as beautiful, my love, as Tirzah, / As lovely as Jerusalem"—v. 4a.
S. S. 6:4—You are as beautiful, my love, as Tirzah, As lovely as Jerusalem, As terrible as an army with banners.

B. Tirzah, a capital city of the kings of Israel and the place of the kings' palace (1 Kings 14:17; 15:21; 16:23), is mentioned here in a positive sense to signify the sanctuary of God, the dwelling place of God as the King; the holy city Jerusalem was the capital of Judah and the safeguard of God's dwelling place, the temple, on earth.
1 Kings 14:17—And Jeroboam's wife rose up and departed, and she came to Tirzah. As she came to the threshold of the house, the boy died.

1 Kings 15:21—And when Baasha heard *this,* he stopped building Ramah and dwelt in Tirzah.

1 Kings 16:23—In the thirty-first year of Asa the king of Judah Omri began to reign over Israel for twelve years; he reigned six years in Tirzah.

C. In the Old Testament the building of God is typified by Tirzah and Jerusalem; in the New Testament this building is the organic Body of Christ; ultimately, the building up of the organic Body of Christ, which is also Christ's wife (Eph. 5:25-32; cf. Gen. 2:22), will consummate the New Jerusalem, the holy city as the consummation of the Holy of Holies, the mutual dwelling of God and His redeemed in eternity (Rev. 21:2-3, 16, 22).

Eph. 5:25-32—Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her [26]That He might sanctify her, cleansing *her* by the washing of the water in the word, [27]That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish. [28]In the same way the husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his own wife loves himself. [29]For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church, [30]Because we are members of His Body. [31]For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. [32]This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.

cf. Gen. 2:22—And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.

Rev. 21:2-3—And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. [3]And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.

Rev. 21:16—And the city lies square, and its length is as great as the breadth. And he measured the city with the reed to *a length of* twelve thousand stadia; the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

Rev. 21:22—And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

II. To become a garden to Christ is to be flourishing in the element of Christ's life with its unsearchable riches; to become the sanctuary of God is to be built up (related to the building up of the Body of Christ) in the growth in the life of Christ with its unsearchable riches unto maturity—Eph. 3:8; 4:12-16:

Eph. 3:8—To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel

Eph. 4:12-16—For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ, [13]Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, [14]That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error, [15]But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ, [16]Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and *through* the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

A. Although the sanctuary of God is in the heavens, it is divided into two sections by the veil, which signifies our flesh—Heb. 10:19-20.
Heb. 10:19-20—Having therefore, brothers, boldness for entering the *Holy of* Holies in the blood of Jesus, [20]Which *entrance* He initiated for us as a new and living way through the veil, that is, His flesh,

B. In relation to Christ, the veil in the sanctuary of God was split at the time of Christ's crucifixion (Matt. 27:51), but in relation to the believers, it still remains for the purpose of God's dealing with them.
Matt. 27:51—And behold, the veil of the temple was split in two from top to bottom, and the earth was shaken and the rocks were split,

C. The apostle Paul became mature in the life of Christ, living in the ascension of Christ, yet God still allowed him to have a thorn in his flesh through a messenger of Satan to keep him from being exceedingly lifted up—2 Cor. 12:7.
2 Cor. 12:7—And because of the transcendence of the revelations, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, that he might buffet me, in order that I might not be exceedingly lifted up.

D. In His economy, God first regenerates us in our spirit with His resurrection life (John 3:6; Rom. 8:10; 1 Pet. 1:3); then He transforms us in our soul by an inward, metabolic proc-ess, bringing Christ and His riches into our being as our new element and causing our old, natural element to be gradually discharged (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:2); finally, our body is transfigured to be conformed to the body of Christ's glory at His coming back (Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:23).
John 3:6—That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Rom. 8:10—But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

1 Pet. 1:3—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

2 Cor. 3:18—But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

Rom. 8:2—For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Phil. 3:21—Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself.

Rom. 8:23—And not only *so,* but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body.

III. There is still the need of the Lord's ultimate calling of us to live within the veil through a stronger experience of the cross in dealing with our flesh after our experience of His resurrection as the new creation of God:

A. After the lover of Christ pursued Him for satisfaction and attained it in the first stage of Song of Songs, the Lord first called her to be delivered from her self by experiencing His cross when she was secluded by introspection; then the Lord called her further to live in His ascension as the new creation of God in resurrection; now ultimately, the Lord calls her to live within the veil in the Holy of Holies, God Himself, to enjoy the consummated God embodied in Christ—cf. Heb. 10:22:

cf. Heb. 10:22—Let us come forward to *the Holy of Holies* with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

1. According to God's economy, no matter how mature and spiritual we may become, as long as we are living on earth, that is, as long as our body has not yet been transfigured (Rom. 8:23; Phil. 3:21), we still have the flesh, which is the veil.

   Rom. 8:23—And not only *so,* but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body.

   Phil. 3:21—Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself.

2. We need to learn to pass through the veil by experiencing the dealing of the cross every day that we may live within the veil, in the Holy of Holies—1 Cor. 15:31; Luke 9:23.

   1 Cor. 15:31—I protest by the boasting in you, brothers, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

Luke 9:23—And He said to *them* all, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

3. When we enter into the Holiest of all, we enter into God and become the sanctuary; in this sense we become God in life and nature but not in the Godhead; as the true Shulammite, we become the duplication and reproduction of Christ, who is "the true God and eternal life"—1 John 5:20.
1 John 5:20—And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding that we might know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

4. There are three wonderful items within the Ark in the Holy of Holies for our experience and enjoyment:
   a. The hidden manna in the golden pot refers to God the Father as the divine source of all supply—Exo. 16:32-34; Rev. 2:17a.
   Exo. 16:32-34—And Moses said, This is what Jehovah has commanded, Let an omerful of it be kept throughout your generations, that they may see the bread which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out from the land of Egypt. [33]And Moses said to Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omerful of manna in it, and place it before Jehovah, to be kept throughout your generations. [34]As Jehovah commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the Testimony to be kept.

