

CHAPTER 3 - THE DECISION FOR SELF (cont.)

AN OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER THREE: The division (mountains of Bether) has caused great emotional pain to sweep over her soul. She lost what she desired most, continued, loving fellowship with her Beloved. However, after many sleepless nights of depression, she searches for *"Him whom her soul loveth"*. The watchmen of the city tell where her Beloved may be found. Joyous fellowship is restored. The bride takes Him to her family. Hidden sin is uncovered. She is emotionally exhausted and her Beloved beckons her to go to sleep and find needed rest. While sleeping the bride is given a vision of her Beloved in all His power and glory. This Holy Spirit given vision is the answer to victory over any temptation that would attempt to entice her to go it alone again.

Deeply concerned, The bride's intimate friends, the virgins, pay her a visit:

One of them spoke, *"We have missed being with you. Remember all those wonderful times we had with the Beloved? Then, later we would get together and share just how special He had been to us. We have been real worried about you because you haven't been coming to fellowship with us. You always had so much to tell us about Him."* Another very concerned friend said, *"And then, we noticed that our Beloved King left on a mission a few weeks ago but we did not see you with Him. We couldn't believe it knowing how deep your relationship with Him had developed. We thought possibly you might be very ill."* What they saw in their friend was disturbing to say the least. *"What has happened to you? We have never seen you in this condition! What can we do to help you? You know how much we love you."* Standing before them was their friend in deep depression, pale and disheveled in appearance. She began to sob uncontrollably. A couple of the virgins just held on to her tightly until she could speak. After a few moments, sobbing intermittently between words, she shared, *"I have lost the One I love with all my heart. There is no hope!"* Some quietly gasped in disbelief. This was much worse than they could have imagined.

Unable to make eye contact she bowed her head in shame and said, *"I will never again have what I had before with Him. I will never forget His eyes, the hurt, the deep disappointment when I wouldn't respond."* One of the virgins interrupted. *"What do you mean you wouldn't respond to Him? You can't mean that! Tell us what happened."* The bride looked as if someone had died and she knew it was her heart. *She continued, "He had just shown me His power over every kind of mountain of trouble and hill of difficulty. He explained how it was time for a new work to be done. Oh He was so excited when He asked me to go. He did everything to persuade me to come with Him. However, a little fox of selfishness appeared and I focused on it instead of responding to Him. I finally told Him that I wanted Him just for myself, no one else. I asked Him, 'Why do we have to leave?'"* Her friends were in tears seeing the enormous spiritual and emotional pain engulfing her. *"Can you believe that?"*

"It would have meant that none of you could have had fellowship with Him. You know I would never want that. Then there was this awful silence. He quietly stood there waiting with longing eyes. In my stubbornness I refused to look at Him anymore. He left so hurt. If I had only said 'yes' I would be serving with Him. It's all over! How can He love me now? To think I did that to Him, the One who was always kind, caring, and never had a harsh word for me! Oh the pain of my heart! I must have been insane!"

Her friends gathered 'round to lay hands on her and pray. She told them, *"It won't do any good. Nothing can change the enormity of my sin. There is no way He can forgive me. If I were in His shoes I know I wouldn't forgive."*

One of the virgins interrupted, *"Stop it and just listen to me! Maybe you wouldn't forgive but apparently you don't know the Beloved's heart or you wouldn't say these things. With all the love He has shared with you, do you think for one moment He is through with you?"*

A glimmer of hope returned to her eyes as she listened. *"Do you not remember when we were in His chamber and He told us that nothing could separate us from His love? That included trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger and sword. Don't you remember, He even went further and said that neither death nor life, angels nor demons, the present nor the future, nor any power, height nor depth, nor anything else could separate us from the wonderful love of our God in our Beloved King" (Rom. 8:35-39)?*

"Not only that, He said He loved us with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31:3). "Yes, what you did was terrible! But He is bigger than your sin. You were the Father's gift to Him (John 10:29), do you think He would insult His Father and discard His precious gift?"

It seemed to help a little. They each prayed for her and hugged her. As they were about to leave, one of them spoke a word over her, *"Seek Him dear bride and wonderful friend, seek Him! Did He not tell us that if we would only seek we would find? You know how He always keeps His promises. Don't ever give up! We are with you! Learn a valuable lesson from all of this. Let me say it again, seek Him! Seek! Seek! Seek! Don't give up! He will be found by you."* She responded to all their love, *"Keep praying for me dear sisters! I love you so much. Thank you for so deeply caring."*

Time passes and she is told that the King had secretly returned to town. She waited and waited, but no call, no note, nothing! The anguish intensified. Guilt ridden, accusing thoughts raced through her mind continually. The dear Holy Spirit kept reminding her of what the virgins had advised - seek Him! The enemy continued planting deadly questions in her thought life, *"What are you going to say to Him when you find Him? And you probably won't find Him anyway. What will you say to explain away how terrible you are? Come on it's hopeless. Don't you know He must hate you by now? Forget it. Give up!"* With what little spiritual strength was left, she just spoke these words, *"Jesus, I love You, I miss You, if there is any way You can be found help me."* For the moment the attacks ceased.

Why did the Beloved not come seeking her? He did it in salvation (**Luke 19:10**) but this was different. He wanted to give time for the Holy Spirit to impress on her heart just how essential the surrendered relationship is. He is giving her time to reflect on all the glorious moments of joy they had together. As the gross darkness of emptiness enshrouded her soul, the memories of His love, joy, peace, kindness, patience, goodness, faithfulness and gentleness she had continually experienced before, now sent a painful arrow of loss to her heart. She had taken Him for granted and had forgotten the greatness and power of His intimate fellowship. Days turn into weeks. A faint memory of the words, *"Seek Him!"* pierce through her hopeless despair. That was the needed answer.

V.1 "By night on my bed I sought him who my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not."

Oh, if only we could learn the lesson of faith and simply trust the words of our Beloved Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus. We would keep our hearts from so much unnecessary pain. We Christians are a strange lot, much like the lady in this song. She dearly loves Him and thirsts for His presence more than anything else, yet she refuses to deal with the **"little foxes"** that have brought on this separation. She loved the private, personal relationship but was unwilling to step out on His Word alone. Her love was not deep enough yet to move out in faith. She had begun a life of surrender in chapter one. But now she is experiencing how much she truly needs Him every minute of the day and that her surrender needed to be more complete.

So many of us can worship but when it comes to really listening to His word and making it a practical reality in our daily walk by the power of the Holy Spirit we miss the mark. What value is our worship for Him without a corresponding deep, active love for His word? Isn't real, true, heartfelt worship from us saying, *"I am wholly Yours! My burning desire is to obey Your Word?"* What is love without trust (faith)? She now must suffer excruciating, emotional aloneness. I say *"alone"* for she says, *"...on my bed..."*; it used to be *"...our bed..."* (**1:16**). He never leaves us (**Heb. 13:5**) but He does remove the feeling of His presence (no peace or joy).

Praise God, this abject emptiness will lead her back to fullness only found in Him! She will find out the hard way that what she thought was important to her, those **"little foxes"**, were really a trick of the enemy. What she thought she needed turned out to bring horrible separation from the One who alone truly satisfied her. Abba Father loved her so much that He was willing to *"hurt"* her with tough love. For her good and restoration she is experiencing **Heb. 12:6-11!**

How long did she suffer the loss of this intimate fellowship? The indication is many, many nights! Oh how she could have avoided this misery of heart and soul! But we, like this bride, think we know best. What He had requested from her (to go with Him) was not unclear nor was He asking her to step out into the unknown in blind faith. He had already been there before (hills and mountains **2:8**).

The trap set by the enemy has been sprung and she's caught in it. One moment of willful, deliberate selfishness is costing her dearly!

If she had only kept her eyes on Him who is the Light, then she would never have noticed the shadows! He allows her to live out the consequences of her decision until she cries out for Him in desperation once again! She could not find any spiritual rest. The joy, peace and contentment of chapters one and two have fled. Oh what an unhappy, unsatisfying existence. Her heart is still surrendered to Him but not her walk. Listen to the desperation of her heart's cry.

