

Song of Solomon 6: 4; “The Glory of the Church”, Sermon # 52 in the series – “I am My Beloved’s”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on June 7th, 2013, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

This afternoon we want to look into this passage and try to understand better the great passion of Christ to see His Church become strong enough by His grace, to go forward together as one Church to fulfill the Great Commission; to take the gospel outside of the four walls, to the communities that we represent. The Church militant is very beautiful to Christ. Preaching and sharing the gospel, and making disciples, is the beauty of the Church, but seeing disciples grow up to be consistent in their worship, and for themselves to be of service to Christ in His Church, that is her glory. And that is what Christ greatly desires to see come about on a grand and glorious level as we move toward the latter days of this Church age. It is my conviction that the Lord Christ would have His Church to become triumphant with His cause, even in this present evil age.

In this holy regard, Christ’s passion is, therefore, to see the Church militant become the Church triumphant, by the power of His mighty grace. He would have His saints grow up into a mighty army for Him. Let me ask you now whether this view which Christ has of His Church is your view of the Church? Do you see the glory of the Church? Does she appear as beautiful, and as awesome in your sight as our text describes? Let me open this blessed truth to you now by having you focus your attention upon the 3 descriptions which Christ gives to us here of His Church. She is 1st of all – Beautiful as Tirzah. She is 2^{ndly} – Lovely as Jerusalem. And she is 3rd – Awesome as an army with banners.

1st of all – She is “beautiful as Tirzah”.

Tirzah was the royal city of one of the old Canaanite kings, we read in Joshua 12: 24. Tirzah, at the time of Solomon was the capital of the north of Israel. Joshua and the children of Israel had conquered this city, as a part of the land which would belong to them. The name “Tirzah” means “pleasant” or “amiable”. The Church is pleasant for Christ to think about because of what He has done for her by His grace. He has conquered all of her enemies through His death and resurrection. Joshua, we should understand was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. A type in the Scriptures is an image, or figure, or example of things present, or things to come; especially the actions and history of a number of the prominent people in the Old Testament are types in relation to Christ.

Joshua, for example, was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. His name, Jeshua, is the same as Jesus, and it means “Savior”. “Even as Joshua saved Israel from her temporal and external enemies and calamities; so Christ saves us from all spiritual and internal enemies and miseries.” “Joshua led Israel quite (all the way) into Canaan, not only unto the sight of it, but into it: so Christ leads us into heaven.” “Joshua was a mighty conqueror: so is Christ.” “Joshua overcame and utterly destroyed many kings, so that he might give Israel the peaceable possession of the land of Canaan: so Jesus Christ overcame, and totally vanquished many mighty kings, and enemies of our souls, so that he might give us a certain assurance of the eternal inheritance.” (So says Benjamin Keach in his book – “On the Types and Metaphors of the Bible”. P. 976)

In the case of the verse that we are studying this afternoon, we should understand that Tirzah is a type of the Church, as she made up of the Gentile believers; those who have been brought out of a background of being strangers and aliens to the covenants of promise. They are brought into those covenants and promises because of their faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, the greater Joshua. They are brought into the promised land of grace, and into the New Testament Church, and when they die, they are brought into heaven itself. Now when Joshua brought the children of Israel into the promised land, he was commanded by God to utterly destroy the

inhabitants of the land; to conquer them and settle God's Old Covenant people in the land of Promise.

Even so, the Lord Jesus Christ has brought many Gentile peoples out of heathen darkness in New Covenant times. This is why Tirzah, this mystical city which represents Gentile converts, is so beautiful. Christ has saved many of us Gentile sinners from all kinds of sinful customs and practices, and brought us into the marvelous light of His saving truth, the Bible. He has conquered our hearts and made us a people for God's own possession, who are zealous for good works. Therefore, we are to know that when we have received saving grace, we really do change from living unrighteous and selfish lives, to become those who are most concerned about Christ's kingdom of righteousness, and His glory as it is seen, and as it is to be promoted, in the Church.