   Rev. 2:17—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give of the hidden manna, and to him I will give a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knows except him who receives *it*.

   b. The budding rod signifies Christ as the resurrection; among the three of the Divine Trinity, the second is the resurrection—Num. 17:1-11; John 11:25.
   Num. 17:1-11—Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, [2]Speak to the children of Israel, and take from them rods, one for each father's house, twelve rods from all their leaders according to their fathers' houses; you shall write everyone's name upon his rod. [3]And you shall write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi, for there shall be one rod for the head *of each* of their fathers' houses. [4]And you shall place them in the Tent of Meeting before the Testimony, where I meet with you. [5]And the rod of the man whom I choose shall bud, and I will put a stop to the murmurings of the children of Israel against Me, which they murmur against you. [6]So Moses spoke to the children of Israel. And every one of their leaders gave him a rod, one rod for each leader according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods, with the rod of Aaron among their rods. [7]And Moses placed the rods before Jehovah in the Tent of the Testimony. [8]And on the next day Moses went into the Tent of the Testimony, and there was the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi: it had budded; it even put forth buds and produced

blossoms and bore ripe almonds. [9]And Moses brought out all the rods from before Jehovah to all the children of Israel, and they looked; and each one took his rod. [10]Then Jehovah said to Moses, Put back the rod of Aaron before the Testimony to be kept as a sign against the rebels, so that you may put an end to their murmurings against Me, and they not die. [11]And Moses did *so;* just as Jehovah commanded him, so he did.

John 11:25—Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;

c. The tablets of the law refer to the law of the Spirit of life as the inner law in our spirit (Rom. 8:2, 10), signified by the tablets of the covenant (Exo. 25:16; 31:18; Deut. 10:1-5; Jer. 31:33).
Rom. 8:2—For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Rom. 8:10—But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.

Exo. 25:16—And you shall put into the Ark the Testimony which I will give you.

Exo. 31:18—And when He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave to Moses the two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

Deut. 10:1-5—At that time Jehovah said to me, Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first ones, and come up to Me on the mountain; and make yourself an ark of wood. [2]And I will write upon the tablets the words which were on the first tablets, which you shattered; and you shall place them in the Ark. [3]So I made an ark of acacia wood and cut two tablets of stone like the first ones; and I went up to the mountain with the two tablets in my hand. [4]And He wrote upon the tablets as *He had done* the first writing, the Ten Commandments, which Jehovah spoke to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly; and Jehovah gave them to me. [5]Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and I placed the tablets in the Ark that I had made. And there they have been, as Jehovah commanded me.

Jer. 31:33—But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares Jehovah: I will put My law in their inward parts and write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.

d. We need to see that the Father is in us (Eph. 4:6), the Son is in us (Col. 1:27; 2 Cor. 13:5), and the Spirit is in us (Rom. 8:9).
Eph. 4:6—One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Col. 1:27—To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,

2 Cor. 13:5—Test yourselves whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Or do you not realize about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you are disapproved?

Rom. 8:9—But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Yet if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him.

e. Thus, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are dwelling in the Holy of Holies; when we enter into our spirit as the practical Holy of Holies, we enter into God and meet the Father as the source of supply, the Son as the resurrection, and the Spirit as the law of life.

B. It is here that all the seekers of Christ who live in the Holy of Holies, in the consummated Triune God, enjoy the processed and consummated Triune God to the fullest extent; this is the highest stage in the experience of the lover of Christ as presented in Song of Songs.

IV. Ultimately, we are conformed to be the wonderful Shulammite, who, as the duplication of Solomon, is the greatest and ultimate figure of the New Jerusalem as the counterpart of Christ—6:13; Rev. 21:2, 9-10; 22:17a:

Rom. 6:13—Neither present your members as weapons of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as alive from the dead, and your members as weapons of righteousness to God.

Rev. 21:2—And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev. 21:9-10—And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. [10]And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

Rev. 22:17—And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is thirsty come; let him who wills take the water of life freely.

A. Just as King Solomon became a country man to court a country girl in order to make her his queen, his duplication, God in Christ became a man to court man in order to make man God in life, nature, expression, and function but not in the Godhead to be Christ's bride—Matt. 9:15; Rev. 19:7; cf. Psa. 45:1-3, 9, 13-14.
Matt. 9:15—And Jesus said to them, The sons of the bridechamber cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

Rev. 19:7—Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

cf. Psa. 45:1-3—My heart overflows with a good matter; I speak what I have composed concerning the King. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer. [2]You are fairer than the sons of men; Grace is poured upon Your lips; Therefore God has blessed You forever. [3]Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O mighty One, *In* Your majesty and Your splendor.

cf. Psa. 45:9—The daughters of kings are among Your most prized; The queen stands at Your right hand in the gold of Ophir.

cf. Psa. 45:13-14—The king's daughter is all glorious within *the royal abode;* Her garment is a woven work inwrought with gold. [14]She will be led to the King in embroidered *clothing;* The virgins behind her, her companions, Will be brought to You.

B. The Bible reveals that God became a man to court us and that now He wants us to court Him by our becoming divine for His expression through our personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual relationship with Him—Eccl. 1:2; S. S. 1:1-8; cf. 2 Cor. 2:10; Exo. 33:11; Rom. 8:4, 6; 1 Cor. 2:15.
Eccl. 1:2—Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

S. S. 1:1-8—The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's. [2]Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! For your love is better than wine. [3]Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; Your name is like ointment poured forth; Therefore the virgins love you. [4]Draw me; we will run after you— The king has brought me into his chambers—We will be glad and rejoice in you; We will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you. [5]I am black but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, Like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon. [6]Do not look at me, because I am black, Because the sun has scorched me. My mother's sons were angry with me; They made me keeper of the vineyards, *But* my own vineyard I have not kept. [7]Tell me, 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 is veiled Beside the flocks of your companions? [8]If you yourself do not know, You fairest among women, Go forth on the footsteps of the flock, And pasture your young goats By the shepherds' tents.

cf. 2 Cor. 2:10—But whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive;* for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *it is* for your sake in the person of Christ;

cf. Exo. 33:11—And Jehovah would speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion. And Moses would return to the camp, but his attendant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart out of the tent.

cf. Rom. 8:4—That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

cf. Rom. 8:6—For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

cf. 1 Cor. 2:15—But the spiritual man discerns all things, but he himself is discerned by no one.

C. *Shulammite* is the feminine form of *Solomon,* indicating that now the overcomers have become the same as Christ in life, in nature, in expression, and in function but not in the Godhead for the carrying out of God's economy.

D. The Shulammite is likened to the dance of two camps, or two armies (Heb. *mahanaim*), in the sight of God; after Jacob saw the angels of God, the two armies of God, he named the place where he was Mahanaim and divided his wives, children, and possessions into "two armies"—S. S. 6:13; Gen. 32:1-2:
S. S. 6:13—Return, return, O Shulammite; Return, return, that we may gaze at you. Why should you gaze at the Shulammite, As upon the dance of two camps?