"...I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found Him not."

All those wonderful memories are now used to torture her mind. Her soul cries out, *"Even now I could be walking close to Him arm in arm. It didn't have to end! Oh what have I done? I have exchanged His abundance for fleshly emptiness. Why did I not go with my Beloved? Why, why, why? Oh the anguish! Oh the pain! Oh the fear of the night - will I ever see Him again?"* With a loud cry that trails off into desperate whisper she says, *"Won't someone help me please! Help me! Help me! I miss Him so much!"*

"By night..."

What was joyful before, now is viewed through the backdrop of night. The shadows of the enemy could have been dispelled by placing them under His victorious, protecting shadow (2:3). There would have been no night to suffer! Put those little foxes and shadows under the shadow of His authority. Take them to the place of crucifixion where they have already been dealt a death blow (Rom. 6:6,11,14). Speak His Word of promise over the foxes and watch them disappear (Psa. 57:1; 91:1)!

The needless suffering continues. Horrifying nights engulf her spirit and soul. She sought Him on her bed. She was searching her heart and looking for that former warmth of safety and security that she had experienced close to Him! In the depths of her heart she strains and cries out for Him, praying she will experience His presence again. Exhausted, sleep finally comes but the morning always returns waking to find Him not there and the emptiness started all over again!

He is still everything to her. She wants no one else or anything else but Him. Praise God she had not become spiritually dulled and then continue on with that *"little"* questionable pleasure she thought she needed. It is not her heart but her will that is the problem. Godly sorrow has come and is doing an amazing work in her! Thank God she at least acts on the Holy Spirit prompting and continues to seek Him. So many believers wallow in self-pity and do not actively seek restoration. They listen to the enemy of their minds saying, *"Your Bridegroom will never want you back after all He gave to you. Look how stupid you were, you threw it all away!"*

However, that is not the bride here. It is true that she sought Him and failed to find Him, but her earnestness was being tested! So many give up seeking after a half-hearted effort.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Holy Spirit preserve me from hurting my Beloved and myself by stepping out of the path my Abba Father has set for me to walk in with my wonderful Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Himself."*

V.2 "I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not."

Here we see the answer to her deep depression. She got up out of her hopelessness and began to actively search for Him! There was a spark of hope and she acted upon it! When we have hurt the Lord deeply don't ever entertain the demonic thoughts of quitting. If you pause and listen intently for that Inner Voice, the Holy Spirit witnessing with your spirit, you will hear these words quietly spoken to your heart, **"Seek and ye shall find..."**! O how sweet those words sound and what needed assurance they bring - the little drop of spiritual water in a dry and depressing time will bring the living waters from your innermost being to your Beloved once again!

Why did the Bridegroom allow her to suffer so long? Those lonely days and nights of searching caused her to remember just how awesome the fellowship with Him was. Absence is truly making the heart ache and yearn more deeply for Him.

Heartrending thoughts pierce the soul of her mind, *"I will never, never take my Beloved nor His love for granted again! I didn't realize how important His every word is to my well being. I had proclaimed in no uncertain terms that I was in total surrender to His heart of love, yet I would not go with Him when He pleaded with me."* She cries out in her spirit, *"Dear Bridegroom of my heart, please, please let me find You once again. I am going to go out into the streets! I don't care what others will think. Whatever the humiliation, whatever the coldness, whatever it takes, I need You and You alone, there is no life without You!"*

There is only one thing important to a surrendered believer and that is Jesus alone. Nothing else! There is repentance in her heart already. She now puts feet to her repentance and begins to search for Him whom her soul loves so deeply. He does not make Himself readily available (Psa. 30:7). This does not deter her. Her heart is absolutely focused on restoring **"first love"** love. The promise kept coming back to her from Jer. 29:13,14, if she would keep seeking He would allow Himself to be found.

The Holy Spirit knew just how long it would take to strengthen her spirit and see her stubborn will defeated. The lesson would be learned once and for all, never to take her eyes off the Beloved (**Heb. 12:1-3**).

So many Christians refuse to believe that the *"little foxes"* or *"shadows"* in their lives are a result of their own doing. They justify and rationalize their condition. These are those who seek other things to substitute what they had formerly experienced with the Lord. However, nothing really satisfies! They must return to the One whom their soul loves. Some will blame the church and leave. This only covers the emptiness for a short time. Until she faces the fact that the problem was her refusal to listen to His word and turn to go with Him she will never have true peace again.

The answer is to pray **Psalm 139:23,24!** Let God do the searching and put His finger on the problem. Confess and repent and blessed restoration to His intimacy will be experienced. The fact that she is going about the city streets and the broad ways indicates how much she is willing to risk in order to find Him. Her pride is being dealt with. What an embarrassment! So many people are acquainted with the intimate position given to her (**1:3,4,5,6; 2:4**) and now they will see her humiliated!

Can't you hear the critical remarks as she roams the streets in search of her Beloved: *"How could you have allowed this shameful thing to happen?"*; *"You don't deserve to find Him."*; *"I'll never understand why the king didn't pick one of His own kind (1:5)."*; *"I knew it would never last between you two."*; *"I don't blame Him for hiding Himself from someone like you."*; *"I said all along that He was too good for you."*

But a wonderful, still small voice inside of her continues to remind her, *"...seek and you will find (Him)."* (**Matt. 7:7**). She dismisses the rude, accusing and piercing comments meant to crush her spirit. Instead of quitting in despair the bride obeys the voice of the Comforter (Helper)! With a new vigor she continues looking.

What are you willing to risk dear Christian in order to find full fellowship with Him again? Are you willing to risk godly repentance and confession in order to be fully restored? Is there a hurt from long ago that needs your forgiveness? This humbling time seems so grievous (**Heb. 12:11**) but Oh the refreshing peace it brings. The restoration of His intimate presence and *"first love"* love will be worth it all and so much more! The time of separation will soon be forgotten in the presence of His joy!

V.3 *"The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?"*

In her despair she goes out in the darkness of the city not realizing how dangerous that can be. Who knows what evil plan the enemy had devised to trap her in that darkness and destroy her (**I Pet. 5:8**). But the Lord has His watchman. They are the ones who were charged with the protection of the city. They were the *"early warning system"* of Yerushalayim against anyone coming against God's people.

The word *"watchmen"* is translated *"keep"* the majority of the time. In her desperation she spills out her heart, *"Help me, help me, please, I must find my Love, have you seen Him?"* They pointed in the right direction.

Spiritual watchmen have a deep, Spirit-filled understanding of the Word of God, warning us of impending danger. We live in a night season on this earth where the Prince of darkness temporarily rules. No matter how dark it gets we have the Lord's light in us (**John 8:12; Col. 1:13**). Thank God she paused to hear instructive counsel! How important it is to listen to those who guard us and warn us (**Heb. 13:17**). Pray for them as they carry out their God-given gift and responsibility in the power of the Holy Spirit! Glory to God for those who truly care for the sheep's welfare!

V.4 *"It was but a little (distance) that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me."*

Praise His Holy Name, her searching was for, *"...but a little..."* Remember how the Lord Jesus dropped a heavy emotional bomb on His disciples just before He went to be crucified? They were in despair. He was leaving them and said that they all would forsake Him, one would deny Him three times and another would betray Him (**Mt. 26:21, 31-34; Jn. 13:33**)! Their hearts sank. But, praise God, Jesus took time to tell them how they could have peace in the midst of their emotional crisis (**John 14:27**). He told them this trouble which they must endure would be just *"a little while"*; that their *"sorrow shall be turned into joy."* (**John 16:16-20**). The first *"little while"* seems like an eternity but when we see Him it seems as if it were but a moment.

Are you encouraged dear Christian? **"...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning (Psa. 30:5).**" Your troubles are but for **"a little while"** if we earnestly seek Him and rest upon His promises.

