

Message Nine

A Land of Pomegranates

Scripture Reading: Deut. 8:8; Exo. 28:33-34; 1 Kings 7:18-20; S. S. 4:3b, 13a; 2 Pet. 1:3-8

I. In the Bible pomegranates signify the fullness of life, the abundance and beauty of life, and the expression of the riches of life—Deut. 8:8; Exo. 28:33-34; 1 Kings 7:18-20; S. S. 4:3b, 13a:

- A. A ripe pomegranate with its seeds gives the impression of the fullness of life and of the abundance and beauty of life.
- B. If we experience and enjoy Christ as wheat, barley, the vine, and the fig tree, the abundance of the life of Christ will be with us, and the beauty of Christ will be about us; this is the experience of Christ as the pomegranate.
- C. If we grow in life to maturity, we will become pomegranates—Col. 2:19; 1:28:
 - 1. The more we are willing to be ruled and restricted by the Lord Jesus out of our love for Him, the more we will grow in life—vv. 13, 28.
 - 2. If we see the vision of the all-inclusiveness and extensiveness of Christ, we will concentrate our whole being on this Christ, and He will fill and saturate us—v. 12; 2:9, 16-17; 3:10-11:
 - a. Our being will be occupied with the vast, unsearchably rich, extensive Christ—Eph. 3:18.
 - b. To us to live will be the Christ who takes possession of us and fills and occupies us with Himself—Phil. 1:20-21a; Eph. 3:17a.
 - 3. To be full-grown in Christ is to be filled, saturated, and permeated with Christ—Col. 1:28:
 - a. This is to have every part of our being occupied with Christ—Eph. 3:17a; Gal. 4:19.
 - b. This is the growth in life and the maturity in life, the issue of experiencing the Christ revealed in Colossians—2:9, 19; 3:4, 10-11.

II. Pomegranates and golden bells were on the bottom part of the high priest's robe, which signifies the church—Exo. 28:33-34:

- A. The church should be full of life in her humanity; this is the significance of pomegranates made of linen.
- B. The church has humanity for the expression of the fullness of life and also divinity for the sounding of the golden bells:
 - 1. The fullness of life is expressed in the church's humanity, but the voice of warning is expressed in the church's divinity (the golden bells).
 - 2. We first have the expression of the fullness of life and then the sounding of the golden bells, that is, the speaking from the divinity of the church.
 - 3. The beauty of life expressed in our humanity and the divine sounding from the golden bells are signs of a proper church life.

III. The two hundred pomegranates surrounding the capitals at the top of the pillars in the temple signify the expression of the riches of life—1 Kings 7:18-20; 2 Chron. 3:15-16; Jer. 52:22-23:

- A. Those who judge themselves (bronze) and regard themselves as nothing will be able to bear responsibility in full in the midst of an intermixed and complicated situation (nets of checker work and wreaths of chain work) because they

live not by themselves but by faith in God (lily work); thus, they express the riches of life two hundredfold (pomegranates)—1 Kings 7:15-22.

- B. Out of every one hundred pomegranates, ninety-six were exposed to the open air, and four were covered—Jer. 52:22-23:
 - 1. The expression of the riches of life is eternally complete, in the freshness of resurrection, and in the Spirit.
 - 2. The fact that four of every one hundred pomegranates were hidden indicates that our natural being, our natural life, and our self must be concealed.
 - 3. When our natural being disappears, we have the ninety-six pomegranates, the rich expression of the life of Christ in the reality of the spiritual air.

IV. According to Song of Songs, pomegranates have a spiritual significance in the progressive experience of an individual believer's loving fellowship with Christ—4:3b, 13a; 6:7, 11; 7:12; 8:2b:

- A. "Your cheeks are like a piece of pomegranate / Behind your veil"—4:3b; 6:7.
- B. "I went down to the orchard of nuts / To see the freshness of the valley, / To see whether the vine had budded, / Whether the pomegranates were in bloom"—v. 11.
- C. "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"—7:12.
- D. "I would make you drink spiced wine / From the juice of my pomegranate"—8:2b.
- E. "Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates / With choicest fruit"—4:13a:
 - 1. In Christ's enjoyment of His lover, she is an enclosed garden that grows all kinds of plants in different colors as different expressions of the inner life and in a variety of fragrances as the rich expression of the mature life—vv. 13-14.
 - 2. This becomes the lover's beauty to the Lord; the lover of Christ is now rich in life, producing fruits to nourish and refresh, giving forth sweet fragrances, and displaying beautiful colors for Christ's enjoyment.

V. In 2 Peter 1:3-8 we have the development of the excellent virtues through the enjoyment of the divine nature:

- A. "All things which relate to life and godliness" are the various aspects of the divine life typified by the riches of the produce of the good land—v. 3:
 - 1. Life is within, enabling us to live, and godliness is without as the outward expression of the inward life.
 - 2. Life is the inward energy, the inward strength, to bring forth the outward godliness, which leads to and results in glory.
- B. Faith may be considered the all-inclusive seed of life, and love, the fruit in its full development—vv. 3, 8.
- C. Eventually, we will have the full development and maturity in life from the seed of faith, through the roots of virtue and knowledge, the trunk of self-control, and the branches of endurance and godliness, to the blossom and the fruit of brotherly love and love—vv. 5-8.