Gen. 32:1-2—And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. [2]And Jacob said when he saw them, This is God's camp. So he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

1. When Jacob was on the way to confront Esau, the angels of God met him, and he called the name of that place Mahanaim—vv. 1-2.
Gen. 32:1-2—And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. [2]And Jacob said when he saw them, This is God's camp. So he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

2. After he saw the angels as the two armies of God, Jacob divided his wives, children, and possessions into two groups, or "two armies," indicating that we are more than conquerors and that we bear a strong testimony—v. 7.
Gen. 32:7—Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people who were with him and the flocks and the herds and the camels into two camps;

3. It also indicates that God does not want "giants" but only the feeble ones, the weaker ones, the women and children—2 Cor. 11:29; Rom. 9:16.
2 Cor. 11:29—Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is stumbled, and I myself do not burn?

Rom. 9:16—So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

4. God does not want those who are strong in themselves; those who are counted worthy to be overcomers will be the weaker ones who utterly depend on the Lord in the principle of the Body—1 Cor. 1:26-28; 2 Cor. 11:29; 12:9-10; 13:3-5; Rev. 3:8; 1 Pet. 5:5; Deut. 32:30; Eccl. 4:9-12; Rom. 9:16; 16:20.
1 Cor. 1:26-28—For consider your calling, brothers, that there are not many wise according to flesh, not many powerful, not many wellborn. [27]But God has chosen the foolish things of the world that He might shame those *who are* wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world that He might shame

the things that are strong, [28]And the lowborn things of the world and the despised things God has chosen, things which are not, that He might bring to nought the things which are,

2 Cor. 11:29—Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is stumbled, and I myself do not burn?

2 Cor. 12:9-10—And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me. [10]Therefore I am well pleased in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions and distresses, on behalf of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am powerful.

2 Cor. 13:3-5—Since you seek a proof of the Christ who is speaking in me, who is not weak unto you but is powerful in you. [4]For indeed He was crucified out of weakness, but He lives by the power of God. For indeed we are weak in Him, but we will live together with Him by the power of God *directed* toward you. [5]Test yourselves whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Or do you not realize about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you are disapproved?

Rev. 3:8—I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name.

1 Pet. 5:5—In like manner, younger men, be subject to elders; and all of you gird yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Deut. 32:30—How shall one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Were it not that their Rock sold them, And Jehovah delivered them up?

Eccl. 4:9-12—Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor; [10]For if they fall, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls and does not have another to lift him up! [11]Again, if two lie together, they keep warm. But how can one be warm *alone?* [12]And while a man may prevail against the one, the two will withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Rom. 9:16—So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

Rom. 16:20—Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

5. The spiritual significance of the two armies is the strong testimony that we more than conquer through Him who loved us according to the principle of the Body of Christ—8:37; 12:5; Deut. 32:30; Eccl. 4:9-12.

Rom. 8:37—But in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us.

Rom. 12:5—So we who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Deut. 32:30—How shall one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Were it not that their Rock sold them, And Jehovah delivered them up?

Eccl. 4:9-12—Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor; [10]For if they fall, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls and does not have another to lift him up! [11]Again, if two lie together, they keep warm. But how can one be warm *alone?* [12]And while a man may prevail against the one, the two will withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

6. God needs a people who are one with Him, a people who are submissive to Him, signi-fied by the plaited hair (S. S. 1:11), and obedient to Him with a flexible will, signified by the neck with strings of jewels (v. 10).
S. S. 1:11—We will make you plaits of gold With studs of silver.

S. S. 1:10—Your cheeks are lovely with plaits of ornaments, Your neck with strings of jewels.

7. When we consider how to arrive at the highest peak of the divine revelation, we should not trust in ourselves but depend on the Lord as love, power, and mercy to make us vessels of mercy, honor, and glory—Rom. 9:16, 21-23; S. S. 8:5-6.
Rom. 9:16—So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

Rom. 9:21-23—Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor? [22]And what if God, wishing to demonstrate His wrath and make His power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, [23]In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,

S. S. 8:5-6—Who is this who comes up from the wilderness, Leaning on her beloved? I awakened you under the apple tree: There your mother was in labor with you; There she was in labor *and* brought you forth. [6]Set me as a seal on your heart, As a seal on your arm; For love is as strong as death, Jealousy is as cruel as Sheol; Its flashes are the flashes of fire, A flame of Jehovah.

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Message Five

The Fifth Stage of Song of Songs — Sharing in the Work of the Lord

Scripture Reading: S. S. 7:1-5, 11-12

S. S. 7:1-5—How beautiful are your footsteps in sandals, O prince's daughter! Your rounded thighs are like jewels, The work of the hands of a skilled artist. [2]Your navel is a round goblet That never lacks mixed wine; Your belly is a heap of wheat, Fenced in by lilies. [3]Your two breasts are like two fawns, Twins of a gazelle. [4]Your neck is like a tower of ivory; Your eyes, *like* the pools in Heshbon By the gate of Bath-rabbim; Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, Which faces Damascus. [5]Your head upon you is like Carmel, And the locks of your head like purple. The king is fettered by *your* tresses.

S. S. 7:11-12—Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields; Let us lodge in the villages. [12]Let us rise up early for the vineyards; Let us see if the vine has budded, *If* the blossom is open, *If* the pomegranates are in bloom; There I will give you my love.

I. Solomon is the lord of many vineyards (S. S. 7:12), which require much labor; at this point the Shulammite must share in the work of the Lord to become God's co--worker; what a privilege and glory that men can work together with God to be God's co--workers (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1a)!

S. S. 7:12—Let us rise up early for the vineyards; Let us see if the vine has budded, *If* the blossom is open, *If* the pomegranates are in bloom; There I will give you my love.