There could be no contentment of heart until she was basking in the light of His presence and pouring out, once again, her heart-filled **"first love"** upon Him. Nothing but that could satisfy. As she resumed searching for Him, all of a sudden He was there! Relief comes over her frustrated soul and tears of joy well up in her eyes. She runs to Him and He puts His arms out to her. She becomes totally enwrapped in His embrace. For a while nothing is said - without a word, forgiving love passes from His heart to her heart.

The Bride doesn't need to ask for forgiveness. It is implied by the heart-wrenching hurt of her searching that she had already expressed confession of it on her bed. Much like Peter, when the Lord meets him in **John 21** at the seashore and then asks Peter, **"Do you love Me?"** three times (**John 21:15-17**). The Lord knew Peter loved Him. He wanted him to confess it publicly and His disciple would be totally restored. Guilt would be removed. He had already wept bitterly concerning his sin and must have cried out in confession concerning it (**Mark 14:17**). The bride had suffered and in her grief confessed her sin while agonizing on her bed in those lonely nights of separation.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear, dear Abba Father, thank You so much for making me see my deep foolishness; for letting me hurt that I might know just how desperately I need You and how infinitely valuable You are to my soul. Thank You for those You have placed into my spiritual pathway to draw me back to Your loving arms again. My heart is full and I can feel the streams of living water beginning to flow out of my heart over Your feet. I love You so much! In Jesus' name, amen!"*

"...but I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go..."

There can be no question about the fervency of her "first love, love" for Him. Four times in the first four verses she states in clear, urgent tones that He is the one **"whom my soul loveth."**

Holding tightly to Him, with tears running down her cheeks in thankfulness, she, in whispered tones said, *"O my Beloved I am so ashamed that I did not go with You! The emptiness has been excruciating. You alone are my reason for living!"* He says nothing to her; He doesn't need to; He just presses her closer to Himself with His strong arm around her shoulder. She somehow knew He had already forgiven her and that He was not angry at all with her. The bride had entered into a new knowledge of the depth of His love. It was a love so great that nothing could separate her from it (**Rom. 8:35-39**). The bride had never experienced this level of unconditional love before.

Take heart, dear surrendered believer! Have you failed your Bridegroom, and yet, you still feel that overwhelming love for Him? Observe very carefully here how He deals with her. He will not be any different with you! Remember, the more you love Him, the more intense you will feel your failure. Get your eyes off the failure and place the eyes of your heart back on Him. He will be found! As they walk together she takes Him to her mother's house. It was there that she had had difficulties with her brothers (**1:6**). Listen to her, *"O my Beloved Bridegroom, come in and meet my family. I want them to know Your heart. May they see how wonderful You really are - my Counselor, my Eternal Father, my Mighty God, my Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). O may they be granted to see You as I see You!"* But there still was a problem in her life that needed to be dealt with.

There had been a deep seeded bitterness concerning her brothers who had forced her to take care of many vineyards that were not her responsibility. The result? She was unable to take care of her own vineyard (**1:6**). Every time something reminded her of them the burning resentment rose up in her soul. Lying deep in her soul was a seething, angry spirit of unforgiveness. Now that she has found her Beloved, the bride takes Him to meet the family. He had forgiven her, would she be able to forgive them (**Eph. 4:31-32**)? Dear Christian, let Jesus, who lives inside of you, go to the door of bitterness and allow Him to forgive that hurt through you, just as He allowed the Father to forgive His enemies while being crucified (**Luke 23:34**). He could have easily said, *"I forgive them..."* but He didn't. So pray for that offending person, *"Lord I ask You to forgive ____ through me."* If it comes back up remind your soul each time that You have allowed the Lord to forgive through you. His forgiveness will become yours. You will begin to feel the wound healing.

"...until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me."

As they approached the front door, the bride whispered to her Beloved, *"My Love, wait a moment outside here until I go in and make sure everything is O.K. They do not know we are coming and my brothers can be very rude. Give me just a minute."* The Beloved quietly took one of her hands and "patted" it with reassurance that it would be all right with Him. He knew though, by her body language that there was an underlying anger toward her brothers that had not been dealt with.

As the bride entered, standing there were her brothers each wondering what this intrusion was all about. They still had no respect for their little sister. One brother whispered sarcastically, *"I thought we got rid of her for good! She was nothing but a waste around here."* She could feel the coldness and disdain in their looks. It brought back so many hurtful memories. She was able to crack a smile but bitter anger rose up within her trying to intrude on this special moment. Something inside of her said, *"Here's your chance to tell them what you really think of them! Go ahead!"* She glanced back at the door and remembered her Beloved was just outside! She quickly buried the rage seething inside of her and forced a smile again.

The bride's mother ran up and embraced her. With tears of joy she said, *"I have missed you so much. There has not been a day go by that something good you did or said hasn't crossed my mind. It's been such a long time since I saw you last. You'll have to tell me all about this wonderful Person you've fallen so in love with. Welcome home my daughter."* And gave her another big hug. With a glimmer in her eye she said, *"Well Mother, I have brought my Beloved to especially meet you. He's standing right outside the door!"* With a quizzical look her mother said, *"Hurry up and invite Him in my daughter! Why is He waiting outside?"*

As He entered, a hushed silence fell over the room. The brothers all of a sudden felt very uneasy in His presence. They were no longer the tough guys who had belittled their younger sister. The brothers' hearts began to melt in shame and conviction as the Beloved came and embraced each one with a holy kiss on each cheek. They could say nothing.

It seemed that this magnificent stranger was in full control, yet He said not a word. The bride's mother bid Him to sit and make Himself comfortable. As the Beloved sat reclining He paused for a moment gazing downward. From His innermost being flowed springs of living joy as He began to share how much in love He was with His bride and the plans He had for her happiness and joy.

There was a pause as the mother excused herself for a moment to get some food and refreshment. She asked the brothers to help. At that moment the bride leaned over and whispered, *"Thank You for not saying anything about the separation which I caused to happen between us!"* He smiled and squeezed her hand and responded, *"You know how much I love you and My love covers a multitude of sins!" (1 Pet. 4:8).*

They returned and He thanked them for the wonderful refreshments. He turned to them and said, *"You know I am the King!"* They gasped, *"We thought it was only a 'story' she was telling everybody after she had moved out! Forgive us, we didn't know! You really are the King!"* All of them bowed with their faces to the ground. He touched each one of them and said, *"Fear not, I am not only your King, I am your Kinsman, the Husband of your sister. I have come to bless all of you."*

With a great sigh of relief they received their wonderful King into the family. *"Surely"*, they thought, *"our sister has told Him how terribly we treated her."* But in His eyes they only saw an intense love for them. In all their lives they had never felt so loved before. Without hesitation they received Him into their hearts.

As the King continued to share, the brothers became filled with a strange conviction concerning their sinful attitude. Their hearts melted realizing the immensity of deep hurt they had caused their little sister. Godly sorrow swept over their souls. Each confessed to Him and asked for forgiveness. Deeply moved in heart the Beloved embraced and forgave each one of them as tears of joy flowed. They asked the King, *"Would You allow us to talk privately to our little sister?"* He smiled, nodding His head in agreement knowing what was about to happen. In the other room one of them took their sister by the hand and said, *"All of us realize how terrible we have hurt you. We don't know how you can forgive us but we are asking you to find it in your heart."* In a joyful release, she gave each one a forgiving hug.

The Holy Spirit was not through with His work concerning this matter and the bride herself, in a tearful emotional release, asked them to forgive her for the harsh and unkind words that had been uttered in frustration against them. She confessed, *"I have held a root of bitterness against all of you. It has emotionally eaten me alive. It was as if the Lord's grace had departed from me. I was so alone with my anger toward you. I could not see the Lord leading me or guiding me. It was awful and it kept getting worse over time. I began to hurt others and didn't understand it. Then I surrendered to the Lord thinking that I didn't have to deal with you all anymore. However, I know better now. Please forgive me, dear brothers. I renounce all that I felt toward you." (Heb. 12:15).*

She could feel a heavy burden lifted off of her soul. The bitterness and anger were gone. Peace and purity of mind replaced the darkness. All sat there amazed, each one thinking about the powerful presence of this wonderful King and how a healing joy had been brought to their home. The brothers had never experienced such tenderness in their heart before.