Therefore let us learn to put off our remaining corruption; let us learn to put all indwelling sin to death. Let us put on the New Man that our Lord would have us to become. In order to make progress in righteousness and holiness, let us learn to love all of the brethren. Let us not be arrogant toward either Jews or barbarians, if Christ has saved us. Let us think of how we might better serve Christ in relation to both. Colossians Chapter 3, verse 10 – "And you have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where they is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all."

But 2nd – We find our Lord Jesus Christ describing His Church as being "lovely as Jerusalem".

This is the second city being spoken of in a mystical emblematic way in this verse, and it also refers to the New Testament Church under the typical title of the real Old Testament city of Jerusalem. Two Cities, Tirzah representing Gentile converts to Christ, and Jerusalem representing Jewish converts to Christ, together make up the City of God, the New Jerusalem which is portrayed for us in many places in both Old and New Testaments. Let's start in the book of Psalms. Turn with me over to Psalm 48. "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain." "Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." "God is in her palaces; He is known as her refuge."

Now, you can see that the "Jerusalem being spoken of here is not simply the literal Jerusalem of Old Testament times. It is the spiritual Jerusalem of New Testament times, because of the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ is being exalted in the true worship of the Church. The barrier has been broken down between Jew and Gentile; Christ has come and fulfilled the law of God, and now His purpose is to bring her to the place where she is "beautiful in elevation", (certainly not physical elevation), but His purpose is that she become "the joy of the whole earth". This is because she is His City; "the City of the great King"; that is, not only king David, but King Jesus.

John Gill says, "Jerusalem is a figure of the Gospel church, which is often compared to a city, Isaiah 26:1; of which saints are citizens and fellow citizens of each other; this is a city built on Christ the foundation; is full of inhabitants, when together and considered by themselves; is governed by wholesome laws, enacted by Christ its King, who has appointed officers under him to explain and enforce them, and see that they are put in execution; and has many privileges and immunities belonging to it; and this is the city of God, of his building and of his defending, and where he dwells."

"It is, as in Psalm 48:2; 'The City of the great King', the King Messiah, and where he displays His greatness; here He appears great and glorious, shows His power and His glory; is seen in the galleries and through the lattices of ordinances, in His beauty and splendor; here He grants his gracious presence, and bestows His favors and blessings; and is therefore greatly to be praised

here, as He is by all his people on the above accounts; even in the mountain of his holiness; as Mount Zion is called on account of the temple built upon it, and the worship of God in it; and a fit emblem it was of the church of Christ, which, as that is, is chosen and, loved of God, and is His habitation, is impregnable and immovable, and consists of persons sanctified by God the Father, in the Son, and through the Spirit.”

Since this is the case, we should clearly be able to see what our duties and responsibilities are, as the City of God. But turn with me over to Matthew Chapter 5, verse 14 and we will begin to review them. “You are the light of the world.” “A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.” “Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.” “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

You can see here that the city that the Lord Jesus is speaking of is a city of spiritual light. And that light which is in us as believers, the spiritual truths of the gospel and the Word of God, are not meant to be hidden away, but rather they are to be put up on a lampstand, where they will give light to all of the house. The lampstand is the local Church, and the preaching of Christ in all of His glory from His Word gives light to all of the spiritual house (another metaphor for the Church). But the metaphor of the house may also refer to this world that we live in, in the context. It is the duty of the Church to let her light shine in such a way before the men of the world that they might see her good works and glorify the Father who is heaven. The truth that we hold; the truth of the Word of God accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit is meant to shine to everyone around us, being seen in our good works to neighbors and strangers as well as to our fellow-believers.

Turn over, also, to Hebrews Chapter 12, verse 22. “But you have come to Mount Zion, and to the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of the sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.” Now look down at verse 28. “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” “For our God is a consuming fire.”