1 Cor. 3:9—For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.

2 Cor. 6:1—And working together with *Him,* we also entreat you not to receive the grace of God in vain;

II. To share in the Lord's work, we need to be qualified, which depends on our being equipped with all the attributes of the divine life expressed in human virtues; the Spirit reviews the lover's virtues, which are signs of her maturity in the divine life and qualify her to work with the Lord—S. S. 7:1-5; cf. 2 Cor. 1:12; 2:14-17; 11:10a; 1 Thes. 2:1-12:

S. S. 7:1-5—How beautiful are your footsteps in sandals, O prince's daughter! Your rounded thighs are like jewels, The work of the hands of a skilled artist. [2]Your navel is a round goblet That never lacks mixed wine; Your belly is a heap of wheat, Fenced in by lilies. [3]Your two breasts are like two fawns, Twins of a gazelle. [4]Your neck is like a tower of ivory; Your eyes, *like* the pools in Heshbon By the gate of Bath-rabbim; Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, Which faces Damascus. [5]Your head upon you is like Carmel, And the locks of your head like purple. The king is fettered by *your* tresses.

cf. 2 Cor. 1:12—For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in singleness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and more abundantly toward you.

cf. 2 Cor. 2:14-17—But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ and manifests the savor of the knowledge of Him through us in every place. [15]For we are a fragrance of Christ to God in those who are being saved and in those who are perishing: [16]To some a savor out of death unto death, and to the others a savor out of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? [17]For we are not like the many, adulterating the word of God for profit; but as out of sincerity, but as out of God, before God we speak in Christ.

cf. 2 Cor. 11:10—The truthfulness of Christ is in me, that this boasting shall not be stopped as it regards me in the regions of Achaia.

cf. 1 Thes. 2:1-12—For you yourselves know, brothers, our entrance toward you, that it has not been in vain. [2]But having suffered previously and having been outrageously treated, even as you know, in Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much struggle. [3]For our exhortation is not out of deception nor out of uncleanness nor in guile; [4]But even as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men but God, who proves our hearts. [5]For neither were we found at any time with flattering speech, even as you know, nor with a pretext for covetousness; God is witness. [6]Nor did we seek glory from men, neither from you nor from others, though we could have stood on our authority as apostles of Christ. [7]But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children. [8]Yearning in this way over you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us. [9]For you remember, brothers, our labor and travail: While working night and day so as not to be burdensome to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. [10]You are witnesses, as well as God, how in a holy and righteous and blameless manner we conducted ourselves toward you who believe, [11]Just as you know how *we were* to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling *you* and testifying, [12]So that you might walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

A. God's unique work is to work Himself in Christ into His chosen people, making Himself one with them for the Body of Christ—Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:17a; 4:16:
Gal. 4:19—My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,

Eph. 3:17—That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Eph. 4:16—Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and *through* the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

1. We cannot serve God beyond what we are as a person—Paul says, "By the grace of God I am what I am…"—he was a person filled and constituted with Christ as grace, which is God for our enjoyment—1 Cor. 15:10a.
   1 Cor. 15:10—But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.

2. As a result of this, Paul continues by saying, "And His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me"—v. 10b.
   1 Cor. 15:10—But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.

3. *Not I but the grace of God* equals *no longer I…but…Christ* in Galatians 2:20; thus the grace that operated in Paul was not some matter or some thing but a living person, the resurrected Christ, the embodiment of God the Father who became the all--inclusive life-giving Spirit, who dwelt in the apostle as his everything.
   Gal. 2:20—I am crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *who* live, but *it is* Christ *who* lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the *faith* of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

4. Paul's ministry was to dispense the riches of Christ as God's grace into His chosen people for their enjoyment, issuing in the building up of the church—Eph. 3:2.
   Eph. 3:2—If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

B. In Song of Songs the Lord's loving seeker is spoken of as the "prince's daughter" (7:1); this indicates that a lover of Christ should reach the maturity in His royal life to reign in life through the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:17).
   S. S. 7:1—How beautiful are your footsteps in sandals, O prince's daughter! Your rounded thighs are like jewels, The work of the hands of a skilled artist.

   Rom. 5:17—For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

C. The Spirit reviews her beauty in the gospel preaching (footsteps in sandals)—S. S. 7:1; Rom. 10:15:
   S. S. 7:1—How beautiful are your footsteps in sandals, O prince's daughter! Your rounded thighs are like jewels, The work of the hands of a skilled artist.

   Rom. 10:15—And how shall they proclaim *Him* unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who announce the news of good things!"

1. The preaching of the gospel will protect us and keep us from being defiled by the earth; part of the church's armor of God is "having shod your feet with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace"—Eph. 6:13, 15.
   Eph. 6:13—Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

   Eph. 6:15—And having shod your feet with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace;

2. Christ made peace for us, with both God and man, on the cross, and this peace has become our gospel (2:13-17); this gospel of peace has been established as a firm foundation, as a readiness with which our feet may be shod.
   Eph. 2:13-17—But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have become near in the blood of Christ. [14]For He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity, [15]Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, *so* making peace, [16]And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it. [17]And coming, He announced peace as the gospel to you who were far off, and peace to those who were near,

3. Being thus shod, we will have a firm footing that we may stand to fight the spiritual warfare; the peace for such a firm foundation is Christ—6:14.
   Eph. 6:14—Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness

D. The Lord says concerning His loving seeker: "Your neck is like a tower of ivory"; ivory in typology signifies the resurrection life; thus, her neck, signifying her will, is full of resurrec-tion life—S. S. 7:4.
   S. S. 7:4—Your neck is like a tower of ivory; Your eyes, *like* the pools in Heshbon By the gate of Bath-rabbim; Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, Which faces Damascus.

E. Next the Lord speaks of her eyes: "Your eyes, like the pools in Heshbon / By the gate of Bath-rabbim"—v. 4:
   1. In Song of Songs 1:15 her eyes were likened to doves' eyes, but in 7:4 her eyes are likened to pools; the doves' eyes are spiritual, but the eyes like pools are fully open to the light and are enlarged and broadened to cover the whole universe.
      S. S. 1:15—Oh, you are beautiful, my love! Oh, you are beautiful! Your eyes are *like* doves.

      S. S. 7:4—Your neck is like a tower of ivory; Your eyes, *like* the pools in Heshbon By the gate of Bath-rabbim; Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, Which faces Damascus.

2. These pools are located by the gate, which is for coming in and going out, signifying the communication of fellowship, which depends upon our broadened sight; these are reflecting pools, which indicates that her sight is full of light.
3. We must become so enlarged in our vision that we not only see and care for the work where we are, but we also care for the Lord's interest on the entire earth and in the whole universe.