The bride glanced toward her Beloved and noticed a gleam of pleasure in His eyes. The thought raced through her mind, *"This must have been one of the 'little foxes' spoiling my soul."* Again she glanced toward the Beloved and she knew in her spirit He was in agreement with that thought! It felt so good to have His approval again!

Excitement filled the house! Like a fast flowing stream, question after question poured out for their new Kinsman to answer. All could see how much He loved the sharing time with them. For the first time they truly felt special. They had passed from darkness into light (**1 Pet. 2:9**). Old things passed away. It was as if they were a completely new creation (**II Cor. 5:17**).

When there were no more questions left the Beloved reassured them, *"I promise to meet all of your needs according to My riches in glory."* (**Phil. 4:19**). *"Remember, just ask Me and I will take care of all them."* The King rose from the table and said, *"It has been a blessed time with all of you. I'm so glad you have lovingly and willingly received Me into your home. But we are going to have to get back to the palace. I have some pressing business to take care of."* And with a twinkle in His eye said to the love of His heart, *"my bride has close friends waiting anxiously to see her. I believe she has some important things to share with them, the virgins."* Embracing each one of them He said, *"Please come to the palace any time. Think of My throne as a throne of grace (**Heb. 4:16**). You will never need a special invitation! Remember, you're royal family now. I'm going to leave you a book I've written, it will guide you for the rest of your life!"* They laughed shaking their heads in amazement of what had transpired this day!

O to have the forgiving spirit of Joseph upon us in dealing with crushing past hurts (**Gen. 44,45**). If you, dear child of the Lord, are ever to grow in your relationship with the Bridegroom, you must take care of any past hurts at home first. Is there unforgiveness in your heart for something a grandparent, parent, brother, sister, spouse or child did a long time ago? Maybe it took place way back in your early childhood days. I repeat, let the Lord forgive them through you as He allowed the Father to forgive His enemies while being tortured and crucified. It's for your healing.

Do those closest to you see that your attitudes, actions, and activities are controlled by a deep love for Him? How about your children (maybe spiritual children-friends), have you brought them near the Shepherd's tent (**1:8**)? Do they see the results of your professed surrender when you said to your Beloved, *"I have eyes of love for You only my King, my Spouse."*? Do they see a wonderful, loving holiness of obedience to His Word flowing from you in your daily walk?

The Beloved and His bride returned to the palace. Her close friends, the virgins, had heard they were coming and all were anxiously waiting to meet them. When the great door opened, they all rushed to her and gave her many hugs. They knew there had been a great victory in her life. All began to say excitedly, *"Tell us all that has happened! We can't wait to hear about it! It's so wonderful having you back with us. It just hasn't been the same."* The Beloved broke in during all of this excitement and said, *"Ladies, words are not adequate to tell you how I feel concerning all of you, with all of My heart I thank you for caring so deeply, especially when My love was away. I know how much you want to share right now but she has had a very, very exhausting, full day."* Then He addressed those court ladies who served and waited on His bride...

V.5 "I charge you, O ye daughters of Yerushalayim, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he (she) pleases."

They were told by the Beloved to be quick and be gentle in obeying His command to let her sleep. The Lord loves for us to meditate on all that He does for us. ***"My soul shall be satisfied...and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches."*** (**Psa. 63:5,6**).

Oh how loving her Beloved is, how caring, how gentle, so understanding! She now can sleep, peacefully with true rest of soul and spirit. How horrible were those sleepless nights (**3:1**). How beautifully exhausting was this day in finding Him. All her spiritual energy was poured out upon Him through His anointed presence and leading of the Holy Spirit. It is now time to rest.

If only we could realize that loving Him, following Him, obeying Him, serving Him, brings us true rest. As she lay back to sleep she said, *"I love You, my Beloved with all of my heart."* She squeezed His hand and with a grieved look started to say, *"I'm so, so sorry I..."* But He placed His finger gently over her lips. She knew all was well. In a moment His bride was fast asleep, in a heavenly slumber, with a glow of perfect peace.

The Beloved sits next to her stroking her hair saying in a whisper as she drops off into a sweet sleep, *"You know I love you with all My heart, My Bride; rest My love and enjoy the dream I have prepared for you. May your heart be thrilled in this glorious revelation and vision of Myself as you sleep!"* He heard her whisper quietly to her soul, ***"Return unto thy rest,***

O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee (Psa. 116:7)." The Beloved watched her go off to sleep and joy swept over His soul. O how He loved being with her again! He too had been hurt very deeply by her refusal to go. She was the joy of His heart. O how He missed her fellowship while He was out ministering to the needs of others. Listen! The Holy Spirit is speaking to you, *"Come, dear reader, and enter into this glorious dream! Have your spiritual eyes opened to the secrets for victorious living."*

And now, here is the bride's glorious dream-vision described in detail...

THE DREAM OF HIS STRENGTH AND POWER 3:6 – 11

V.6 "Who is this that cometh (up) out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?"

Why does she need a dream or a vision of her Beloved in His strength and power? To reveal in her how to have victory over any problem that she will face whether they be little foxes, shadows or major hurts. She had failed in the first test. Without a Holy Spirit revelation of the greatness of the Beloved King she will fall in this wilderness journey. To be a victorious bride, she must have her eyes fixed on Jesus alone (**Heb. 12:2,3**)!

The problem is always a problem of spiritual vision and unity with other believers in the body of Christ! Her vision of Him had been obscured by the **"shadows"** of the **"little foxes"**. Everything was fine until her eyes focused on something that seemed of **"trivial"** importance! The result was devastating. The Beloved asked her to go with Him in **2:10** to be with other lilies (as you will see in **6:3**). She needs to be instructed in the things that will give victory in her daily walk. This comes to us as the Holy Spirit brings other gifted members of Christ's body into our lives to instruct and pray for us. Read **John 17:21; Eph. 4:3,4,14-16**.

She will be given a dream concerning those who walk in unity with the King. She will see His power and observe it in them. She will see the importance of the sword they carry. This Holy Spirit vision of Jesus and His body will dramatically show her what joy it is to walk close to the King. He is leading her into this blessed relationship of which she will definitely experience later (**8:5**). REMEMBER IT IS NOT JUST A VISION OF HIM BUT OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO MAKE UP HIS BODY. **"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (a sharing in) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion (a sharing in) of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."** (1 Cor. 10:16-17).

PRAY WITH ME: "O Lord, let me see Jesus as all I need. May You be the **"I am"** of every circumstance that invades my life. Let me see the true picture of this wilderness I must live and walk in. Holy Spirit cause my spirit to have a fresh vision of Him whom my soul loveth! **'Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law (Psa. 119:18)**. Your Word proclaims this wilderness is a place of wandering without direction (**Ex. 14:3**), a terrible place (**Deut. 1:19**), a howling waste (**Deut. 32:10**), a dry, barren land (**Psa. 107:35**), a place where one can die of thirst (**Isa. 50:2**), a place of desolation (**Ezk. 6:14**), and a place of wild beasts (**Mk. 1:13**)! Dear Father, let me see the utter waste and danger the world is to my soul. Without a clear Holy Spirit vision of my all powerful, conquering King I will fall in the wilderness! In my Beloved Jesus' name, amen."

"...cometh out of the wilderness..."

How sad it is that so many Christians get used to the wilderness. They begin to see very little danger in it. We are to be a pilgrim passing through this land (**Heb. 11:13,16**) which is ruled by the powers of darkness (**Eph. 6:10-18**)! So often the Christian settles down in the wilderness as if it were a permanent place. They become desensitized to the dangerous subtleties of the enemy. In this wilderness journey of ours, by faith we must see our Lord as the victor Who has overcome all obstacles Satan will place in the pathway (**John 16:33; Rom. 8:37; I John 4:4; 5:4**). What many Christians fail to realize is that this wilderness (the world) still temporarily belongs to the enemy.

