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

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.

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:

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.

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:

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

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.

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:

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.

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.

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.

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:

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.
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.

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.
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.
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.
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.

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 requirements and satisfy His heart—Matt. 6:6; 13:20-21.
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.

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.

D. God put man in the garden "to work it and to keep it"—Gen. 2:15:

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.
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.

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.

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.

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.
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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