F. The Lord highly values her because she has a "nose like…the tower of Lebanon"—v. 4:

1. A nose like the tower of Lebanon means that the Lord's loving seeker has a spiritual sense of high and sharp discernment; Philippians 1:9 indicates that we should not love others foolishly but should love them soberly with love that abounds in full knowledge and sensitive perception.
   Phil. 1:9—And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and all discernment,

2. The faculty of smell is found only with the mature ones; this sense does not come from spoken words or visible things; it is an inward ability from the intuition in our spirit that enables a person to differentiate good and bad smells.
3. This spiritual intuition enables a person to identify the things that are of God; it is not by reason or logic but by a spontaneous and inwardly accurate feeling, which enables a person to discern spiritual matters.
4. At the same time, this olfactory sense enables a person to identify bad smells as well; many teachings cannot be considered to be wrong, and many people have nothing that others can find fault with, yet we sense that something is off.
5. You may tell the Lord's servant that everything is fine, but immediately he senses something wrong, something not genuine, and something not in harmony with the Lord; this is the safeguard of the Lord's work.
6. A nose like the tower of Lebanon speaks of its height and sharpness; today there are too many Christians with a disfigured, or flat, nose, which signifies the lack of Christ as the sensing ability in our service to God and disqualifies us from the priesthood—S. S. 7:4; Lev. 21:18 (see also ASV 1901).
   S. S. 7:4—Your neck is like a tower of ivory; Your eyes, *like* the pools in Heshbon By the gate of Bath-rabbim; Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon, Which faces Damascus.

   Lev. 21:18—For no one who has a defect shall approach: one who is blind or lame or with a disfigured nose or with an extended *limb,*

7. Being disqualified from the priesthood because of a defect signifies that anyone who is deficient in Christ is not able to minister Christ as food to God—vv. 17-21.
   Lev. 21:17-21—Speak to Aaron, saying, No one of your seed throughout their generations who has a defect shall approach to present the food of his God. [18]For no one who has a defect shall approach: one who is blind or lame or with

a disfigured nose or with an extended *limb,* [19]Or one who has a broken foot or a broken hand, [20]Or a hunchback or a dwarf, or one who has a defect in his eye or eczema or scale or crushed testicles. [21]No one of the seed of Aaron the priest who has a defect shall come near to present Jehovah's offerings by fire. He has a defect; he shall not come near to present the food of his God.

G. The Spirit reviews her beauty in her thoughts and intentions (head), which are strong for God (Carmel—cf. 1 Kings 18:19-39), and in her submission and obedience for her consecration (locks of her head—cf. Num. 6:5a), which are for the glory of God (purple) and capture (fetter) her Beloved, who is the King (S. S. 7:5).

cf. 1 Kings 18:19-39—And now send *word, and* gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, as well as the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table. [20]So Ahab sent *word* to all the children of Israel and gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel. [21]Then Elijah came near to all the people and said, How long will you go hopping between two opinions? If Jehovah is God, follow Him; but if Baal is, follow him. And the people did not answer him a word. [22]And Elijah said to the people, I alone am left as a prophet of Jehovah, but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. [23]Let them therefore give us two bulls. And let them choose one bull for themselves and cut it in pieces and put it on the wood, but let them apply no fire; and I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood, and I will apply no fire. [24]Then call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Jehovah; and the God who answers by fire, He will be God. And all the people answered and said, The word *seems* good. [25]And Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, Choose one bull for yourselves, and prepare it first, for there are many of you. And call on the name of your god, but apply no fire. [26]So they took the bull which had been given them and prepared *it;* and they called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, O Baal, answer us! But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they leaped around the altar that had been made. [27]Then at noon Elijah mocked them and said, Cry out with a loud voice, for he is a god; for he is meditating or has wandered off or is on a journey. Perhaps he is asleep and will awake. [28]And they cried out with a loud voice and cut themselves, according to their custom, with swords and spears until blood gushed out all over them. [29]And when noon had passed, they prophesied until *the time of* the offering up of the meal offering; but there was no voice nor any that answered nor any attention paid. [30]Then Elijah said to all the people, Come near to me. And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of Jehovah which was broken down. [31]And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob (to whom the word of Jehovah came, saying, Israel shall be your name); [32]And with the stones he built an altar in the name of Jehovah, and he made a trench around the altar, with a capacity of two measures of seed. [33]And he arranged the wood and cut the bull in pieces and laid *it* on the wood. And he said, Fill four jars with water, and pour *the water* on the burnt offering and on the wood. [34]And he said, Do it a second time. And they did

it a second time. And he said, Do it a third time. And they did it a third time. [35]And the water went around the altar, and he filled the trench also with water. [36]Then at *the time of* the offering up of the meal offering, Elijah the prophet came near and said, O Jehovah, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known today that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and that I have done all these things by Your word. [37]Answer me, O Jehovah; answer me, that this people may know that You, O Jehovah, are God and *that* You have turned their heart back again. [38]And the fire of Jehovah fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. [39]And when all the people saw *this,* they fell on their faces and said, Jehovah—He is God! Jehovah—He is God!

cf. Num. 6:5—All the days of his vow of separation no razor shall pass over his head. He shall be holy until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to Jehovah; he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long.

S. S. 7:5—Your head upon you is like Carmel, And the locks of your head like purple. The king is fettered by *your* tresses.

III. "Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields; / Let us lodge in the villages. / Let us rise up early for the vineyards; / Let us see if the vine has budded, / If the blossom is open, / If the pomegranates are in bloom; / There I will give you my love"—vv. 11-12:

A. "Let us lodge in the villages"—*villages* is plural; she has fully taken on the sojourning nature of the Lord that is not confined to one place, but that is from one village to another; she follows the Lord and seeks after lost sheep and wounded ones.

B. Christ's lover wants to carry out with her Beloved the work that is for the entire world (fields) by sojourning from one place to another (lodging in the villages); this indi-cates that she is not sectarian in carrying out the Lord's work; she keeps the work open so that others can come to sojourn there and she can go to sojourn elsewhere; this is to keep the one work in one Body.

C. *Early* shows her diligence in the Lord's work; the work in the early morning is indispensable; laziness is not a characteristic of the Lord's life; only those who are truly spiritual can be diligent; the difference between diligence and laziness lies in the use of time—Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5.
Eph. 5:16—Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Col. 4:5—Walk in wisdom toward those who are without, redeeming the time.

D. To share in the work of the Lord is not merely to work for the Lord but to work together with the Lord (1 Cor. 3:9a; 2 Cor. 6:1a); to work with the Lord we need the maturity in life, we need to be one with the Lord, and our work must be for His Body.
1 Cor. 3:9—For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.

2 Cor. 6:1—And working together with *Him,* we also entreat you not to receive the grace of God in vain;

E. The Shulammite works as Solomon's counterpart, taking care of all the vineyards (S. S. 8:11), the churches and the believers on the whole earth; this indicates that our work should be for the Body, not just one city.
S. S. 8:11—Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon: He let out the vineyard to keepers; Each was to bring a thousand *shekels* of silver for its fruit.