The enemy knows that what he stole from Adam and Eve, the right to rule (have dominion) is only for a specific time. Jesus has already won the right to rule this earth because of Calvary. In this present time the victory is for us, His people, on an individual basis. He will take over entirely what is rightfully His one day (in the chapters of **Rev. 5,19, 20, 21**). If we stay close to Him through His Word, praising and praying in the Spirit, discernment will be ours! His bride should always be seen as coming up out of the wilderness. It is to be a progressive, upward walk with Him. Always keep in mind it is an **"upward"** experience! This whole Song written by the Spirit is leading you and me to **8:5**. **"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?...."** Did you catch the word **"up"**?

Notice that there is movement in the wilderness. The Christian life is not static but active, moving forward and upward! **"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."** (Isa.40:31). Meditate on these scriptures: **Psa. 23:4; 119:45; Rom. 8:4; Eph. 5:2; 5:8; Col. 1:10; I John 1:7; II John 1:6.** In the previous chapter she wanted things to remain status quo. There was no vision of going so there would be no growing with Him. He was saying in **chapter 2**, *"If you are to grow in your surrender to Me then it is imperative that we walk together! I can't share with you the secrets of My heart unless you allow yourself to be intimate with My Spirit!"*

Let the Word of God unlock the meaning of the symbols in this vision. **"Smoke"** represents God's glory and power (**Isa. 6:4; Rev. 15:8**); an acceptable sacrifice to God (**Lev. 1:9**); God's wrath (**II Sam. 22:9; Psa. 74:1; Isa. 30:27**); judgment of the wicked (**Rev. 14:11; Gen. 19:28**). As she sleeps, the eyes of her spirit are opened to see the Bridegroom filled with glory and power. In the power of His wrath alone, wickedness will be dealt with. She has nothing to fear! To Him alone she is to offer the sacrifice of praise and joy. Why? Because she now knows that the battle is not hers but His! He is the conqueror, the glorious One, the only worthy One! He is her victory! There will be a terrible judgment of the wicked one day. Dear reader, is this your vision?

Her spiritual eye focuses on the **"myrrh"**. Had she so quickly forgotten its deep significance? She had apparently taken the little bag of remembrance from between her breasts. Is that why she was so easily moved by the foxes? It represents the crushing sacrifice of crucifixion (His blood) which alleviates our sinful pain and makes us beautiful. (See comments on **1:13**) She is never to forget the great price her Beloved paid for her to be His bride! The **"myrrh"** would have helped her to focus back on her Beloved when the **"little foxes"** showed up. The old hymn told us to, *"Turn our eyes upon Jesus and look full in His wonderful face."* Is this not what her dream is all about?

PRAY WITH ME: *"O Lord, may I never forget Your sacrifice and the blood that flowed down from Calvary for my sin. May it always remain fresh and gloriously real to me. So that when the sinful 'little foxes' come I will immediately deal with them by crushing them through Your crucifixion and sacrifice."*

What she did in refusing to go with her Beloved was to pour impurity all over the throne of her heart. The Holy Spirit now directs her to notice the **"frankincense"** which comes from a Hebrew word meaning *"to be white"*. The gum is extracted from the Boswellia tree by cutting into the bark and collecting the resin. O what the Beloved went through for her at Calvary - the bruising, the battering, the beatings, the crushing, the cutting so that purity would be given to His bride! Frankincense was offered in worship to God (**Mt. 2:11**). Jesus Himself is the **"frankincense"**. A beautiful example of the value of the frankincense is seen in the Tabernacle. The showbread or *"bread of presence"* used in the Holy Place, representing God's people, had frankincense placed on it (**Lev. 24:7; Col. 1:27**). He alone, Who is the frankincense, gives value to His people.

O the beautiful frankincense of the indwelling Spirit of Christ. O the holiness and purity the Holy Spirit brings into our surrendered lives. Frankincense was also burned as incense in worship to Jehovah (**Ex. 30:34-38; Lev. 2:1,2; Mt. 2:11**). That is exactly what happens within us when we are filled with spiritual frankincense! When we are filled with Jesus, the Holy Spirit ignites it for worship in our spirit giving glory to the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

All of this caused her to see how truly repugnant she was. How terrible her sin had been! She is told to apply the **"myrrh"** and **"frankincense"**! In this vision her soul cries out, *"O Lord give the "myrrh" of forgiveness for my sinful heart of independence. I confess my sin to You my Beloved."* He placed the bag of **"myrrh"** around her neck. She could feel the beginning healing sweep over her soul. Then the frankincense of purity appeared within! The order is perfect.

As the dream unfolded, this thought burned in her mind, *"My soul is so impure, can it ever be clean again?"* She speaks to Him in the dream, *"My wonderful Lord, my beautiful Savior, Lover of my soul, apply the frankincense to my soul that I may be cleansed of my sin of unresponsiveness and independence. Oh I feel so clean again, that fragrance is so wonderful."* At that very moment the precious Holy Spirit applies the frankincense to the throne of her heart. *"O how clean, how pure, how fresh my soul feels. Thank You, thank You, thank You my blessed Husband. I love You for Your infinite patience with me and drawing me back to Yourself!"* In the vision she places her arms around Him whom her soul loves and says, *"Thank You my Love, thank You with all of my heart that You love me so infinitely! Oh how very, very special I feel! I love You, I love You, I love You!"*

The Holy Spirit brought to her remembrance **Psalm 119:140**, **"Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it."** **"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."** **John 15:3.** **"...he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul..."** **Psa. 23:2,3.** She confessed her sin of independence in the dream (**I John 1:9**)

and a refreshing and renewing purity swept over her soul! Worship filled her spirit. She began to sing and make melody in her heart for she was filled with holiness! O the exhilarating surety of being filled with Him (**Eph. 5:18,19**)!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Holy Father, pour the spiritual frankincense over my soul and may Your holy fire ignite it in worship to my Beloved! Jesus, You are the frankincense and myrrh of my soul. May the sweet aroma of my surrendered heart bring joy to You (**II Cor. 2:14-15**). May the fruit of the Spirit flow from my life! Praise Your Holy name! The wilderness has no attraction for me anymore. You alone fill my soul, my heart, and my vision!"*

In this incredible vision the Holy Spirit now directs her spiritual eyes to the **"powders of the merchant"**. They were used to bring a pleasant scent to the air. Some were used to beautify. They all were costly because of the tedious work of pulverizing the various substances into fine powders. He was **"crushed"** for our iniquities (**Isa. 53:5,10**)! It pleased Lord to crush His Son! O what glorious powders were brought forth from the crushed heart of our God and King! As a result, indescribable scents of victory came forth from that crushing and God's heart was pleased. With her eyes ablaze with glory she spoke, *"O my Beloved Bridegroom, I do not need things of the wilderness to make me attractive or to give me pleasure and joy. I only need to be Spirit-filled with Your wonderful fragrances of holiness, obtained through the crushing of Your heart. These will beautify my life as You live through me in the power of Your Word and Spirit (**Gal. 2:20; 5:23,24; Eph.5:18-21**)!"*

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Father, refine my life. May my stubborn will be continually crushed in crucifixion (**Gal. 2:20**). Make me sensitive to Your promptings! Thank You for Your Word of cleansing and restoration! In Jesus' name, amen."*

Vs. 7,8 "Behold his (litter or carriage to travel upon) bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night."

"Behold..."

O what a vision! O how each one of us needs to see Jesus lifted up! This is exactly what the bride of Christ needs. The bride refused to go with Him when He called. Why? Because of the shadows; because of the heat at noon; because of a divided heart (**Mts. of Bethel**)! Here is the answer for her fears and anxious moments, it is to simply **"Behold"** Him, high and lifted up coming out of the wilderness (**Heb. 12;1-3; I John 3:1-4; John 1:35-37**).

"...his bed, which is Solomon's..."