You can see here the 2nd component of the New Testament City of Jerusalem, or God, and that is holiness; serving God with reverence and godly fear. This is not simply Old Testament worship, but New Testament worship in spirit and truth. It is having regard for God to treat Him as holy and to live as a people separate from the world’s way of thinking and doing things, where it conflicts with the truth of the Bible. Let us understand that the Bible has relevance for instructing us in righteousness and holiness in all generations. Turn with me over to Isaiah 1, verse 21. “How the faithful city has become a harlot!” “It was full of justice; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers.” “Your silver has become dross, your princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; everyone loves bribes, and follows after rewards.” “They do not defend the fatherless, nor does the cause of the widow come before them.”

“Therefore the Lord says, the Lord of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, ‘Ah, I will rid Myself of My adversaries, and take vengeance on My enemies.’ “I will turn My hand against you, and thoroughly purge away your dross, and take away all your alloy.” “I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning.” “Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.” “Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her penitents with righteousness.”

This begins with speaking of Isaiah’s time; the faithful city of Jerusalem in which were the temple and the pure worship of God in the days of David and Solomon, had fallen away from being faithful to God’s word; instead being His faithful wife, she had become a harlot. Jerusalem

had been full of justice and righteousness, but now there were murderers and rebellious princes who dwelt there, and all of the good and gracious qualities which God's grace had produced in good men were now gone, and the silver of doing what was good and right had turned to the dross of sin in that society. They did not have that pure and undefiled religion which was visiting widows and orphans in their distress, and they were not keeping themselves unstained from the world. (James 1: 27)

But God was intending to do something quite extraordinary to bring Jerusalem around right. Zion would be redeemed with the justice of God falling upon Christ Jesus the Lord. God would give Jerusalem, on account of His work, good and wise judges and counselors in the Apostles. He would thoroughly purge away their dross and take away the alloy of sin for all of His New Covenant, New Testament saints, beginning at the literal Jerusalem. And so Christ's Church, all those who would believe in walk in the ways of truth, would become spiritually lovely as the City of God, set upon the hill of the highest elevation because they were "raised up with Christ", and "seated with Him in the heavenly places spiritually speaking.

But this then leads us to consider this last description which Christ gives us of His Church; she is "awesome as an army with banners".

There is perhaps no greater, nor more awesome sight in all the world, as army with banners. The great numbers of men, all dressed in their uniforms, having banners representing their country and their cause, marching together in formation, marching by their commanding general in review, or preparing for battle; this does much to inspire all that country's citizens. Even so it is awe-inspiring to our Lord in His declaration of admiring love. For He knows what He is making His Church into. He is equipping her to be an army of truth and righteousness. And taken collectively, world-wide, she is a powerful force for good in every generation where faithful men have held fast the truth and held forth the truth and lived righteous and holy lives.

This has both individual and collective implications for us here today. Individually, you should see how important it is for you, as a soldier of Christ Jesus to be faithful in the battle for truth and righteousness. Much good can be done if you will see that each soldier is important to the army's victory in battle. Each soldier's faith, and boldness and courage, and self-sacrifice are needed. 2nd Timothy 2: 1-4 – "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." "No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier."

But there is also the collective implication of seeing what Christ Himself will do through the pouring out of His Spirit, and bringing His people to place where they will pray for revival and the strength to act boldly and valiantly with the gospel and the Word of God, on the greater level of the nations. Listen to Zechariah 8, verse 20 – "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Peoples shall yet come, inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us continue to go and pray before the Lord, and seek the Lord of hosts.'" "I myself will go also." "Yes many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord." "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"

The Church of Jesus Christ shall someday collectively be much stronger than she is now, for the Jews are yet to be converted to Christ and brought into the Church as a nation. And this will be the beginning of the conversion of other nations as well. So that this verse shall be fulfilled in the greatest spiritual sense that can be conceived of. The Church's glory shall be seen, not only by Christ, but also by many among the nations. She shall be as awesome as an army with banners.