F. We must have a work that is for the entire world; this is what Paul did by establishing local churches and then working to bring them into the blending life of the entire Body of Christ for their full realization of the Body of Christ—Rom. 16:1-27; 1 Cor. 12:24-25a.
Rom. 16:1-27—I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a deaconess of the church which is in Cenchrea, [2]That you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints and assist her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been the patroness of many, of myself as well. [3]Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, [4]Who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; [5]And *greet* the church, which is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the firstfruits of Asia unto Christ. [6]Greet Mary, one who has labored much for you. [7]Greet Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. [8]Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. [9]Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. [10]Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those of the *household of* Aristobulus. [11]Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the *household of* Narcissus who are in the Lord. [12]Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Greet Persis, the beloved *sister,* one who has labored much in the Lord. [13]Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother as well as mine. [14]Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers with them. [15]Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints with them. [16]Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you. [17]Now I exhort you, brothers, to mark those who make divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them. [18]For such men do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own stomach, and through smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. [19]For *the report of* your obedience has reached to all; therefore I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and guileless as to what is evil. [20]Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. [21]Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you, as well as Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen. [22]I, Tertius, who write this epistle, greet you in the Lord. [23]Gaius, my host and *host* of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, greets you, and Quartus the brother. [24]*See note 24.* [25]Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel, that is, the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery,

which has been kept in silence in the times of the ages [26]But has now been manifested, and through the prophetic writings, according to the command of the eternal God, has been made known to all the Gentiles for the obedience of faith; [27]To the only wise God through Jesus Christ, to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Cor. 12:24-25—But our comely *members* have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the *member* that lacked, [25]That there would be no division in the body, but *that* the members would have the same care for one another.

G. She and her Beloved work diligently in the churches (vineyards) for other believers to bud, blossom, and bloom; in the midst of the Lord's work, the lover of the Lord says, "There I will give You my love"—cf. S. S. 7:12.
cf. **S. S. 7:12**—Let us rise up early for the vineyards; Let us see if the vine has budded, *If* the blossom is open, *If* the pomegranates are in bloom; There I will give you my love.

H. If we would work together with the Beloved, we should express our love for Him in the place of His work; how wonderful this is!—Mark 12:30.
Mark 12:30—And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."

IV. The first works are works that issue from and express the first love (Rev. 2:4-5); when we are filled with the first love of the Lord (v. 4), giving Him the first place in all things (Col. 1:18b), everything we do issues from and expresses our love for Him (John 21:15-17; Eph. 4:16; 2 Cor. 5:14-15, 20):

Rev. 2:4-5—But I have *one thing* against you, that you have left your first love. [5]Remember therefore where you have fallen from and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.

Rev. 2:4—But I have *one thing* against you, that you have left your first love.

Col. 1:18—And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

John 21:15-17—Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs. [16]He said to him again a second time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep. [17]He said to him the third time, Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

Eph. 4:16—Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and *through* the operation in the

measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

2 Cor. 5:14-15—For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died; [15]And He died for all that those who live may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and has been raised.

2 Cor. 5:20—On behalf of Christ then we are ambassadors, as God entreats *you* through us; we beseech *you* on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God.

A. At the beginning of a believer's work, he has to be delivered from the vanity of his former and outward work—he has done only what man has entrusted to him but not what God ordained for him—S. S. 1:6b-8.
B. When a believer is delivered from the self, his heart is liberated from his individualistic work to the work of the Lord, and the condition of every saint and even of the most immature believer has become his interest and the object of his concern.
C. Now the Lord's loving seeker is able to relate the Lord's work to the Lord Himself, and she can make her work an expression of her love to Him.
D. All her labor is a "labor of love" (1 Thes. 1:3) that issues from the love of God, which has been poured out in her heart (1 John 4:19; Rom. 5:5).
1 Thes. 1:3—Remembering unceasingly your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

1 John 4:19—We love because He first loved us.

Rom. 5:5—And hope does not put *us* to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

V. "My beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord"—1 Cor. 15:58:

A. Only those works that are motivated by our first love for the Lord are the gold, silver, and precious stones—3:12.
1 Cor. 3:12—But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble,

B. Our labor in the work of the Lord is not by our natural life and natural ability but by His resurrection life with His resurrection power.
C. Such labor results in the fulfilling of God's eternal economy through the preaching of Christ to sinners, the ministering of life to the saints, and the building up of the church with the experiences of the processed Triune God as gold, silver, and precious stones—v. 12.
1 Cor. 3:12—But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble,

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Message Six

The Sixth Stage of Song of Songs — Hoping to Be Raptured

Scripture Reading: S. S. 8:1-7, 13-14

S. S. 8:1-7—Oh that you were like a brother to me, Who nursed at my mother's breasts! If I found you outside, I would kiss you, And none would despise me. [2]I would lead you *and* bring you Into my mother's house, Who has instructed me; I would make you drink spiced wine From the juice of my pomegranate. [3]His left hand would be under my head, And his right hand would embrace me. [4]I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, Do not rouse up or awaken *my* love Until she pleases. [5]Who is this who comes up from the wilderness, Leaning on her beloved? I awakened you under the apple tree: There your mother was in labor with you; There she was in labor *and* brought you forth. [6]Set me as a seal on your heart, As a seal on your arm; For love is as strong as death, Jealousy is as cruel as Sheol; Its flashes are the flashes of fire, A flame of Jehovah. [7]Many waters cannot quench love, Nor do floods drown it. If a man gave all the substance of his house for love, It would be utterly despised.

S. S. 8:13-14—O you who dwell in the gardens, *My* companions listen for your voice; Let me hear *it.* [14]Make haste, my beloved, And be like a gazelle or a young hart Upon the mountains of spices.

I. Through her growth and transformation in life, the lover of Christ becomes mature in life to the extent that she has become the same as Christ in every respect except that she has the flesh; she is hoping to be saved from her groaning for her flesh, indicating that she hopes to be raptured through the redemption of her body—S. S. 8:1-4; Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Eph. 4:30b; Phil. 3:21.

S. S. 8:1-4—Oh that you were like a brother to me, Who nursed at my mother's breasts! If I found you outside, I would kiss you, And none would despise me. [2]I would lead you *and* bring you Into my mother's house, Who has instructed me; I would make you drink spiced wine From the juice of my pomegranate. [3]His left hand would be under my head, And his right hand would embrace me. [4]I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, Do not rouse up or awaken *my* love Until she pleases.

Rom. 8:23—And not only *so,* but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body.