She also sees Him seated. He is at rest. Much like Jesus, sleeping in the boat. This is a scene of confident triumph. He has everything under control. Had she gone with Him she would have been right next to Him enjoying every minute of the fellowship as they come up out of the wilderness. She would be seated with Christ, her Beloved and that is where we receive our authority to overpower the enemy's attacks (**Eph. 2:6**). The bride is to never forget that the **"bed"** (carriage) is her Beloved's alone! He is to get all the attention, praise and glory!

At this moment the Holy Spirit invites her to be seated with the King. She could feel His power and authority flow through her spirit. O how safe and secure it felt seated so close to Him. The King revealed to her that there would be fierce attacks from the enemy. He put His strong arm around her as they traveled alone in the wilderness and said, *"You now have all of My authority."* It was the authority of victory of which He had over the enemy at Calvary. The proclamation of His Lordship and His blood would be all the authority she needed (**Rev. 12:11**). He explained that it would come through using the Word. The only requirement was for her to walk in holiness. He told her, *"Continue to apply the crucifixion ("**myrrh**") and holiness ("**frankincense**") daily to your will and you will walk in joy and victory each step of the way."*

"...threescore valiant men..."

In this wonderful dream she sees the Beloved as her dynamic King with sixty men carrying swords (**"6"** the number of man - **Gen. 1:27,31**, **"10"** the number of responsibility - **Exo. 20:1-17 - 6 x 10**). Her King has those in His service who are led by the Holy Spirit and are able to skillfully use the sword of the Spirit against anything that would harm her in the wilderness journey (**Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12**). Praise God for His holy sword, His immutable Word! The word **"valiant"** means to be strong or mighty. May each one of us be skilled in standing on and claiming with active faith the promises of His Word!

"...they are about it..." (around it)

Notice that the King is the central focal point of the sixty valiant men with swords. Your purpose in any study must be with the Lord as the center. Without the Lord Jesus as our leader, as the central purpose of our walk and as the One lifted up to get all the glory all will be meaningless. Keep in mind He is being carried so He is lifted up. The Bridegroom-King is to be lifted up in our life. Our purpose is for Jesus to be seen in us by all those who come into our pathway along this wilderness journey: family, friends, unbelievers, angels and demons. Because these warriors were close to the Lord's carriage then they were able to hear His instructions on how and when to use the sword if necessary. How close do you stay to the Lord? Do you talk to Him during the busyness of the day? Do you praise Him in your mind when you are not required to concentrate on other things? Do you meditate upon a very special Word He has given to you?

"...They all hold swords..."

You are to **"hold"** the sword! Too many of God's children put their sword aside only to pick it up once a week when the Lord's troops gather together for further instructions. Spiritually we must **"hold"** the sword close to our heart and mind as we walk through the activities of daily life, ready to use it at a moments notice since the enemy will attack at the most unexpected times. Isn't that what **Psa. 119:11** means - hiding it in our hearts; is that not holding it spiritually close? What did it take for the Son of Man to stop the enemy in the wilderness (**Matt. 4:1-11**)? Jesus, our Lord spoke the Word three times. Whether it is in warfare or in worship, use His word! Actually praising Him during spiritual conflict will bring victory. **"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings has thou ordained strength (praise - Matt. 21:16) because of thine enemies, that thou mightiest still the enemy and the avenger."** (**Psa. 8:2**) Read **II Chron. 20:20-22!**

As you read ask, "Lord, what are You desiring to say to me in this passage? I want You to feed my spirit (**John 6:63**). I am reading Lord because I love to hear Your voice! I want to know what pleases You. Your heart is Your Word, cause it to be revealed to me. Thank You Holy Spirit for making it real to me."

"...expert in war..."

When are we ever going to become expert in the Word of God so that we can **"...endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"** (**II Tim. 2:3**)? It will take: reflective study, a time commitment, a deep love for the Bridegroom, loving worship and quiet listening to what the Holy Spirit is saying in the heart! **"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."** (**II Tim. 2:15**). We become experts in spiritual warfare by continually applying His word to each circumstance. **Heb.5:14** teaches, **"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."**

Loving His word and applying it will be worth it all, for in her life's journey she will be seen as more than a conqueror (**Rom.8:37**). This miserable earth is a wilderness! As we lovingly submit to His Word and actively use it we will walk with our Beloved King in victory! Praise God! Dear bride, keep the sword near your side as those in **Neh. 4:18** so that the Kingdom of God may be advanced for His glory! Her Beloved Bridegroom has provided everything so that she can become an expert in spiritual warfare: the Holy Spirit to reveal life changing and life directing truths (**John 16:13**), pastors and teachers to help train and equip us (**Eph. 4:11,12; Tit. 2:11-15**) and other surrendered believers for true Christian fellowship.

Actively identify yourself with those who are truly skillful in using God's word. Watch their walk not just their talk in actions, attitudes, reactions and responses. Be cautious, some have a great gift in teaching biblical information but their walk leaves much to be desired.

"...every man hath his sword upon his thigh"

The **"thigh"** speaks of strength and the ability to stand. It was the placing of the hand upon another's **"thigh"** where personal covenants of commitment were made between men (**Gen. 24:2,9; 47:29**). The Holy Spirit admonishes us to **"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...."** (**Eph. 6:14**). Never forget to humble yourself and allow the grace given to you to be dispensed through you to others. A humble heart before God and His people will cause you to become a Holy Spirit-filled expert in the use of God's ultimate weapon - His Word! You will be a protector of the little lambs of the flock!

"...for fear in the night."

As the vision continued a foreboding chill enshrouded her soul. She screamed for a chilling, fearful, depressive darkness pressed in upon. There had been the terrors of the night, the moment when her Beloved had left and she was all

alone! Night after night fear had filled her emotions. It was as if she were reliving the terrible sin of separation and the fear of never seeing Him again. This time a holy sword came out of her mouth, "*Jesus is my Lord and I have overcome by the blood of the Lamb!*" (Rev. 12:11). Instantaneously the night fled away - she found herself next to her Beloved King. She had used the sword! Her eyes were opened and there were heavenly warriors surrounding her. Dear Christian we live in a night scene (Rom. 13:12; John 3:19,20)! The workers and rulers of darkness will attack us with hellish fears as we travel through this "*valley of the shadow of death*" (Psa. 23:4)!

Literally it is "*the valley of darkness*". It speaks of our journey here on this earth and not really about dying. The death of a child of God will be full of light. We can say with full confidence that, "*even though I walk through that dark valley I will fear no evil!*" If He is the center, as we see Him here, then there is nothing to fear! We must truly make the study of our Bridegroom's Word a top priority so that its light will emanate from us to illuminate the path leading us to glory. "*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*" (Psa. 119:105). Don't miss reading Psa. 34:7!

Thanks be unto God, for in each wilderness difficulty she now knows that her Beloved King has His valiant, mighty warriors ready to minister to her needs. Who are these valiant ones? Some are His angels, appearing as humans at times, who minister and do battle for us (Heb. 1:13,14; Psa. 91:11). When you speak the Word of God out of your mouth, angels are activated to minister to you and against the enemy (Psa. 103:20)!

These valiant ones are also the prayer warriors in the body of Christ who do battle with the sword of the Spirit for the bride! Thank you Jesus! We don't have to fight our battles in the energy of the flesh (I Sam. 17:47; II Chron. 20:15; 32:8). Praise God for the One Who always causes us to triumph (II Cor. 2:14)!

PRAY WITH ME: "*O my dear Husband, eternal King of my heart, I praise Your name for all the provisions of blessing and protection given to me by Your loving Father in the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:3). Dear Jesus, how could I have hesitated in going with You? My entire welfare is in Your hand. You are in control! You have the power! You have the strength! You love me with all of Your heart. And so why have I been concerned about the shadows? Forgive me for having focused my eyes on the wilderness shadows instead of on the light of Your face. I will fear the night no more! Praise Your holy name Lord Jesus!*"

V.9 "King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon."

