

Message Twelve

Hoping to Be Raptured

Scripture Reading: S. S. 8:1-14

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 still has the flesh—S. S. 8:1-4:

- A. When her body is transfigured (Phil. 3:21), she and the Lord will be the same (1 John 3:2), and no one will despise her because of her shortage in the flesh—v. 1.
- B. She is hoping to be saved from her groaning for the flesh, indicating that she hopes to be raptured through the redemption of her body—vv. 2-4; Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Eph. 4:30b.

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:
 - 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—cf. 2 Cor. 12:9-10; 13:3-4.
 - 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.
 - 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—cf. 2 Cor. 1:8-9.
- 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—cf. Gen. 5:22-24; Heb. 11:5-6.

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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.
- 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

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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 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.

IV. The lover of Christ asks Him who dwells in the believers as His gardens to let her hear His voice while her companions listen for His voice—S. S. 8:13; cf. 4:13—5:1; 6:2:

- A. This indicates that in the work that we as the lovers of Christ do for Him as our Beloved, we need to maintain our fellowship with Him, always listening to Him—cf. Luke 10:38-42.
- B. Our lives depend on the Lord’s words, and our work depends on the Lord’s commands; the central point of our prayers should be our longing for the Lord’s speaking—Rev. 2:7; 1 Sam. 3:9-10; cf. Isa. 50:4-5; Exo. 21:6.
- C. 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—Eph. 5:26-27.

V. As the concluding word of this poetic book, 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—S. S. 8:14; Rev. 11:15; Dan. 2:35:

- A. 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—Rev. 22:20.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

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- B. "Come, Lord Jesus!" is the last prayer in the Bible (v. 20); the entire Bible concludes with the desire for the Lord's coming expressed as a prayer.
- C. "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 Song of Songs*, p. 126).