2 Cor. 5:1-8—For we know that if our earthly tabernacle dwelling is taken down, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. [2]For also in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our dwelling place from heaven, [3]If indeed, being clothed, we will not be found naked. [4]For also, we who are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened, in that we do not desire to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. [5]Now He who has wrought us for this very thing is God, who has given to us the Spirit as a pledge.

[6]Therefore being always of good courage and knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are abroad from the Lord [7](For we walk by faith, not by appearance)— [8]We are of good courage then and are well pleased rather to be abroad from the body and at home with the Lord.

Eph. 4:30—And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption.

Phil. 3:21—Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself.

II. "Who is this who comes up from the wilderness, / Leaning on her beloved?"—S. S. 8:5a:

A. The lover of Christ who came up once from the spiritual wilderness (the worldly environment) by herself (3:6) now comes up from the fleshly wilderness (the earthly realm) by leaning on her Beloved, trusting in Him helplessly:
S. S. 3:6—Who is she who comes up from the wilderness Like pillars of smoke, Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, With all the fragrant powders of the merchant?

1. *Leaning on her beloved* implies her feeling that she is powerless and unable to walk apart from the Lord; she makes herself a burden for her Beloved to carry—2 Cor. 12:9-10; 13:3-4.
2 Cor. 12:9-10—And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly therefore I will rather boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ might tabernacle over me. [10]Therefore I am well pleased in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions and distresses, on behalf of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am powerful.

2 Cor. 13:3-4—Since you seek a proof of the Christ who is speaking in me, who is not weak unto you but is powerful in you. [4]For indeed He was crucified out of weakness, but He lives by the power of God. For indeed we are weak in Him, but we will live together with Him by the power of God *directed* toward you.

2. *Leaning on her beloved* implies that, like Jacob, the socket of her hip has been touched, and her natural strength has been dealt with by the Lord—Gen. 32:24-25.
Gen. 32:24-25—And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. [25]And when the man saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was dislocated as he wrestled with Him.

3. *Leaning on her beloved* implies that she seems to find herself pressed beyond measure, and this seems to last until the wilderness journey is over—2 Cor. 1:8-9.

2 Cor. 1:8-9—For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of our affliction which befell *us* in Asia, that we were excessively burdened, beyond *our* power, so that we despaired even of living. [9]Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead;

4. A trusting life in the Lord is indispensable; we should trust in Him helplessly until the Holy Spirit exclaims, "Who is this who comes…leaning on her beloved?":
   a. "Trust in Him at all times, O people; / Pour out your heart before Him; / God is a refuge to us"—Psa. 62:8.
   b. "Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, / For in You I trust. / Make known to me the way on which I should walk, / For to You I lift up my soul"—143:8.
   c. "Those who trust in Jehovah are like Mount Zion, / Which cannot be moved but abides forever"—125:1; concerning Mount Zion, see footnote 1 on Psalm 48:2.
      Psa. 48:2—Beautiful in elevation, The joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion, the sides of the north, The city of the great King.

B. As she is waiting for His coming, she is going out with Him to meet Him (cf. Matt. 25:1); by leaning on our Beloved, we constantly enjoy Him as our "going-out" strength to leave the world behind (Gen. 5:22-24; Heb. 11:5-6).
cf. Matt. 25:1—At that time the kingdom of the heavens will be likened to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

Gen. 5:22-24—And Enoch walked with God after he had begotten Methuselah three hundred years, and he begot *more* sons and daughters. [23]And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years. [24]And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

Heb. 11:5-6—By faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God. [6]But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing *to Him,* for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

III. "Set me as a seal on your heart, / As a seal on your arm; / For love is as strong as death, / Jealousy is as cruel as Sheol; / Its flashes are the flashes of fire, / A flame of Jehovah"—S. S. 8:6:

A. She asks her Beloved to keep her by His love (heart) and His strength (arm), for His love is as strong as unshakable death and His jealousy is as cruel as unconquerable Sheol, which is like the jealous Jehovah, who is a consuming fire (Deut. 4:24) that burns up all the negative things.
Deut. 4:24—For Jehovah your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

B. "When she recalls her original condition, she cannot help but be filled with humility. She cannot help but consider her emptiness, the vanity of her experience, the undependability of her mind, and the futility of her pursuit. Her only hope is the Lord. She realizes that whether she can endure to the end does not depend on her own endurance, but on the Lord's preservation. No spiritual perfection can sustain a person until the Lord's return. Everything depends on God and His preserving power. When she realizes this, she cannot help but exclaim, 'Set me as a seal on your heart, / As a seal on your arm.' The heart is the place of love, while the arm is the place of strength. 'Set me as permanently as a seal upon Your heart, and as indelibly as a seal upon Your arm. Just as the priests bore the Israelites upon their breasts and their shoulders, remember me constantly in Your heart and sustain me with Your arm. I know that I am weak and empty, and I am conscious of my powerlessness. Lord, I am a helpless person. If I try to preserve myself until Your coming, it will only bring shame to Your name and loss to myself. All my hopes are in Your love and power. I loved You before. But I know the undependability of that love. Now I look only to the love You have toward me. I held You once, and it seemed to be a powerful grip. But now I realize that even my strongest grip is just weakness. My trust is not in my holding power, but in Your holding power. I dare not speak of my love to You any longer. I dare not speak of my grasping of You any longer. From this point on, everything depends on Your strength and Your love'"—Watchman Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee,* vol. 23, "The Song of Songs," p. 119.

C. His love cannot be quenched by trials nor drowned by persecutions nor replaced by any wealth—S. S. 8:7; Rom. 8:35-39; 1 Cor. 13:1-3.

S. S. 8:7—Many waters cannot quench love, Nor do floods drown it. If a man gave all the substance of his house for love, It would be utterly despised.

Rom. 8:35-39—Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or anguish or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? [36]As it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; we have been accounted as sheep for slaughter." [37]But in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us. [38]For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor things present nor things to come nor powers [39]Nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Cor. 13:1-3—If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. [2]And if I have *the gift of* prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. [3]And if I dole out all my possessions to feed *others,* and if I deliver up my body that I may boast, but do not have love, I profit nothing.

IV. The last two verses of Song of Songs are vital for our being prepared to be the bride of Christ so that we may hasten His coming and bring Him back—"O you who dwell in the gardens, / My companions listen for your voice; / Let me hear it. / Make haste, my beloved, / And be like a gazelle or a young hart / Upon the mountains of spices"—8:13-14:

A. She addresses Him as the One who dwells in the gardens, the transformed believers; she says that her companions listen for His voice; then she implores the Lord, "Let me hear it."