As you know "**Solomon**" means "*peaceable*". Jesus is our King Peaceable! When He is truly King of our desires then all fear must flee before Him! O this is what our resting bride needs in order to go with Him when He calls. Seeing Him in total control gives us absolute spiritual confidence to step out in faith with Him. It will happen in chapter seven.

The word "**chariot**" is not the usual Hebrew word. This Hebrew word is only found here in the Song of Solomon and it is a covered couch (palanquin) carried by two poles on the shoulders of two or more men. We see King Jesus resting as He is being carried. There is no battle scene here. The real battle was won at Calvary. All we need to do is appropriate it by faith. The wilderness may bring fear with its real dangers lurking about but our Bridegroom is resting on His couch. He is not worried! He is not concerned! He is the victor!

Take a careful look again at this vision. The King is being carried. In the surrendered life we carry our victorious King wherever He is leading us. We must take Him in all our circumstances. His character is to flow out of us to those in our lives.

"**Lebanon**" means "*white*" or "*pure*". Dear bride, why are you so fearful? Your Bridegroom's plans, purposes and power are pure. Praise God, His will is pure and He is riding in the center of it. This vision shows His will at the center of the entourage walking with Him. Is the desire to do His will at the center of all of your activities dear reader? He is the power behind His will. Nothing to fear! Cedars of Lebanon were evergreen, tall, stately, the best! There is no one greater than our Beloved King. No evil, no enemy, no hurt or pain can conquer Him. He has already won!

The Holy Spirit declares, "**King Solomon made himself a chariot** (covered couch)". He designed it. He will inhabit it. He will receive all the glory. Are you not designed by the Lord for His habitation (I Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:21,22)? Praise His holy name - He will receive all the glory! This couch, carried in the wilderness, is a place of exaltation, authority and rest. Your heart is His "**couch**" today. For the Lord to be exalted, have authority and rest on the throne of your heart, He had to make a new one for you (Ezek. 36:26,27). Isn't He wonderful?

My friend, carry Him all through your life in the exalted position He rightly deserves. Let all see Who really is the Love and Lord of your life! It will be accomplished in all humility. This principle is taught in **Philippians 2:3**. "**Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.**" Then the Holy Spirit gives us the ultimate illustration of humility.

In **Phil. 2:5-8** He explains to us how our God, the Lord Jesus Christ, gave up all His power and became a humble servant. How did Jesus, the Son of Man, exalt God the Father? By humbling Himself. Do you yearn to exalt Jesus? What will be the spiritual result? Jesus was exalted by the Father (**Phil. 2:9-11**) so also you will be exalted in the way it was meant for you. **I Peter 5:6** says so!

V.10 "He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for (by) the daughters of Yerushalayim."

It was stated in **1:11** that "**silver**" represented atonement or redemption. "**Gold**" represented the character, glory and person of God, as well as His infinite value, purity, truth and honor. What a vision! What a dream! We are to never, never forget His person. You can hear Jesus, the Bridegroom saying to her, "*Dear bride there is no reason for you to ever fear again. Remember, My will is sealed in My blood! I redeemed you so that the Holy Spirit could fulfill My glorious purposes in you. My character is the guarantee that all will turn out right if you completely humble yourself in surrender to Me. I am your God, your Redeemer in truth and purity.*"

"...the covering of it of purple..."

The couch was covered in purple, the most costly of all the colors. It took over 200,000 mollusk shellfish to make an ounce of purple dye! It was used by royalty (**Judges 8:26**) and by those who were rich (**Prov. 31:22; Luke 16:19**). In this vision she sees her Beloved as the King of her life. She sees Him as possessing all that she will ever need. He is rich in glory, mercy and grace (**Eph. 1:7,18; 2:4,7; 3:8**). His riches are unsearchable! They are unfathomable! They are yours! They are mine! Do you see Him as all you need (**Phil. 4:19**)? O to be covered spiritually by the purple: His royalty, His authority and His complete protection!

The order here is very interesting: silver, gold and then the purple. We first must be redeemed and never forget the cost with which our soul was purchased. He then must be worshiped as our God in all His power. Finally, He must be given the right to rule us without question (**Rom. 14:9**). Jesus died not just to be your Savior but to be your Lord! He died and rose again that He might be King of your life. Have you willingly given Him the rights to everything in your life? If not, do it now!

*Royal robes do now invest Thee, Royal splendors crown Thy brow;
Christ of God, our souls confess Thee - King and Sovereign even now!
Thee we reverence, Thee obey - Own Thee Lord and Christ alway.*

*Anointed King, with glory crowned, Rightful heir and Lord of all!
Once rejected, scorned, disowned, E'en by those Thou cam'st to call:
Thee we honor, Thee adore, Glorious now and evermore." R. Holden*

"...the midst thereof paved (fitted, inlaid) with love..."

Remember her sin, she would not go with Him to be with other lilies. She wanted Him all to herself on her own terms. She had forgotten there were many others who were in love with this great King. The Holy Spirit rivets her attention on those who are involved in demonstrating their love for Him by gracious loving acts. They themselves had part in building the traveling couch. The King had the plans and the materials. Now He asks His people to be part of what He is building. They lovingly placed prepared materials on it. Is this not true concerning those who are filled with love for Him? (Read carefully **II Pet. 1:3-11**).

Imagine what it must have been like for these ladies as they sewed the various fabrics into this traveling couch of their King. In working together through a loving unity of purpose, they were brought close to the King Himself. Not many in His Kingdom ever got this close to Him. Up close, while working, they heard His wisdom and intimate thoughts for only His own. They so enjoyed watching Him. He was so special! He was God's anointed. "*I can't believe I am so close to Him!*" each thought. There were moments that He would have a special word (rhema) for each individual worker. They would then share these revelations with each other as they fitted out the couch with their love!

Do you understand dear reader just how important it is to be unified in love for Him with other lilies? Something wonderful happens each time you are together. "**...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.**" (**I Cor. 2:9**). Read **I Cor. 10:16,17**. The more you walk in humility with other lilies, the more you obey the Lord, the more the Spirit will cause springs of living love to flow to Him and from Him.

Love must permeate everything - our faith and all our activities (**Gal. 5:6; I Cor. 13**). We are God's glorious building that is still growing. What do we have to do with this temple, this building of which we are a part? We supply love to the joint next to us (**Eph. 4:16**). We become rooted and grounded in His love (**Eph. 3:17**); we speak the truth in love (**Eph. 4:15**); we walk in love as He did (**Eph. 5:2**)! The result? By His Holy Spirit we cause this glorious building to grow in love (**Eph. 4:16**). Do you **"pave"** everything around you with love, especially your relationships with the other lilies in the church fellowship, at home and at work?

If the study of God's word, the listening to anointed tapes and Christian radio and television, the reading of Godly books, going to conferences and seminars do not cause you to love God more and love God's family more than all of the above was wasted time and in vain. Jesus declared it in **Matt. 22:37-40**, **"...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."**

With the addition of the New Testament books we could put it this way, **"On these two commandments rest the whole purpose for the study of Genesis through Revelation."** Our purpose is not to just get wonderful Bible knowledge but through our Bible study we are to **"...grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...."** (**II Pet. 3:18**). Since He is the embodiment of love then that is exactly what we will grow in and experience.

All of the above (**vs. 9-10**) belonging to our Beloved has been given to us, the bride and love of His heart: His stability - **"pillars"** (**Eph. 6:10**), His redemption - **"silver"** (**Gal. 3:13**), His glory - **"gold"** (**John 17:22**), His authority to rule - **"purple"** (**Rev. 5:10**), His heart - **"love"** (**Rom. 5:5**). What a perfect, complete Husband we have! What an infinitely blessed bride we are! Hallelujah! It is one thing to know that we possess His possessions (**Eph. 1:3**). It is quite another thing to be spiritually possessed by Him - Holy Spirit filled and empowered. What a gift from the Lord! Her surrendered heart is maturing.