B. Our daily prayer must be, "Lord, let me hear Your voice today—the voice of my Beloved"; the Lord says to the seeker, "Let Me hear your voice" (cf. 2:14); we want to hear the Lord's voice, and He wants to hear our voice for mutual, intimate fellowship together.

cf. S. S. 2:14—My dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the covert of the precipice, Let me see your countenance, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your countenance is lovely.

C. Our lives depend on the Lord's words, and our work depends on the Lord's commands; in the work that we as lovers of Christ do for Him as our Beloved, we need to maintain our fellowship with Him, always listening to Him.

D. The central point of our prayers should be our longing for the Lord's speaking—Rev. 2:7; Isa. 50:4-5; Exo. 21:6.

Rev. 2:7—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

Isa. 50:4-5—The Lord Jehovah has given me The tongue of the instructed, That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens *me* morning by morning; He awakens my ear To hear as an instructed one. [5]The Lord Jehovah has opened my ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn back.

Exo. 21:6—Then his master shall bring him to God and shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

E. Without the Lord's words, we will not have any revelation, light, or knowledge; the life of the believers hinges totally upon the Lord's speaking.

F. Thus, it is vital that we have the attitude of a hearer, like Samuel, who said, "Speak, for Your servant is listening" (1 Sam. 3:10), and like Mary who "sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to His word" (Luke 10:39); the Lord's call in these last days is: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 2:7a).

1 Sam. 3:10—Then Jehovah came and stood by and called as at the other times, Samuel! Samuel! And Samuel said, Speak, for Your servant is listening.

Luke 10:39—And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to His word.

Rev. 2:7—He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

G. Song of Songs 8:13-14, concerning our hearing and listening to the Lord's voice so that He can return, is intrinsically related to Ephesians 5:25-27; these verses in Ephesians encapsulate God's entire economy:
S. S. 8:13-14—O you who dwell in the gardens, *My* companions listen for your voice; Let me hear *it.* [14]Make haste, my beloved, And be like a gazelle or a young hart Upon the mountains of spices.

Eph. 5:25-27—Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her [26]That He might sanctify her, cleansing *her* by the washing of the water in the word, [27]That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

1. Verse 25 says that Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her; He died to redeem us, to purchase us, because He wants us to be His bride—this verse reveals Christ as our Redeemer with His judicial redemption.
Eph. 5:25—Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her

2. Verse 26 continues by saying that He gave Himself up for the church "that He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word"—this verse reveals Christ as the life-giving Spirit with His organic salvation for bride preparation:
Eph. 5:26—That He might sanctify her, cleansing *her* by the washing of the water in the word,
   a. In the present Christ is the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b), and as the life-giving Spirit, He is embodied in His word (John 6:63; Eph. 6:17-18; 2 Tim. 3:16).
   1 Cor. 15:45—So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam *became* a life-giving Spirit.

   John 6:63—It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

   Eph. 6:17-18—And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which *Spirit* is the word of God, [18]By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

   2 Tim. 3:16—All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

b. *Word* in Ephesians 5:26 is not *logos* but *rhema,* which is the Lord's instant, present, living, personal word to us in order to metabolically cleanse away the old and replace it with the new, causing an inward transformation.
Eph. 5:26—That He might sanctify her, cleansing *her* by the washing of the water in the word,

c. We personally need to hear our Beloved's voice, His instant, present speaking to us every day; the Lord's speaking cleanses and washes us with the flowing life of God inwardly and metabolically to sanctify and transform us; we are now in such a washing process, that the church may be holy and without blemish.

3. Ephesians 5:27 says, "That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish"—this verse reveals Christ as the Bridegroom for bride presentation:
   a. In the past Christ was our Redeemer, in the present He is the life-giving Spirit, and in the future He as the Bridegroom will present the church to Himself as His counterpart, the real Shulammite, for His satisfaction—S. S. 6:13.
   S. S. 6:13—Return, return, O Shulammite; Return, return, that we may gaze at you. Why should you gaze at the Shulammite, As upon the dance of two camps?

   b. The wrinkles signify our oldness, the spots signify our natural life, and "any such things" signify everything of the old creation in us; these things are washed away by the water in His word for us to be His transformed new creation, His Shulammite.
   c. His personal, particular, and direct speaking to us day by day prepares us to be His glorious bride so that He can come again to marry us—"My companions listen for your voice; / Let me hear it"—8:13.
   S. S. 8:13—O you who dwell in the gardens, *My* companions listen for your voice; Let me hear *it.*

V. As the concluding word of the poetic book of Song of Songs, the lover of Christ prays that her Beloved would make haste to come back in the power of His resurrection (gazelle and young hart) to set up His sweet and beautiful kingdom (mountains of spices), which will fill the whole earth—8:14; Rev. 11:15; Dan. 2:35:

S. S. 8:14—Make haste, my beloved, And be like a gazelle or a young hart Upon the mountains of spices.

Rev. 11:15—And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the *kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.

Dan. 2:35—Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed all at once, and they became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

A. The Lord says, "Yes, I come quickly"; the apostle John's response is to pray-read this word back to the Lord by saying to Him, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20); this is the last prayer in the Bible; the entire Bible concludes with the desire for the Lord's coming expressed as a prayer.
Rev. 22:20—He who testifies these things says, Yes, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

B. Such a prayer portrays the union and communion between Christ as the Bridegroom and His lovers as the bride in their bridal love, in the way that the prayer of John, a lover of Christ, as the concluding word of the Holy Scriptures, reveals God's eternal economy concerning Christ and the church in His divine love.

C. Our living a life of love, according to the Song of Songs as a love poem, makes us the *poiema,* the poem, of God, issuing in grace as our ultimate enjoyment of God (Eph. 2:10); only the grace of the Lord Jesus can enable us to experience, enjoy, and express the all-inclusive Christ and participate in the Triune God that we may become His eternal corporate expression as His ultimate Shulammite, the wife of the Lamb, for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose, that He and we may enjoy absolute satisfaction and complete rest mutually for eternity (Rev. 22:21; 19:7; 21:9).
Eph. 2:10—For we are His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand in order that we would walk in them.

Rev. 22:21—The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.

Rev. 19:7—Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

Rev. 21:9—And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

D. "When He comes, faith will be turned to facts, and praise will replace prayer. Love will consummate in a shadowless perfection, and we will serve Him in the sinless domain. What a day that will be! Lord Jesus, come quickly!"—Watchman Nee, *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee,* vol. 23, "The Song of Songs," p. 126.

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