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Abba Father, may the dear Holy Spirit cause me to keep my eyes on my Beloved as He is carried in triumph and love through this wilderness in which I must live. May I long to obey, love to obey, live to obey Him alone!"*

V.11 "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals (wedding), and in the day of the gladness of his heart."

"Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion..."

We must **"go forth"** in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake (**Psa. 23:3**). We are to step out in faith with Him and the entourage of His bride. According to **Heb. 12:22-24** Zion can represent true believers! In her dream she is made to focus on other **"lilies"** (daughters) (**Phil. 2:2-5**). The bride in this vision observes how they also love and follow Him with all of their hearts. She finds herself being drawn to them for they love what she loves - Jesus! Soon, they will become her closest friends and not just those who minister to her in the court. Her heart filled with His presence as she watched them! Even in this vision her heart was changing. She now deeply desired to intimately fellowship with those who loved her Beloved as much as she did!

"...Behold..."

For real victory two things are absolutely important: to **"go forth"** and **"behold"** our King of peace. Oh what the eye of faith can actually see! Here and in **v. 7** the blessed Holy Spirit beckons us to **"behold"** Jesus. That is the major work of the Holy Spirit in the bride, to keep her eyes on the Beloved. The command in **Hebrews 12:2** is to be a continual **"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured crucifixion, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."** Listen to **Hebrews 2:9**, **"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."** In every circumstance of life keep your eyes on your Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ! Let Him be King in all things (**Prov.3:5-7**).

"...with the crown wherewith his mother crowned Him..."

As the Holy Spirit ends this vision, the bride is given a very special scene to ponder. Who is this person representing the Bridegroom's mother? Let the Holy Spirit give us the answer from His Holy Word. Jesus tells us exactly who His mother

is in **Matt. 12:50**, "**For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.**" Do you realize that symbolically we are His sister, brother and **mother** if we obey Him? Wow, what a thought! He considers us intimate family because of our unreserved willingness to do His will! That is the proof we truly belong to Him (**Matt. 7:21**).

Will you, His "**mother**", crown Him? A crown is to be seen! What is this crown? We are His crown! In **Pro. 12:4** it states, "**A virtuous** (Heb. excellent, strong, valiant, able, efficient) **woman** (or wife) **is a crown to her husband...**". We are His wife! Listen to these words. **Rev. 19:7**, "**Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.**" And from where does this righteousness come? **II Cor. 5:21** says, "**For he (God) hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**" Any righteousness in our life that's spiritually worthwhile comes from Him alone! When our heart is surrendered to Him (**Rom. 12:1,2**) then His righteousness just flows through us by the power of the Holy Spirit. The moment we willingly obey His Word - His righteousness (right living) is produced in us.

Crown Him with Holy Spirit humility, surrender, submission and service. This is the "**crown**" of His "**gladness**" when His righteous image is seen in us! That's a real testimony to the world (**II Cor.3:18; Rom.8:29**). Isn't it amazing what simple, loving obedience produces in us!

"...espousals (wedding)..."

Praise God we are wedded to the Bridegroom in our spirit. O the joy of true, pure unity with Him and His body. What joy it brings to Jesus! When we leave this earth a glorious change will take place - we will finally receive our new body (**Phil. 3:20-21; II Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7-9**). Then the marriage ceremony will take place! Dear bride of Christ, be His gladness and joy now, allow Him to be the Husband He is supposed to be to you - the head of the spiritual household of your heart!

PRAY WITH ME: *"Dear Lord Jesus, I so desire to be the kind of bride which will bring joy to You and a completion of Your will in this life You have given me. I submit my will to You. Now, fill me with Your Spirit, fill me with Your wisdom, fill me with Your love and fill my walk with Your humility. Since it is Your responsibility to fill me, I can only ask! I empty out my will and surrender to You right now. Cause the characteristics of this wonderful filling to be seen in my life (**Eph. 5:18-21**). As You humbled Yourself, I humble myself before You. You said, **"...I am meek and lowly in heart...."** (**Matt. 11:29**).*

What a vision! What a scene for victory! The King is triumphant over the wilderness! So sure of His victory in heading for crucifixion, that before He went, the Lord spoke these words in the past tense! "**These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I HAVE overcome the world.**" (**John 16:33**)! Even in His pronouncement concerning the enemy He spoke not in the future tense, "**Of judgment, because the prince of this world IS judged.**" (**John 16:11**). He hadn't been led to be crucified, yet but He knew the victory was entirely finished before He ever climbed the hill of Calvary! Think of His promises to you from His Word. Any doubt that they will be fulfilled? Walk by faith as Jesus did! Jesus, the Son of Man, relied totally on His Father's promises and direction (**John 5:19,30; 14:10**).

At this very moment in the dream she takes the crown of her redeemed life and places it upon His head in total surrender! What inexpressible joy fills both of them! Even in this dream the bride knows she will never be the same! What a vision this has been - a capsule of the basic biblical promises (our spiritual weapons) that we are to live and conquer by!

Oh what a day it will be when the bride becomes complete perfection as He has planned! Listen to the beat of His loving heart concerning her in **Eph. 5:26,27**, "**That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it (bride, church) to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.**" It will be realized in heaven.

Dear surrendered reader, give your glorious Bridegroom what He longs for most, a holy walk. You have been given all that is necessary for a separated walk. Let's show the world what a glorious difference the surrendered life makes. Read **II Cor. 7:1; II Pet. 1:3,4; I John 5:14,15; II Cor. 1:20; II Cor. 4:7-9; Zech. 4:6** and **Phil. 4:13**!

The bride in our song begins to awaken. Unaware that He is sitting next to her, with the voice of the heart, the bride speaks, "**O my Beloved King, my Bridegroom, it is too much for me to comprehend that I, who was made lower than the angels and born in sin, am able to bring such gladness of heart to You. To think that before I was born, before the world was created, I was on Your heart!**"

"O my Blessed Bridegroom, not for one moment did the gladness of Your heart for me ever skip a beat, not even when the nails split Your hands and feet. There was not a moment of change in Your infinite intensity to win my heart when the crown of thorns was pressed into Your sacred head; when the spit ran down Your face; when Your hairs were plucked from Your cheeks; when Your head was being beaten with a rod; when the whip came crashing down on Your back!"

"Glory to You my God and Father! Glory to You my God and Savior! Thank You my God, dear Holy Spirit! O my soul, rejoice and praise, rejoice and adore, rejoice and worship Him Who alone is worthy. Was there not one moment of hesitation concerning the cost? Or when Your Father turned His back from You in disgust because You had become my sin? No! No! No! With all the worship of the heavenly angels, cherubim and seraphim, You did not have second thoughts about becoming all that Your Father hated concerning my dead, sin-sick soul! Look at me now. I am all dressed up in Your beauty and I become lovelier day by day as long as I stay close to Your side!"

"I understand now just how much You really love me. The vision You gave me in my sleep has already strengthened my soul. Open my eyes further that I may see even more wonderful things from Your word (Psa. 119:18). O my Love my heart belongs to You. Now teach me further how to walk with You so I may bring pleasure to Your heart!"

PRAY WITH ME: *"Praise You Lord Jesus! You went to hell for me! I bow my heart in inexpressible joy in the Holy Spirit. You alone are my portion (Lam. 3:24). O how I long to fulfill Heb. 12:2 everyday. O Holy Spirit take me and cause me to bring a bride's joy to my Bridegroom this day. Work in me holiness and purity as I surrender to You. May my Bridegroom, whom my soul loves, never have to look at me and see impurity. May His ministering angels never have to turn their heads from me because of unholiness! O Father, I want my soul and spirit always to be attractive to my Husband, Your Son! I love You Lord! Continue to conform me to the image of the Lover of my soul. Thank You for providing for me all that is needed to have a pure and holy walk before You in Your wonderful name dear Bridegroom of my heart. Amen!"*

COME APART AND REST FOR AWHILE. GO TO THE PRAISE LIST AT THE END OF THIS BOOK AND SELECT A FEW WORDS OR PHRASES WITH WHICH TO PRAISE YOUR DEAR BRIDEGROOM.